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Access and Inclusion Plan

2016-2018

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Access and Inclusion Plan

Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to provide improved access and equitable provision of services for current and potential students of all abilities. Through the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan we aim to:

- gain an increased awareness of the needs of all students
- extend the College's capacity to meet the needs of all students
- eliminate harassment and discrimination
- identify available support services and resources
- raise awareness of College services and enhance the College image with disability stakeholders and the general community

The plan outlines the actions that the college will undertake to address the issues and areas of improvement required to meet the Disability Education Standards and to achieve the objectives listed below.

Background:

The initial Disability Action Plan for Port Macquarie Community College was developed in 2008 as part of a statewide response by Community Colleges to be more inclusive in the services they provide. It served as an extension to the College's *Access and Equity Policy* and involved consultation with key local stakeholders.

With a national drive towards supporting people with disabilities to participate in all of life's domains and the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, Community Colleges across NSW have once again responded to the need to ensure that they are responsive to the current needs and expectations of people with disability.

Hence, Port Macquarie Community College's Access and Inclusion Plan 2016-18 has evolved from its Disability Action Plan 2008, existing legislation and in response to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Objectives:

Objective 1: Provide an inclusive environment to enable better engagement of people with disability (PWD) of College services

Objective 2: Provide information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to PWD

Objective 3: Engage an holistic approach in the design and delivery of programs targeting PWD

Objective 4: Ensure College buildings and facilities are physically accessible to PWD

Objective 5: Ensure a dementia friendly environment is provided to enable better engagement of people with dementia of College services

Objective 6: Encourage PWD to participate on College governance, planning and advisory boards and committees

Objective 7: Encourage employment of PWD in the College

Statement of Commitment:

The College will assist PWD to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to successfully achieve the following goals:

- Students, staff and customers with disability will be provided with the same opportunities as other people to take advantage of the range of education, training and employment opportunities
- The College will report on its progress in developing and implementing policies and practices to improve access, participation and outcomes for PWD through the Annual Report.
- The College will strengthen strategic alliances and have a supportive approach to the delivery of services for PWD.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The implementation of the plan will be monitored against the timeframes identified for each action. An initial evaluation of progress will be conducted in the first six months of implementation and then on an annual basis, or as required in a continuous improvement model.

The effectiveness of the plan in achieving the key objectives will be assessed against the following indicators:

- Low percentage of student complaints / staff grievances relating to disability matters
- Continued positive feedback from disability stakeholders
- Completion of action within timeframes.
- Increased participation by students with disability as measured by enrolments

Relevant Legislation:

The legislation relevant to this Access and Inclusion Plan can be found at:

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992;
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977;
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1996
- The National Standards for Disability Services

Consultation:

The College has developed its Access and Inclusion Plan through consultation with key internal and external stakeholders. (See Appendix II.) Interviews and surveys were conducted to obtain information to assist in the access to educational and training services for PWD.

Objective 1: Provide an inclusive environment to enable better engagement of PWD of College services

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Improve awareness among staff and Management Committee about issues and obligations regarding access to quality training and participation for students with disability	Ensure disability awareness raising initiatives, including relevant anti-discrimination legislation, are included in staff professional development	General Manager and/or Training Manager	Ongoing
	Review induction programs for new staff to ensure they understand their obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and the National Standards for Disability Services	General Manager and Training Manager	January 2016
	Ensure staff responsible for access and equity programs and services are provided with regular professional development and current information related to students with disability including mental health issue	General Manager and Community Relationship Manager	Ongoing
	Have suitably trained staff to interview students on enrolment to better identify PWD	Learner Support Coordinator	Ongoing

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
2. Raise awareness of disability issues and promote an inclusive culture across the College	Promote positive stories and images through websites and publications about students and staff with disability	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing
	Ensure that the achievements of the Access and Inclusion Plan are reported in the College's Annual Report	General Manager	March 2016/17
3. Encourage students with disability to disclose their disability or medical condition	Design enrolment forms to include phrasing that encourages students to disclose their disability and/or medical condition	Training Manager	December 2016
	Ensure adjustments are put in place to accommodate disclosed disabilities or medical conditions	Training Manager	Ongoing
4. Improve the range and accessibility of information about education and training options and supports for students with disability	Review content of the College's website continuously to ensure current information is provided to students, parents/carers and trainers about the support available for students with disability	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
5. Ensure the College's complaint handling processes are accessible to people with disability	Ensure information regarding the College's complaint processes is available in accessible formats on request	General Manager	January 2016/17
	Provide complaint handling training to staff. Ensure issues relating to students, staff and parents/carers with disability are included in this training	General Manager	January 2016/17
6. Increase organisational capacity to positively affect student wellbeing and to meet the learning and development needs of students with disability	Implement professional learning programs that will increase trainers' capacity to support student wellbeing, meet diverse learning and development needs and manage challenging behaviours	Training Manager	Ongoing
	Monitor the number of students who access reasonable adjustments for assessments to inform ongoing support for future students with disability	Training Manager with Learner Support Coordinator	Ongoing
	Develop a positively focussed process that identifies how a student with disability can have input in their individual training plan	Training Manager	Ongoing

<p>7. Provide training and assessment for students with disclosed disability that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports their individual learning needs in a coordinated and efficient way • Provides reasonable adjustments for assessment • Recognises their ongoing training requirements and leads to better employment outcomes 	<p>Ensure that enrolment information is accessible to students with disability. Provide options to support the enrolment process that may include the use of inclusive technology</p>	<p>Learner Support Coordinator with Training Manager and Business Development Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Ensure that training takes into account any additional costs associated with providing training services for people with disability</p>	<p>Training Manager with Learner Support and Business Development Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Provide ongoing advice to students to support successful transitions into further training or employment</p>	<p>Learner Support Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 2: Provide information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with disability

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
<p>1. Accessible formats describe alternative communication formats that increase access to information for people with disability. The College’s publications will be made available in accessible formats</p>	<p>Ensure that publications and content are available in accessible formats on request. Commonly used formats include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large print - a 16-point font size or customised to suit need • Audio - CD or podcast. • Braille - keep document layout as simple as possible for easier transcription • Easy English - A simplified form of plain English used for written information. Helpful for people with a cognitive or intellectual disability or low English language literacy levels. Clear and simple words with short sentences. Pictures and photographs may be used to illustrate meaning. • Captioning - Videos with captions and/or audio description. 	<p>Business Development Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Ensure PDF electronic documents are available in an accessible HTML, text or word processor format for people with disability</p>	<p>Business Development Coordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

2. A range of assistive technologies is available in teaching and learning environments	Ensure the needs of students with disability are incorporated into the learning environment	Learner Support Coordinator with Training Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure students with disability are provided the same reasonable adjustments for testing and assessment events that they receive in the learning environment	Training Manager	Ongoing
3. The College website and social media platforms are accessible to people with disability	The college website will be compliant to Level A of the Web content accessibility guidelines version 2.0 - external site (WCAG 2.0) standard including screen reader software	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing
	Ensure that accessibility issues are considered when developing social media platforms	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing
4. Accessibility is a key consideration when developing or acquiring new information technology systems	Ensure that specifications for the development or acquisition of new IT systems include access considerations	Business Development Coordinator with General Manager	Ongoing

Objective 3: Engage an holistic approach in the design and delivery of programs targeting people with disabilities

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Consult with PWD on an ongoing basis to seek their input regarding possible programs	Establish a network of PWD to invite into regular sessions to gain input & feedback on college programs	Community Relationship Manager	Ongoing
2. All relevant service providers and agencies are involved in the design and delivery of programs specifically targeting people with disabilities	Consult with the relevant service providers and agencies in the design of programs for PWD	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing
	Engage the relevant service providers and agencies in the delivery of programs for PWD	Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing

Objective 4: Ensure College buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disability

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Physical access is a key consideration in asset decisions	Consider disability access issues when planning where courses will be delivered	Business Development Coordinator and Training Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure specifications for all new buildings comply with the Australian Standards 1428 and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	General Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure specifications for all modifications of existing buildings comply with the Australian Standards 1428 and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	General Manager	Ongoing
2. Physical access is a key consideration when hiring venues	Ensure wherever possible all venues hired for College purposes comply with the Australian Standards 1428 and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	Business Development Coordinator with General Manager and Community Relationship Manager	Ongoing

Objective 5: Ensure a dementia friendly environment is provided to enable better engagement of people with dementia of College services

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Improve awareness among staff about issues regarding access to quality training and participation for students with dementia.	Ensure dementia friendly awareness raising initiatives are included in staff professional development	General Manager with Training Manager	Ongoing
	Review induction programs for new staff to ensure they are aware of provision for a dementia friendly environment.	General Manager with Training Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure staff responsible for access and equity programs and services are provided with regular professional learning and current information related to students with dementia.	General Manager with Training Manager and Learner Support Coordinator	Ongoing

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
2. Dementia friendly access is a key consideration in asset decisions	Consider a dementia friendly environment when planning where courses will be delivered	Business Development Coordinator with Training Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure all new buildings and modifications of existing buildings include dementia friendly lighting, signage & colours	General Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure wherever possible all venues hired for College purposes are dementia friendly.	Business Development Coordinator with Training Manager	Ongoing

Objective 6: Encourage PWD to participate on College governance, planning and advisory boards and committees

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Disability communities are consulted in relation to key initiatives and are included for consideration to participate on committees and advisory boards	Engage with relevant disability stakeholder groups when key policies, strategies or projects are being developed, reformed or implemented in relation to students or staff with disability	General Manager with Community Relationship Manager and Management Committee President	Ongoing
2. Accessibility is a key consideration when conducting public consultations	Ensure access provisions are considered when conducting public consultations including physical access and accessible formats of information delivery	Community Relationship Manager	Ongoing

Objective 7: Encourage employment of PWD in the College

Strategies	Action	Lead responsibility	Timeframe
1. Barriers to recruitment of PWD will be reduced or eliminated and the college will endeavor to improve employment and retention rates of people with disability	Ensure staff involved in recruitment are trained in merit selection techniques which include Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) principles and understand their responsibilities regarding the college's position on workplace diversity	General Manager	January 2016/17
	Provide information and resources to create an inclusive and disability friendly work environment	Community Relationship Manager with Learner Support and Business Development Coordinator	Ongoing
	Ensure managers are aware of the various funding supports available for staff with disability	General Manager	Ongoing
	Ensure staff involved in recruitment are aware of the College's obligations under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	General Manager	January 2016/17
	Provide information and resources to create an inclusive and disability friendly work environment where more staff choose to disclose their disability	General Manager with Community Relationship Manager	Ongoing

Appendix I – Key Contact Links

Name	Link
Australian Human Rights Commission	http://www.humanrights.gov.au/
Australian Standard 1428 – Design For Access & Mobility	www.standards.org.au/
Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992	www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/
Disability Standards for Education 2005	https://education.gov.au/disability-standards-education
National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Programme	https://education.gov.au/ndcoprogramme
National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)	www.ndis.gov.au/about-us
National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)	www.ndis.gov.au/
National Standard Disability Services	www.dss.gov.au/

Appendix II – Stakeholder Consultation List

We thank the following Port Macquarie-Hastings agencies for their input into our Access and Inclusion Plan 2016-17 either through survey or focus group:

- ACES Inc
- Enterprise & Training Company Ltd (ETC)
- ST Joseph's Family Services
- Headspace EACH
- Partners In Recovery
- Endeavour Mental Health Recovery Clubhouse - Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW
- Mission Australia
- National Disability Coordination Officer Program - North Coast NSW
- Mid Coast Communities
- New Horizons
- Psychology For The Soul