PHYSICAL, SENSORY, COGNITIVE, NEUROLOGICAL, PSYCHOSOCIAL

Planning for Disability Equity and Inclusion:
A discussion paper for the planning profession

A Planning Inclusive Communities Research - Community of Practice of Planners Initiative supported by Planning Institute of Australia

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UNIVERSITY *of* TASMANIA

PIA Planning Institute Australia

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners as the ongoing custodians of the various lands and waters on which we all live, work, learn and thrive, and pay our respects to ancestors, Elders past and present.

We recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the eternal and spiritual connection they hold to land, water and culture.

Through our values, we are committed to building vibrant communities and creating purposeful outcomes that reflect our deep appreciation for the peoples and cultures that make us who we are and shape where we are going — together as one.

Planning for disability equity and inclusion: A discussion paper for the planning profession

Note on Disability and Language:

The language of people with disabilities and disabled people are both used in this discussion paper to reflect the two common forms of language used in Australia. The use of identify first language - disabled people - is in line with social and critical models of disability that recognises people are disabled by society's systems, structures, attitudes rather than their impairments. However, person-first language, which uses the phrasing "a person with – a condition or diagnosis," is also preferred by some people in the disability community and is used in UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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1. Introduction - Why we need a discussion paper

Globally to locally, the planning profession plays a key role in shaping the futures of suburbs, cities, and regions. As an organisation, the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) strives to be the trusted voice on planning by championing the role of the profession through strong leadership, advocacy, and education. PIA has made progress in equity and diversity such as through its Gender Equity Policy and Planning with Country.

What remains lacking in the Australian planning profession is recognition, education, advocacy, and resources in how we plan for people with diverse disabilities across ages, genders, race, cultures, and social-economic situations. This discussion paper is a step towards addressing this gap.

The term disability is widely encompassing and includes people with physical, sensory, cognitive, neurological, psychosocial impairments, mental health needs, chronic-illness, and neurodiversity. For the purposes of this discussion paper, we adopt United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) definition:

> *Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers [environment, economic] may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Article 1, UNCRPD) (1)*

As members of PIA, we all have a responsibility to plan for disability inclusion and equity as outlined in our profession's code of conduct.

> *PIA Code of Conduct (2)*
>
> *1.COMPETENCY, DUE CARE AND DILIGENCE Our Members will: b) ensure that the processes of planning are conducted as openly and as inclusively as is reasonable and that all relevant information is disclosed to interested persons*
>
> *2. RESPECT, HONESTY AND INTEGRITY Our Members will: a) not discriminate on the grounds of race, creed, gender, age, location, social status or disability; b) treat others with courtesy and respect, without discrimination, harassment, coercion or inappropriate conduct*

The *Planning Inclusive Communities* research project *(3)* aimed to identify gaps and needs to inform future planning solutions. This project was broken down into two stages. Stage one consisted of two parts – Stage 1a involving 97 people, aged to 92 years, from Tasmania and Queensland including disabled people, family members, community members, including local government, built environment and community professionals, and Stage 1b involving 30 Planners from various areas arounds Australia (New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania). This created the stage one Planning Inclusive Community (PIC) report underpinning this discussion paper.

The second stage includes the creation of a Community of Practice of Planners (COPP) to help progress stage one findings into tailored solutions for the planning profession. The COPP identified a discussion paper as an important starting point, with its purpose being to:

- lead the planning profession in a discussion on disability inclusion and equity,

- to build awareness on how our planning profession contributes positively and supports disability inclusion and equity and everyone more widely, and
- build capacity and empower practitioners by offering resources and actions developed by planners and communities to help improve planning for disability equity and inclusion.

2. The context

2.1 Why are we centring disability?

The COPP was developed to bring visibility of disability to urban planning practice.

Disability is an important focus because:
- Disability is a natural part of being human. We all have diverse bodyminds (3),
- Every one of us will have an experience of disability over our lifetime – be it direct or be it the experience of a loved one (3),
- 4.4 million, or 1 in 5 Australians, have a disability (4),
- 24% of First Nations people live with disability (4),
- 1 in 2 older persons have a disability (4),
- Over 8 million or nearly 1 in 3 (31.7%) Australians had at least one long-term health condition at the time of the latest Census (5),
- Nearly 1 in 2 (46%) Australians aged 16–85 will experience a mental illness during their lifetime (6).

People with disabilities (3)
- are diverse in physical, sensory, cognitive, neurological, psychosocial needs,
- can be any age, race, gender and in social-economic situation.

Disability can be (3):

- visible but is mostly invisible,
- permanent, episodic, or temporary.

Socio-cultural-spatial factors often exacerbate the environmental exclusions of people with disabilities (3).

These facts show how essential it is that urban planning and planners think and act more deliberatively and intentionally in how to plan and design our environments to be just and inclusive for all.

2.2 Disability and intersectionality

Intersectionality first defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (7), refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and oppression. This is critically important when considering the diversity of disabled people, who are often subjected to various forms of discrimination. This includes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability – fpdn.org.au
- Cultural and linguistically diverse people with disability – neda.org.au
- Women, girls, and non-binary people – wwda.org.au
- Children and young people with disability – cyda.org.au
- LGBTIQA+ disabled people

"An intersectional lens is required to reach the furthest behind first and achieve: Substantive equality that leaves no one behind, More inclusive and responsive policy making and service delivery, Better use of resources: improved stakeholder collaboration builds a better understanding of the context, solution and results in more tailored services" https://unwomen.org.au/our-work/focus-area/intersectionality-explained/(8)
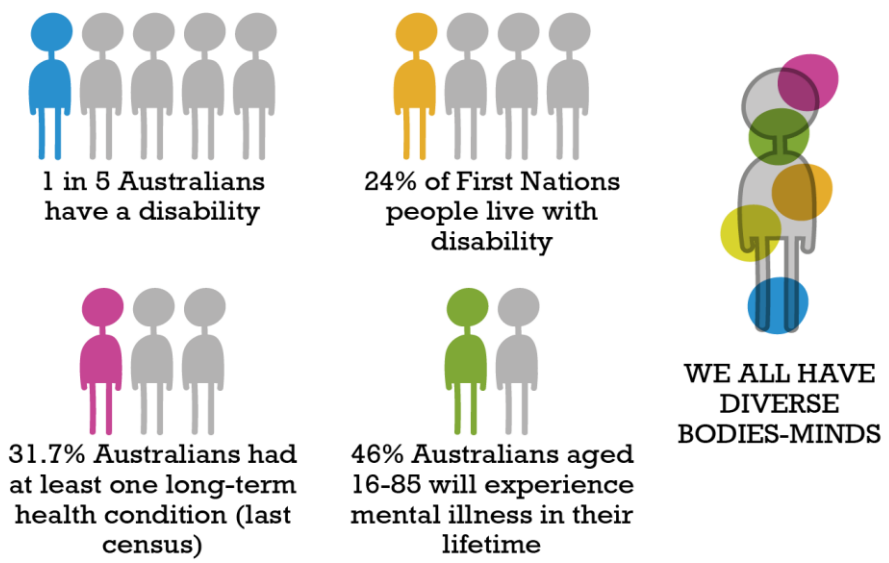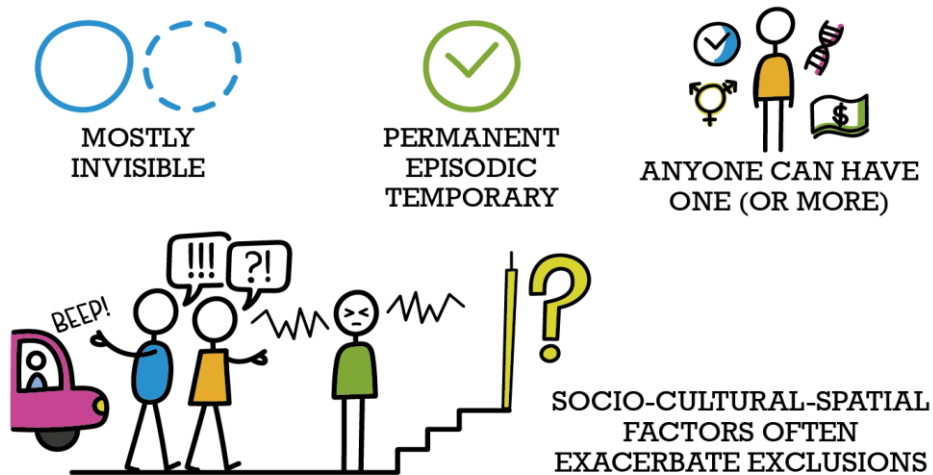
Figure 1. Infographics Representing Disability Prevalence, Diversity and Characteristics

3. The challenges

"Discrimination on the basis of disability" means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation" *(UNCRPD) (1)*

- Currently 1 in 3 disabled people experience difficulties in accessing all spaces and infrastructures (6).
- We have a legacy of car-dependent, poorly planned, designed, and invested-in suburbs, cities and regions, which exacerbates the disadvantage for people unable to drive (9).
- Built environments and infrastructure have been influenced by inadequate and unfair urban policies and practices that have led to significant negative impacts on individual and community wellbeing and have reinforced inequality and polarization (10).
  - Many people impacted by these policies have been people with disabilities, neurodivergent people, and people with complex mental health needs (6).
- Disabled people are identified as one of the groups most at-risk from climate change, many of whom have intersectional identities as indigenous people, people from the global south, people of colour, and people experiencing homelessness. Despite this significant risk, they have largely been excluded from climate adaptation strategies (11).
- Planning futures, post-covid, has given limited attention to current and future Australians with disability, neurodiversity, and mental health needs, despite the increased risk/impact (12, 13).
- Planning for disability is frequently viewed narrowly; merely as complying with standards and/or meeting the minimum legislative requirements regarding access (12). This approach can reinforce planning processes and systems that generate unequal and unfair outcomes.

These challenges listed here were also highlighted in the PIC research and COPP (3).

In the face of climate change and growing urban segregation, poverty, and inequality – deliberative planning for equity and inclusion is critically needed to ensure just adaptions for all people and communities (UN Habitat III – The New Urban Agenda) – this has to include disability. **https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/ (14)**

3.1. Ableism in urban planning

Recognising and addressing ableism in planning is a key pathway to equity and inclusion.

What is Ableism?

Ableism is a prejudice that favours the so called "able" "average" body-mind, which has often been based on the non-representative "white, fit, young male" (15). Identity, markets, built environments and infrastructure have all been skewed to this deeply rooted form of prejudice (16). Ableism is pervasive in urban planning and design such as plan making processes and activities, regulatory systems, and infrastructure (15).

Ableism excludes, devalues, or makes invisible all other bodyminds from our way of thinking, processes and decision-making. These bodyminds include people with disabilities, women and non-binary people, children and young people, Indigenous people, and culturally and linguistically diverse people (12). "Planning for the average" has created streets, public spaces, transport, housing, town centres and cities that often exclude access (sensory, cognitive, physical) and use by a wide range of people and kin preventing spatial autonomy and full participation in everyday life (17).

The impact of ableism in urban planning has been conveyed in the recent open access special edition of Disability Justice and Urban Planning (12) and spotlight contribution on Disabled City (13).

An important component of planning for disability, equity and inclusion is to challenge ableist thinking about "normal and average" that underpins the planning, design, funding and delivery of these everyday spaces and infrastructure (17).

> *"To make this change, we need to affirm our diversity in bodyminds across ages, genders, and cultures; recognise ableism and how it operates in planning; and reinforce that planning for the average is an exclusionary practice." Stafford, 2023*
> **https://www.urbanet.info/urban-planning-disability-equity-inclusion-2/ (17)**

3.2 Research Findings – Tensions urban planners experience in practice .

The experience of urban planners working to promote disability inclusion has involved pushing against systems, processes and mindsets that enshrine ableism. This was reinforced in Stage 1b of the PIC project, involving 30 urban planners and designers from diverse roles, experiences and locations around Australia in interviews and anonymous surveys. Centred on practice-led questions, participants were asked to share their experiences and processes of incorporating access and inclusion in practice. 29 participants shared ways they tried to include access and inclusion, with most practice examples centring on engaging people with disabilities in feedback on master plans, structure/local area plans and on specific public space design projects.

However, planners also identified several tensions incorporating access and inclusion in everyday practice. These were found to belong to four categories:

- **Planning systems** (e.g. codes, schemes and regulation)
- **Internal and External Organisational Context** (e.g. buy-in from others, values, politics)
- **Resources** (e.g. money, time, people)
- **Education** (formal training, awareness training and professional skill development knowledge and resources, advocacy by the profession)

> *"While I try to incorporate access and inclusion into everyday practice, this is often limited to planning processes (through, for example, the conduct of community engagement). The planning system is too limiting in the latitude it provides practitioners to foster inclusive places - even if we really want to." Urban planner*
>
> *"…Again though, there is so much more we would have liked to do with more appropriate resources, organisational buy-in and less limitations from the planning system." Urban designer*

The research also identified the changes needed so planning inclusively can be a more daily practice. These changes are presented in *section 5 – How planning can help?*

3.3 PIA policies and gaps

PIA has policies and position statements on various equity and planning issues. Disability is largely invisible within these documents, apart from Gender Equity. However, all of these are applicable to disability and could be easily adapted by recognising diverse bodyminds, equity, and inclusion in these policies. These documents are summarised below.

Table 1: Summary of PIA policies regarding disability

PIA Policy	Statement	Comment
PIA National Gender Equity Policy (2021)	"The impacts go beyond our profession, as the historical lack of women planners is reflected in our cities and regions. From transport, housing and public safety to childcare, workforce and civic participation, the built environment can be experienced very differently depending on gender, particularly in combination with factors such as age, disability, income, education, and cultural background."	Disability is recognised.
Developing a national gender equity policy for the planning profession a discussion paper (2021)	"The number of females aged between 30-50 years working part time is significantly higher than their male counterparts. This has the potential for serious impacts, including for career advancement opportunities, job security and job satisfaction. We also need to consider how gender intersects with other issues such as class, disability, cultural background and location. The combined effects of these issues will further disadvantage some women." (p. 8)	Disability is recognised.
Diversity and Inclusion Statement (Interim*) (2018)	"The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) encourages diversity of thought and experience. We believe an inclusive and collaborative culture will contribute to best practice planning and foster a positive working environment. This involves engaging with people of diverse ages, life stages, backgrounds and locations."	No mention of disability but recognises the need to engage with human diversity more broadly.
PIA Planning for Healthy Communities	"Planners and urban designers need to creatively and collectively address the sedentary lifestyle of our communities. This is critical if we are to curb increasing rates	No mention of disability – but does talk about prevention of chronic disease and mental health needs that are promoted through the

PIA Policy	Statement	Comment
Position Statement (2016)	of chronic health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. Planners and urban designers also need to consider measures to address social isolation that can contribute to depression and related mental ill-health." (p. 1)	design and planning of built environments. However, the lack of focus on the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities or chronic health issues presents a narrow and potentially exclusionary conception of health.
PIA Public Participation Position Statement (2011)	"PIA believes that good planning practice involves maximising opportunities for participation in planning and that this should include: • diversifying ways in which people can take part, • encouraging and enabling participation by members of groups that are hard to reach, and • making formal provision for the interests of some groups, especially future generations, to be represented...." (p. 1)	No mention of disability but speaks to inclusion and diversity more broadly.
PIA CLIMATE SERIES: Planning in a Changing Climate Position Statement (2021)	"It further acknowledges that climate risks and vulnerability are unevenly distributed and generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities." (p. 3) "Ensuring that engagement processes are inclusive, targeting disadvantaged people and communities along with other stakeholders." (p. 7).	No mention of disability, but makes one reference to the exacerbated climate risks borne by disadvantaged people and communities.
PIA Climate Series: Role of Planning in adapting to a changing climate – Appendix A: Land use planning principles for disaster resilient communities (AIDR) (2021)	"3. Pursue resilient, sustainable and liveable communities Planning decisions are to support improvements to resilient, sustainable and liveable communities, and to minimise the effects of socioeconomic inequalities on vulnerable members of the community." (p. 8)	No mention of disability but makes one mention of the need for planning decisions to minimise effects of inequalities and "vulnerable" members. Needs better recognition of people with disabilities given the significant climate risks they carry. Also, the term disadvantaged would be more appropriate then "vulnerable", which negates human agency.
Planning for the housing we need: Ten ways planning can support housing affordability and diversity (2023)	1. "Facilitate social and community housing and short-term emergency housing 2. Utilise inclusionary zoning and value sharing 3. Develop new models for inclusive renewal for existing urban areas to ensure place-based outcomes." (p. 6)	No mention of disability. The term inclusionary is mentioned without definition. Sustainable Design is an action but not liveable housing or universal design. Better recognition of human diversity would fill a significant gap in discussion on housing diversity servicing different groups.

4. What is planning for disability equity and inclusion?

4.1 Important concepts and principles

There is currently no working definition of planning for disability equity and inclusion, however there are **core concepts** that guide planning and design thinking and decision making. These are: Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Universal Design.

Equity is about just and fair inclusion, where everyone has opportunities to achieve equal outcomes. Equity acknowledged that all people start from different places of privilege and circumstances – and this needs to be reflected and considered in planning. We are all different and experience the world in our own unique way; human diversity must be embraced and responded to in how we plan, design, and adapt cities, suburbs, and regions. This means that we need to look at what individual people and communities need to achieve equity. (Australian Human Rights Commission - AHRC)

> *"For example, equality would be giving everyone the same type of ladder to pick mangoes at the top of a tree. Equity would be realising that not everyone can use the same type of ladder and providing another way for them to reach the mangoes at the top of the tree."*
> *AHRC (https://humanrights.gov.au/lets-talk-about-equality-and-equity)*

Inclusion is when everyone is treated equally and has an active role in society. Hence, an inclusive society for people with disabilities is one where they: are respected; have equal access to services and facilities and are provided the same opportunities as non-disabled Australians (Inclusion Australia).

Diversity is an inclusion concept, providing essential recognition to human diversity and differences without oppression, and helps disrupt ableism. Diversity is an evolving process and concept, and encompasses but is not limited to race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, sexuality, ability, educational attainment, spiritual beliefs and more (18).

In addition to planning for diversity, having greater diversity in planning profession will also provide better planning outcomes for people and communities.

Universal Design (UD)

Universal design is another helpful approach to planning and designing for disability equity and inclusion when considered with an intersectional lens, and other planning trends like multigenerational planning with smart growth (19), Sustainability (20). First conceived by Ron Mace in 1997 (21), Universal Design means the design of products, environments, programmes,

and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Universal design benefits everyone – by focusing on purpose, connectivity, ease of use, and encompassing human diversity (including physical, sensory, cognitive impairments, neurodiversity, mental health needs, across ages, genders, cultures). There are 7 principles and 8 goals (21). The 7 principles are:

1. Equitable use – design for everyone and every ability

2. Flexibility in use – design should accommodate a wide range of users

3. Simple and intuitive to use

4. Perceptible information – the design should be easy to see

5. Tolerance for error – the design should minimise hazards and error

6. Low physical activity – minimising injury

7. Size and space for appropriate use, regardless of user's body, size or ability.

"To achieve participation and empowerment for all through Universal Design. The goal for investing in UD is to give all people the possibility to live in a society providing equal choice, full inclusion and participation. The political, social, educational, spiritual, gender and economic strength of individuals increases in a society that invites participation."
Nordic Charter for Universal design 2014, p. 4 (22)

EQUALITY: Gives everyone the same type of access as everyone else – without adjusting for diversity
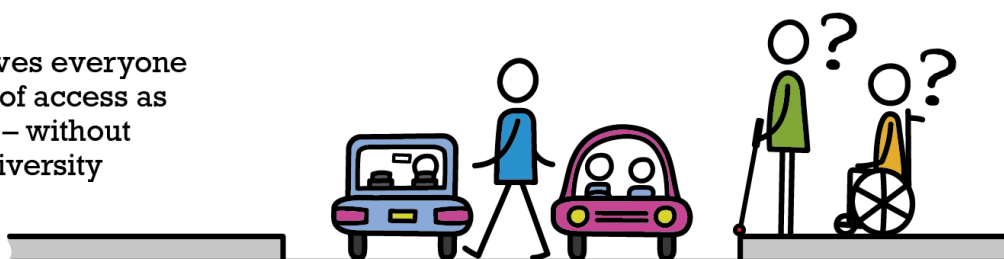
EQUITY: Is about fairness and ensures that diverse needs of people have what they need to access and participate
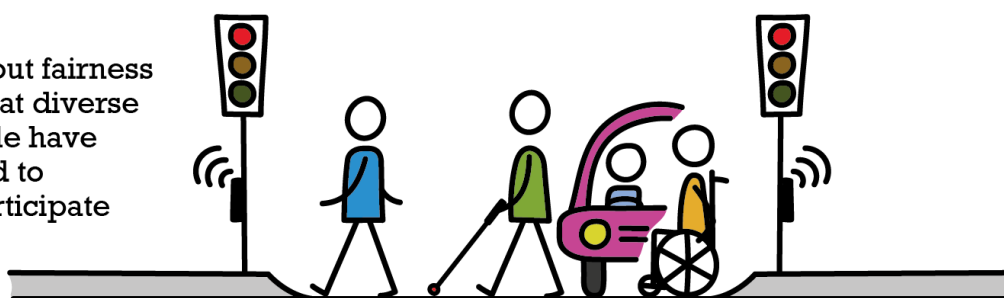
JUSTICE: Everyone has the opportunity to participate as barriers are removed and people have support they need

Drawings © 2023 Kylie Dunn (dinkylune.com)

Figure 2. Illustrating the differences between concepts

4.2 Research learnings from Planning Inclusive Communities Stage 1 *(3).*

"It's also like equality is not enough, it should be equity, so everyone has what they need to be able to engage in that community." — Young person participant from Stafford et al. 2023 (3)

The research identified five core interconnected elements **– known as the "makings of an inclusive community"**. The research suggested that these five elements needed to be reflected and embedded in how we plan and design suburbs, cities, and regions to get close to achieving equity and inclusion. The research also identified that inclusion and equity are influenced by broader social, economic, and built environment structures and systems, but inclusion also importantly happens in the everyday experiences in place. These are captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Elements of makings inclusive communities (3, 23)

Elements	Description
1. Human diversity is valued and embedded in all aspects of planning	There was a real sense that for inclusive communities and cities to be fully realised, planning must accept that as humans we are diverse in minds and bodies across the lifespan. This was felt to be enabled by authentic representation and leadership by and with disabled people in suburban/precinct planning and place enrichment.
2. All people centred public planning processes and decisions (urban governance)	All people must be recognised, respected, and involved in public planning processes and decisions about community and place. This includes all-encompassing processes and communication suited to a diversity of bodyminds, ages, and languages that support all people to be involved in shaping community. Providing clear inclusive information to ensure all people can be actively involved. Having a variety of opportunities for people to share knowledge and ideas about their lived experiences to actively shape decision making is crucial.
3. Inclusively designed spaces and infrastructure are assets of a community with equity, accessibility and ease as core foundations.	How we plan – through our policies, processes, and approaches – can either open or reduce choices and opportunities to be part of everyday life. Taking access, equity and ease seriously requires moving beyond compliance with "minimum" standards, to a performance-based planning-for-all approach framed by equity and universal design from the start. This is facilitated through things like: universal design street and housing guidelines to support equity in movement and place; inclusive local area plans (also referred to as precinct or neighbourhood plans) with integrated vibrant activity-centres; inclusive active and public transport strategies and infrastructure; and mixed-housing requirements including social housing mandates and multigenerational – kin living.
4. Planning for connectedness between nature, people and place.	Connectedness between nature, people and place is considered key for wellbeing and sustainability and must be taken seriously in all new development and retrofitting of suburbs and cities. Having the presence of nature through the preservation of natural areas, gardens, parks and tree-lined streets was felt to support biodiversity, evoke a sense of aliveness, and deepen one's connections to place. Quality infrastructure and spaces – such as footpaths, seating, public spaces, community green spaces, town centre/main streets – also importantly

Elements	Description
	supports encounters and gatherings that helps build and strengthen a sense of place and belonging.
5. Vibrant places and experiences	A marker of an inclusive community is the vibrancy conveyed in spaces and infrastructure. Such vibrancy engenders a sense of fun, friendliness and creativity, while ensuring seamless connectivity and participation. Vibrant places that are accessible to all were considered to help break down silos and bring people together as they signal more welcoming environments, attracting more diversity of people, and enabling people to stay longer.

How do we put this into practice?

To enable these elements will require many system improvements and cultural change that will take time, as outlined in the change needed framework in section 5 – *How Can Planning Help*. The research has identified that planners can start now with more deliberative and concerted thinking and action (17, 23), such as:

- Accepting and planning for our human diversity if we are serious about removing exclusion and achieving sustainable environments for all people.
- Reflecting and auditing how these five core elements are evident or absent in your own regions and cities' processes and consider how to make your practice more inclusive. Even if just starting with how we communicate.
- Being guided by and working with the lived knowledges of affected citizens and communities to improve processes and outcomes.
- Advocating – being champions of change.

4.3 What are good examples of disability equity in planning policies, strategies and guides?

One of the key purposes of this discussion paper is to create awareness, as well as provide information to empower planners in their practice. So far, the paper has established the need/gaps, provided key concepts, and evidence-based elements to guide planning for disability inclusion and equity approach. This section highlights examples of how planners and governments globally are working towards incorporating disability in planning for equity and inclusion.

Table 3 below lists resources that provide helpful guidance on strategy, statutory planning and development guidance, and design codes. One resource listed is the America Planning Association's Planning for Equity Policy Guide, which is a must read for all planners to understand how to plan for equity and inclusion of all people and communities. Also included are reports from Europe and Norway presenting reviews and case studies of applied policies and practices at city and municipality/local government level. There are also three examples included on specific planning guidance in planning for access, inclusion, and universal design at different scales: from Ireland at a national level, and London and Manchester – Greater City Level. Also included is CABE UK's specific guide on the principles of inclusive design important to understand for any projects. This small collection provides clear ways to ensuring we fulfil our responsibility in planning for disability equity and inclusion.

Table 3: Examples of strategic planning approaches in promoting disability equity and inclusion

Name Document & Country	Link
USA. America Planning Association *Planning for Equity Policy Guide.* (2019). *Equity in Zoning Policy Guide (2022).*	planning.org/publications/document/9178541 planning.org/publications/document/9264386/
Europe. *A new decade of making cities disability-inclusive (2020). Eurocities*	eurocities.eu/latest/a-new-decade-of-making-cities-disability-inclusive/
Norway. *Universal design as a municipal strategy experience and results from the pilot municipality project 2005-2008* (2009). Ministry of the Environment. (English Version).	regjeringen.no/contentassets/76dc9f0cce8a487d8e86c0bda613545f/t-1472e.pdf
Ireland. Building for Everyone. *Booklet 9 Planning and Policy*. National Disability Authority's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. (nd).	docplayer.net/21635515-Building-for-everyone.html universaldesign.ie/built-environment/building-for-everyone
Manchester, UK. *Additional Planning Guidance: Design for Access 2*. Manchester City Council (2003).	manchester.gov.uk/info/500207/planning_and_regeneration/1962/additional_planning_guidance/2
London, UK. Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment. The London Plan *Supplementary Planning Guidance*. Greater London Authority (2004).	london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/archives/spg_accessible_london.pdf
United Kingdom. *The principles of inclusive design.*(They include you.) CABE UK (2006).	designcouncil.org.uk/fileadmin/uploads/dc/Documents/the-principles-of-inclusive-design.pdf

Additionally, there are some Australia examples that have been highlighted by planners from the research to date. These include:

- South Australia's PDI Act having universal design as an objective – **legislation.sa.gov.au/lz?path=%2FC%2FA%2FPlanning%20Development%20and%20Infrastructure%20Act%202016**
- The Australian Building Codes Board (2023) Livable housing design Handbook https://www.abcb.gov.au/sites/default/files/resources/2023/Livable-Housing-Design-handbook-2022-1.1.pdf Australian Network for Universal Housing Design https://anuhd.org/
- Whole of Victorian Government Universal Design Policy – **providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/whole-victorian-government-universal-design-policy-word**

5. How can planning help?

The change needed - building capacity in the profession

Planners in the PIC project identified various changes needed to enable more ease in incorporating access and inclusion in daily practice (Stafford, in press). These act as a road map for setting inclusive planning futures polices and actions for the profession, authorities, and planning practitioners.

Area 1: Improving education and professional development

- Requiring equity, inclusion and access in formal planning education
- Planning for equity, inclusion and access offered in professional development training
- Building awareness on spatial barriers to participation with lived experience experts
- Building skills and confidence in doing inclusive engagement
- Better knowledge sharing in the profession, including practice networks in planning for equity and inclusion.

Area 2: Improving systems - policy and regulations

- Clarity and harmonising of standards, policies and requirements
- Good practice guidelines/examples
- Equity and Inclusion explicitly visible and actionable in policy and planning schemes, strategy, and reporting.

Area 3: Improving the profession's culture

- Building understanding with lived experience knowledge
- Building and lifting expectations
- Building diversity in the profession
- Building practice networks in planning for disability equity and inclusion.

Area 4: Improving advocacy

- Learning how to be effective allies
- Championing change makers
- Stronger leadership in equity and inclusion.

Change needed framework

In addition to above, the PIC stage one also identified a systemic change needed framework across three core planning areas:

1. Inclusive Urban Planning and Design Practice

2. Inclusive Urban Governance – Processes and decision making

3. Education and Leadership.

Each area has defined actions, as outlined in Figure 3 below. This framework of change needed is not exhaustive but are key areas participants felt were needed holistically to progress short to long-term strategies and actions toward planning for disability equity and inclusion for all (3; 17, 23).

The Makings of Inclusive Communities
## Change is Needed

Urban Planning and Design Practice

- All people must be at the centre of what we do and be involved from the start.
- Inclusive/universal design with biophilic design /urban greening is integral to communities.
- Foregrounding equity, ease and accessibility in planning and designing for movement and place.
- Raising ambitions by going beyond minimal or compliance-focused approach.
- Develop inclusive planning practice guidance and urban design codes.
- Integrated planning that centres equity and inclusion, wellbeing, climate adaptation.
- Future proofing design using inclusive sustainable approach.

Urban Governance - Processes and Decision Making
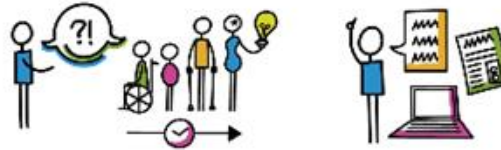
- Lived expertise is valuable knowledge and embedded in all aspects of urban governance.
- Working in collaboration and co-creating, working across disciplines, sectors, and agencies.
- Communicate with all from the start using multiple methods suitable for diverse audiences.
- Decision making has integrity, flexibility, and be guided by lived knowledges.
- Integrated planning processes for more equitable, connected and efficient ways of working.
- We listen, learn and then act.

Education and Leadership

- Recognise and understand planning for our human diversity across the lifespan.
- Challenge negative perceptions and naysayers.
- Awareness raising education and amplifying diverse voices.
- Demonstrate what's possible using case studies while respecting the unique context of place.
- Being inclusive creates economic and regional development.
- Representation and leadership by and with Disabled People is essential.

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Content and data owner Dr Lisa Stafford

Figure 3. Three key areas of change needed in the Makings of Inclusive Communities. Drawings by Kylie Dunn, content owner Dr Lisa Stafford (3).

6. Pathway forward

Based on the PIC research, the COPP, and review of equity policies in PIA and internationally the following actions are considered:

1. Developing a Disability Equity and Inclusion Action Plan under a broader Diversity and Inclusion policy.

2. Establishing PIA Planning for Equity and Inclusion Community of Practice/Network.

A policy and COP/Network will:

- Highlight the profession's responsibilities to understand and respond to the diverse needs of the membership and people and community we serve,
- Ensure disability equity and inclusion outcomes are embedded in all PIA initiatives, policies and activities,
- Increase awareness within the profession about the impact of ableism,
- Increase knowledge sharing and support for planners in planning for disability equity and inclusion,
- Commit to disability equity and inclusion in all PIA events, committees and other PIA bodies,
- Actively seeks input on the needs of all members and respond effectively,
- Adopt initiatives to ensure balance in leadership and governance of PIA at all levels.

Further, it is expected that the policy will:

• Provide clarity about what disability equity and inclusion means for the planning profession and expectations of members to reduce disability discrimination and inequality

• Reinforce our obligations, both to each other within the profession and to the people and communities we work with, to ensure everyone is treated equally,

• Provide leadership, a platform for change, and prioritise equity at the national level,

• Identify the barriers for people with diverse disabilities in the planning profession and demonstrate a commitment to addressing them,

• Identify the additional barriers and lack of visibility for some planners with disabilities who are indigenous disabled people, disabled people of colour, and disabled women and gender-diverse people.

6.1 We need your help!

To reach our core goal of achieving disability equity and inclusion in the planning profession, it is important that the PIA has position with "teeth". Clear commitments for implementation are key to progressing, monitoring, and achieving objectives. Some initial ideas are:

• Establish a COPP/Network to lead implementation of the policy, encouraging coordination of actions at state and national levels,

• Develop mechanisms to foster regular communication about the value of diversity and equity, especially in leadership roles,

• Develop a consistent method of collecting and reporting on data to understand disability equity in planning,

• Develop training programs and materials.

About us

The PIC COPP is made up of Dr Lisa Stafford, lead researcher (MPIA), and 6 continuing voluntary planners – coauthors (RPIA to Assoc. PIA) across New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania to help contextualise findings, road map, and articulate ideas for the discussion paper to ensure it is relevant to all people and all planners, no matter their age, location, experience, and background.

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Appendix 1. Our obligations and responsibilities

Disability equity and inclusion – connecting planning trends, polices and laws

As outlined earlier, every planner in PIA has an obligation to planning inclusively, with respects and integrity without discrimination on bases of disability and intersection of gender, race, age social status and so on. (PIA Code of Conduct as at 26 November 2020)
https://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/6014

As planners we also need to respond to dynamic and evolving planning trends, policies and laws (Supranational – International, Federal, State, Local).

The discussion paper does not have capacity to identify and overview all these. We have simply pointed out some key ones.

At supranational level - aligns with equity and PIA polices

UNCRPD – Which Australia is a signatory

- Article 3 – General principles - https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-3-general-principles
- Article 4 - General Obligations https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-4-general-obligations
- Article 9 – Accessibility - https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/crpd/article-9-accessibility

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 which Australian has committed to. While all goals can be link to aspects of planning, Central goals are Goal 11.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 11 is to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Inclusion, and equity are recognised as key principles to addressing race, disability, class, gender and age inequality and discrimination.

Goal 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions

16.7 - Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. Decision-making addresses societal, environmental and economic challenges related to the community, considering short-term and long-term risks and opportunities. Decision-making draws on diverse backgrounds, viewpoints and interests, reflecting a broad base of stakeholders, and working to promote inclusion and provide effective services for all of society.

Australian level

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwealth)
- Disability Standards for Access to Premises (2010) (Cwealth);
- Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002) (Cwealth).
- Australian Standards e.g. AS1428 suite; AS 2890.6:2022[Current]Parking facilities, Part 6: Off-street parking for people with disabilities
- National Construction Codes NCC 2022 Volume Two - Building Code of Australia Class 1 and 10 buildings

- o Part H8 - https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/editions/ncc-2022/adopted/volume-two/h-class-1-and-10-buildings/part-h8-livable-housing-design
  - o Note: State/Chapter Variation –e.g. SA Part H10 Access for people with a disability
- Guides: Austroads, NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation

Note state-based variations

- State based planning systems (legislation, polices, schemes)
- State/Chapter Variation in NCC
- State-based anti-discrimination and human rights acts
- State road drawings

Local government variations

- Strategic plans
- Local planning schemes/provisions
- Precinct or neighbourhood plans
- Council by-laws

Intersecting policies

National Policy: Australian Disability Strategy (ADS) 2021-2031 p. 11 – Inclusive Homes and Communities

Outcome: People with disability live in inclusive, accessible, and well-designed homes and communities

- Having appropriate housing, and a community that is accessible and inclusive, is central to how people with disability live, work and socialise.
- Accessible housing, transport, communication and the built environment are key factors supporting the participation of people with disability. Accessible public buildings, facilities, parks and events all support the inclusion of people with disability in community life. *ICH - Policy Priority 4: The built and natural environment is accessible.*