



BRAIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

PO Box 199, Braidwood. NSW 2622

Submission on the Draft QPRC Disability Inclusion Access Plan 2026-2030

The Braidwood Community Association welcomes the opportunity to comment on the QPRC Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2030.

The BCA notes that the Draft DIAP refers to three achievements re disability access in Braidwood since the previous Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026. They are:

1. *Installation of best-practice pool platform lifts (Pool Pods) at Queanbeyan Aquatic Centre, Braidwood Pool and Captains Flat Pool.*
While this is appreciated, it was not a top priority for our community.
2. *Improvements to pathways and accessible parking across the region, including at Braidwood Pool.*
This refers to the creation of two accessible parking spaces in the small parking area in Ryrie Park, and the creation of an accessible kerb entrance to the existing pathway to the Braidwood Pool. This occurred several years ago. While appreciated, we note that Braidwood lacks accessible parking in almost all of our main street, where most of our businesses and services are located.
3. *Accessibility audits of key public spaces to inform future improvements, including Braidwood National Theatre and adjacent public toilets, Ryrie Park public toilets, Braidwood main street.*
Please see detailed comments in this submission.

These are the only actions taken by Council to improve disability access for Braidwood since 2022. Several new footpaths have been provided, but these are not specifically projects to address disability access needs.

Plans for the **88 Wallace Street** project include a new public toilet facility which will meet current requirements for disability access, and a couple of accessible parking bays in the new off-street carpark. These additional facilities in the centre of our town are very much appreciated. The funding for these has been received via State and Federal Govt grants for the 88 Wallace Street project, together with a contribution from Council funds of approximately \$820,000. The BCA notes that the Council funds are not a new contribution towards accessibility infrastructure. These funds were set aside for this project several years ago, so should not be regarded as specifically budgeted for accessibility projects in Braidwood.

Accessibility Audit 2025

The BCA has chosen to focus its comments on the report to Council from **Access Solutions National Pty. Ltd. (ASN)** dated 5th September 2025. The subject of the report is **Disability Access Requirements Advice**. It was received by Council at its meeting on 27th May 2026. The BCA acknowledges the value of this report and appreciates the decision by Council staff to engage Access Solutions National Pty Ltd (ASN) to undertake this audit.

While the ASN report contains information on several areas within Braidwood, the BCA will focus its comments on the audit of Wallace Street, Braidwood's main street and our central retail and tourist precinct.

The ASN report includes the following comment:

"Executive Summary of All Reports

The onsite disability access audits conducted by Access Solutions National Pty Ltd (ASN) for Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council reveal systemic accessibility shortfalls across community facilities and precincts, including the Showgrounds, Public Toilets, Main Street, and Theatre.” (p5)

With reference to Wallace Street in Braidwood, the audit report states that

“Precinct-Level Issues: In Braidwood Main Street, access is rated only 4/10, with steep grades, broken pavements, missing kerb ramps, and poor wayfinding”. (p5)

The detailed assessment of Braidwood’s main street states:

“Braidwood Main Street Precinct Audit

- **Scope & Classification:** Public precinct (streetscape). Focus on pedestrian paths, crossings, furniture, parking, wayfinding.

- **High-Level Ratings:**

- General Accessibility: 4/10
- Pathways: 4/10
- Wayfinding: 2/10
- Overall Statement: “The precinct has very poor access.”
- Pathways: No continuous accessible paths on at least one side of streets; steep gradients without rest stops; uneven cobblestone and broken surfaces.
- Crossings & kerbs: Non-compliant kerb ramps (exceeding 1:8 gradient, misaligned with travel direction, missing landings).
- TGSIs: Missing tactile indicators at hazards, stairs, and crossings.
- Street furniture: Non-compliant seating (lacking backrests/armrests).
- Wayfinding: Poor signage and obstructions from shopfronts encroaching on footpaths.
- Parking: Accessible bays incorrectly dimensioned (using off-street standards for on-street); bollards missing in shared zones.

- **Overall Assessment:** Precinct access is fragmented, with critical non-compliance in kerb ramps, tactile guidance, and pathways. Systemic upgrades needed to achieve DDA compliance.”

Strategic Implications:

- Compliance gaps present potential breaches of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and NCC Premises Standards, exposing council to legal and reputational risks.
- The audits recommend both mandatory rectifications (to meet statutory codes) and advisory improvements (best practice measures to enhance inclusivity).
- Across all sites, investment in accessible infrastructure—including paths, sanitary facilities, wayfinding systems, and compliant fittings—is required to align with expectations of equitable access.” (p5)

The detailed Access Audit report on Wallace Street notes 101 specific items requiring rectification. Many of these include the comment: **“Recommendation: As this is the minimum requirement it must be provided”**.

Action Plans in the Draft DIAP 2026-2030

These Audit findings relate to Focus Area 2 of the draft DIAP, **Creating liveable and safer communities**. The community comments on p22-23 of the Plan record personal experiences of some of the issues highlighted in the Accessibility Audit. The summary of these comments (p24 of the report) reinforces many of the issues highlighted in the report.

The BCA understands that the DIAP 2026-30 is an aspirational document and does not commit Council to undertake specific actions or funding for specific projects. However, it is disappointing that in the 20 Actions included in the report, there are no references to actions to address the critical issues identified in the ASN Accessibility Audit. There is no commitment to undertake the recommendations in the ASN Accessibility Audit Report, despite many of these being described as “minimum requirements” that “must be provided”.

Action 5 in the draft DIAP refers to “*working with the Access Committee to prioritise upgrades*”, and “*consulting with the Access Committee and community members with lived experience when planning new and upgraded public facilities*”, while also “*developing a suite of standard accessible designs for public amenities and outdoor infrastructure, including pathways*”. None of these actions commits Council to actual on-site work to rectify the compliance gaps identified in the Accessibility Audit. The time frame for Action 5 is 1-4 years. Under this Plan, another 4 years could pass without any action to rectify the critical non-compliance issues in Wallace Street identified in the ASN Audit.

The BCA is aware of several accidents in Wallace Street resulting from the poor condition of the pavement. We are also aware of locations where it is difficult to navigate the pavement due to obstructions on footpaths such as tables, chairs, pot plants etc. Reports to Council about these locations do not appear to have led to any action to resolve these problems.

Parking and access to the pavements at the intersection of Wallace and Duncan Streets is dangerous for anyone with mobility issues. This is the central intersection in Braidwood, and its condition is challenging even for people without mobility problems. People parking along Duncan Street must navigate rough unpaved surfaces, uneven pavements, tree roots and deep puddles in wet weather.

Braidwood has a high proportion of residents aged 65+, and there has been an increasing use of mobility aids by older residents. There are no footpaths on many of Braidwood’s streets, and people using mobility scooters are forced onto the roads. There are limited safe places to cross our roads. The BCA has made a submission to Council regarding the recently advertised Rural Contributions Plan and the associated Works Schedule. This has direct consequences for disability access in Braidwood.

In the **Report to Council on the Disability Access Audit Report**, (Item 9.3, 27 May 2026), the following undertaking was made:

“To achieve the best outcomes for the community, the summary report and accompanying audits will be used by relevant Council teams to guide priority asset renewal and capital works projects. This information has been shared included in Asset Management Plans to ensure works are programmed. Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2026-2030 is currently in development and once finalised, will include ongoing actions relating to audits and improvement works to support increased accessibility across the LGA. Funding to support this works has been including in the budget for ongoing financial years to enable a staged approach”.

This suggests that Asset Management Plans will be developed to ensure works are programmed to rectify critical compliance gaps identified in the Wallace Street Precinct Audit Report. The BCA requests that Council keeps us informed about plans to rectify these compliance gaps. If funding has been included in the budgets for ongoing financial years, we request that the BCA is consulted as “community members with lived experience” when planning new and upgraded public facilities, in accordance with the undertaking in Action 5 of the draft DIAP 2026-2030 (p33). Priorities will need to be established to address the most critical compliance issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The BCA looks forward to further consultation about the asset renewal and capital works projects required to support accessibility and safety in the Wallace Street precinct and in other Braidwood locations.

Submitted by Sue Murray
President
On behalf of the Braidwood Community Association.

10 September 2026