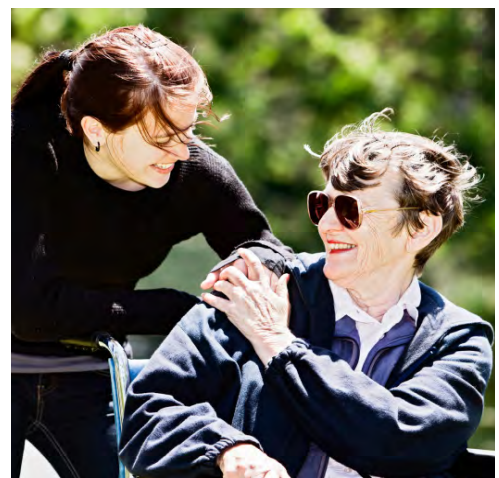


Issues Paper and Profile of People with Disability

Tweed Shire





PO BOX 248
Darlinghurst NSW 1300
02 9357 2476
www.cred.com.au

Tweed Shire Issues Paper and Profile of People with Disability
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This paper has been prepared by Cred Community Planning. Cred acknowledges the contributions of Tweed's Community Development Officer – Ageing and Disability and Disability and Community Development Officer – Social Planning.

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Executive summary

Background

An accessible and inclusive community provides everyone with the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, community life with independence, equity and dignity. Tweed Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021 requires the preparation of an issues paper to inform the development of an Access and Inclusion Policy. This *Issues Paper and Profile of People with Disability* provides:

- Background information on the profile of people with disability living in Tweed and its suburbs; and
- A summary of the issues that emerged through consultation in 2012.

This paper will also inform the development of Tweed's four-year Access and Inclusion Plan.

Policy context

There are a range of International, National, State and local policies, plans and legislation that influence planning for access and inclusion for people with disability.

These include:

- United National Convention on the rights of persons with disability (2007);
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA)*;
- *NSW Disability Services Act (1993)*;
- *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977)*; and
- Tweed Shire Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021.

Profile of people with disability

There were 85,106 usual residents living in the Tweed Shire in 2011. This represents an increase of 7.3% (5,786 people) from 2006, compared to only 3.4% for Regional NSW and 5.6% for NSW. The population in the Shire is projected to grow by a further 51% to 128,863 by 2031¹.

Tweed Shire has an older population with nearly 23% (19,472 usual residents) aged 65 years and over in 2011 compared to 18% for Regional NSW and less than 15% for the whole of NSW (Figure 2). The number of residents aged 65 years and over in the Shire is predicted to grow to 25,161 by 2021 and 32,185 by 2031.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Summary of Findings, 2009* found 18.5% of people across Australia had a disability. The survey also found rates of disability are higher in the older population. Therefore, Tweed Shire is expected to have a higher disability rate due to its older population profile.

¹ Tweed Shire Council population projections, compiled and presented in Forecast ID 2013.

An estimated 20,175 people in Tweed Shire had a disability in 2011 representing 23.7% of the population. Based on Tweed Shire Council's population projections by age the number of people with disability in the Shire is estimated to grow to 25,177 by 2021 and 30,951 by 2031 (see notes at Table 2).

In Tweed Shire 5,866 people (6.9%) identified as needing assistance with core daily activities in the 2011 Census – up from 4,684 people (5.9%) in 2006 – and higher than the rate for Regional NSW in 2011 (5.8%) and NSW (4.9%).

Based on the forecast population increase of 43,759 people and current rates of people with disability in need of assistance with core daily activities (severe and profound disability), we can assume that by 2031 there will be an additional 3,019 people with disability living in Tweed and a high proportion of these will be aged 65 years and over.

The proportion of people providing unpaid care for people living with a disability or who are frail aged is an important indicator of the value of unpaid work in Tweed Shire and the potential level of demand for aged and disability care services provided by government.

In Tweed Shire 8,551 people aged 15 years and over (12.2%) provided care to a person with disability, long-term illness or old age in 2011. This is slightly lower than the rate for Rural NSW (12.5%) and higher than the rate for the whole of NSW (11.4%).

Issues identified through community consultation

Between November 2011 and March 2012 over 260 people across Tweed Shire participated in a community consultation on access and inclusion issues and needs. The purpose of the consultation was to provide the community with the opportunity to make access and inclusion issues known to Council.

A range of key issues were identified by type and by geographical area. Forty-four percent (44%) of the total access issues in the consultation identified concerns with specific geographical locations. Two-thirds of all the matters raised by community members were clustered in four areas. These were:

- Access on footpaths, kerb ramps and crossings;
- Accessible car parking spaces;
- Access to businesses; and
- Accessible toilet facilities.

The remainder (24%) involved accessible transport, parks and beaches, furniture and fittings, leisure and cultural activities, and (10%) related to information, affordable housing, employment, discrimination and mobility scooters.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

An accessible and inclusive community provides everyone with the opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, community life with independence, equity and dignity. Tweed Shire Council is committed to the provision of equal access and creating an accessible environment for all, focusing on five areas of access including

1. Access in the built environment;
2. Access to information;
3. Access to services;
4. Access to parks and open spaces; and
5. Access to employment opportunities.

Improving accessibility enhances quality of life for the whole community not just those with disability. A focus on access leads to well-designed public places, improved pedestrian safety, better quality service, participation by a broader range of residents in community life, and good use of technology for communicating with residents and local businesses.

1.2 Purpose

Tweed Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021 requires preparation of an issues paper to inform development of an Access and Inclusion Policy.

This *Issues Paper and Profile of People with Disability* presents:

- A review of local, State, National and International policy requiring Tweed Shire Council to plan for access and inclusion;
- Background information on the profile of people with disability living in Tweed and its localities; and
- A summary of issues that emerged through Council's consultation on access and inclusion with local residents with disability in 2012.

The Access and Inclusion Policy once adopted will be followed by a four-year Access and Inclusion Plan.

1.3 Study area

Tweed Shire encompasses rural areas, national parks, beaches and coastal areas, growing residential and rural-residential areas, and some commercial and industrial land use. The urban areas are concentrated in the northeast corner (Tweed Heads),

with an inland urban centre at Murwillumbah, and several smaller townships and villages. The Shire encompasses a total land area of about 1,300 square kilometres, including significant areas of coastline, national park, wetland and forest. Rural land is used largely for agriculture, particularly sugar cane, beef, dairy, and crop farming along with some forestry and tourism. Getting from the north of Tweed to the south can take up to an hour driving.

Tweed Shire is currently made up of 81 geographically, socially and economically diverse townships and localities forming 14 small geographical areas - as shown in Figure 1. People with disability live in all of these areas with varied needs and aspirations, and differing levels of access to facilities, services, employment, transport and programs. The areas are very different which means that planning for the needs of people with disability needs to be considered based on geographical and socio-economic differences.

Figure 1 Tweed Shire geographical areas



2 Policy context

2.1 Background

There are a number of international, national, State and local policies and plans that influence planning for access and inclusion for people with disability in Tweed.

2.2 International

The *United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disability (2007)* [to which Australia is a signatory] promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal human rights and fundamental freedoms of people with disabilities, and promotes respect for their inherent dignity (Article 1).

Article 9 of the Convention supports the right of persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. This includes access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, and other facilities and services open or provided to the public, in both urban and rural areas.

2.3 National

In Australia, the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* (DDA) requires all States and Territories to implement the intentions of the Act, which provides uniform protection against unfair or unfavourable treatment of people with disability.

The DDA provides uniform protection against discrimination based on disability for everyone in Australia. Under the Act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person, or their associate, if they have a disability in the following areas of life:

- Employment;
- Education;
- Access to premises used by the public;
- Provision of goods, services and facilities;
- Accommodation;
- Buying land;
- Activities of clubs and associations;
- Sport; and
- Administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.

(See *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*, Part 1, Section 3)

The main objective of the DDA is to eliminate as far as possible discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability. The Act is designed to ensure that

people with disabilities are not deprived of equal opportunity by stereotypes, prejudice, misconceptions, or by unnecessary barriers or restrictions. The Act also requires that a person's disability should be taken into account only where it is relevant and fair to do so. (See *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Part 1, Sections 5 to 10).

Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards (2010) made under subsection 31 (1) of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* came into effect in May 2011. This legislation requires compliance with access standards in all new buildings and additions to buildings that are used by the public.

2.4 New South Wales

The NSW *Disability Services Act (1993)* focusses on the provision of services for people with disability to promote integration and achieve positive outcomes such as increased independence and employment opportunities.

The *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977)* outlaws discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, marital status, homosexuality, age, disability, transgender and carer's responsibility. Areas covered by this Act include:

- Employment and employment agencies;
- Partnerships;
- Trade unions;
- Education and qualifying bodies;
- Access to places and vehicles;
- Provision of goods and services;
- Accommodation; and
- Registered clubs.

2.5 Local

Local government has a responsibility, within its role and function, to fulfill obligations under State and Commonwealth legislation. This is accomplished through adherence to the Premises Standards and in the development and adoption of an Access and Inclusion Policy statement and Action Plan, which this study will inform.

The Policy statement will guide Council planning and decision making to ensure that access and inclusion is incorporated into all Council business and operations. The Action Plan will step out a program of work that will comply with legislative requirements and address the issues raised by the community.

Tweed Shire has a 10-year Community Strategic Plan 2011/2021, which sets the strategic direction for all other Council plans and policies and informs the development of the Access and Inclusion Policy and Plan. The 2011/2021 Tweed Community Strategic Plan is built around four themes:

Civic Leadership: *to set the overall direction and long-term goals for the Tweed in accordance with community aspirations.*

Supporting Community Life: *to create a place where people are healthy, safe, connected and in harmony with the natural environment to retain and improve the quality of community life.*

Strengthening the Economy: *to strengthen and diversify the region's economic base in a way that complements the environmental and social values of the Tweed.*

Caring for the Environment: *for Council and the community to value, respect and actively participate in the care and management of our natural environment for current and future generations.*

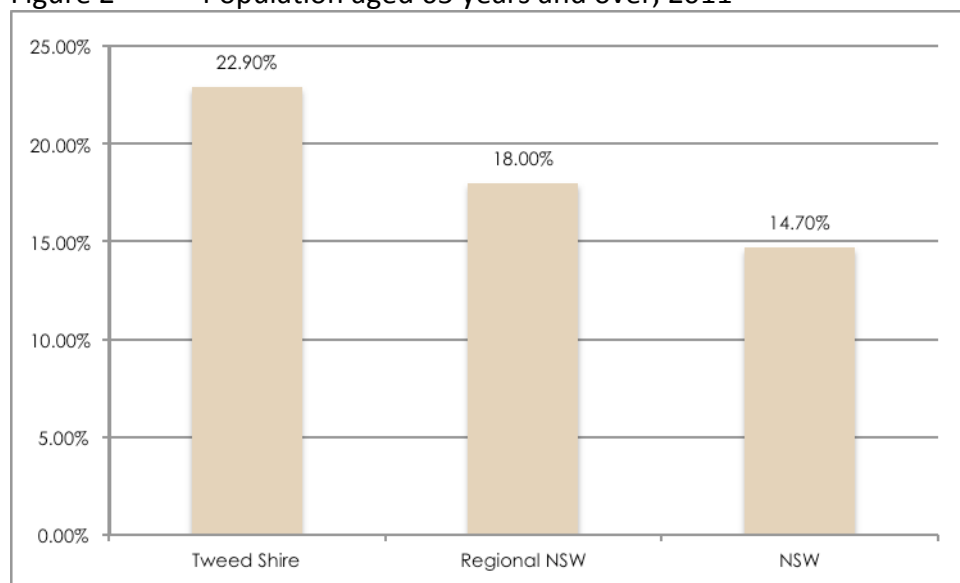
3 Profile of people with disability in the Tweed Shire

3.1 Age and population growth in Tweed Shire

There were 85,106 usual residents living in the Tweed Shire in 2011. This represents an increase of 7.3% (or 5,786 people) from 2006, compared to only 3.4% for Regional NSW and 5.6% for NSW. The population in the Shire is projected to grow by a further 51% to 128,863 by 2013².

Tweed Shire has an older population with nearly 23% (19,472 usual residents) aged 65 years and over in 2011 compared to 18% for Regional NSW and less than 15% for the whole of NSW (see Figure 2). The number of residents aged 65 years and over in the Shire is predicted to grow to 25,161 by 2021 and 32,185 (+11,880) by 2031. A high proportion of this growth will be in residents 85 and over (around 47% of this age group has disability).

Figure 2 Population aged 65 years and over, 2011



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#), (Usual residence data).

Tweed has a progressively ageing population with many new retirees moving into the area (particularly in Tweed Heads and Banora Point) and longer-term older residents ageing in place. While Tweed Shire has a higher proportion of people aged 65 years or more, this varied across the Shire. Proportions ranged from a low of 8.9% in Mid

² Tweed Shire Council population projections, compiled and presented in Forecast ID 2013.

Coast-Casuarina to a high of 35.4% in Tweed Heads. The five areas with the highest proportions of older residents were:

- Tweed Heads (35.4%);
- Tweed Heads South - Banora Point (30.9%);
- Tweed Heads West (29.5%);
- North Coast - Kingscliff (25.8%); and
- Murwillumbah and District (21.1%).

Table 1 People aged 65 years and over, 2011 by geographical area

Geographical Area	Number	Total population	Percent %
Cabarita area	438	3,344	13.1
Cobaki - Bilambil and District	526	4,182	12.6
Mid Coast - Casuarina	243	2,737	8.9
Murwillumbah and District	2,018	9,568	21.1
North Coast - Kingscliff	2,287	8,880	25.8
North East Hinterland - Tumbulgum	401	2,850	14.1
North West Tweed - Tyalgum	329	2,664	12.3
South Coast - Pottsville	1,317	7,046	18.7
South East Hinterland - Burringbar	415	3,011	13.8
South West Tweed - Uki	285	2,269	12.5
Terranora	381	2,733	13.9
Tweed Heads	2,893	8,173	35.4
Tweed Heads South - Banora Point	7,150	23,163	30.9
Tweed Heads West	1,718	5,822	29.5
Tweed Shire	20,401	86,442	23.6
Regional NSW	450,371	2,516,204	17.9
New South Wales	1,010,687	6,896,776	14.7

(source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id by [.id](#))

Residents aged 65 years and over increased by 1,873 between 2006 and 2011 (from 22.8% to 23% of the total population). A significant proportion of this increase (50%) was in residents aged 85 years and over. The steadily ageing profile of the Tweed Shire is relevant to planning for access and inclusion as the rate of disability in older people is higher than other age groups in most communities.

3.2 People with disability

The *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia, Summary of Findings 2009* (ABS) found that 18.5% of people across Australia had a disability. The survey also found rates of disability are higher in the older population. Almost nine in ten people aged 90 and over (88%) had a disability, compared with 3.4% of those aged four

years and under. Therefore, Tweed Shire is expected to have a higher disability rate due to its older population profile.

Table 2 presents estimates for the number of people with disability in Tweed Shire. The estimates are derived by applying national disability rates by age from the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers to the corresponding age group in the Tweed Shire population at 2011 and should be used as a guide only.

Based on the national average of 18.5%, an estimated 20,175 people in Tweed Shire had a disability in 2011 representing 23.7% of the population. Based on Tweed Shire Council's population projections by age the number of people with disability in the Shire is estimated to grow to 25,177 by 2021 and 30,951 by 2031 (see notes at Table 2).

Table 2 Disability estimates by age group, Tweed Shire 2011

Age group	Australia	Tweed Shire	
	2009 Estimated national disability rate* (%)	2011 population **	2011 Estimated number of people with disability
0 to 4	3.4	4,870	163
5 to 14	8.8	10,294	907
15 to 24	6.6	8,880	588
25 to 34	8.6	7,551	650
35 to 44	12.8	10,283	1,318
45 to 54	18.0	12,169	2,192
55 to 59	27.7	5,769	1,600
60 to 64	35.9	5,818	2,091
65 to 69	40.1	5,049	2,024
70 to 74	48.1	4,353	2,093
75 to 79	53.4	3,953	2,110
80 to 84	65.2	3,215	2,097
85 and over	80.6	2,902	2,340
TOTAL	18.5%	85,106	20,175 (23.7%)

Sources:

*Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009 Summary of Results, Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue No. 44300DO001

**Population by age (usual residence), 2011 Census, Profile ID; Tweed Shire Council population projections, compiled and presented in Forecast ID.

Note: Estimate of number of persons in Tweed Shire with disability is derived by applying national disability rates by age at 2009 to the same age groups for usual residents in Tweed Shire at the 2011

Census and project population by age for 2021 and 2031. They are based on the assumption that national disability rates by age are applicable to Tweed Shire’s population and projections out to 2031 and should be used as a guide only.

3.3 People who need assistance with core activities

The ABS Census collects information on the number of people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives with any or all of the following activities – self-care, body movements or communication – because of a disability, long-term health condition, or old age. This data does not reflect the total number of people with disability. The proportion of people requiring assistance with a core activity increases substantially with age (Table 3).

In Tweed Shire 5,866 people (6.9%) identified as needing assistance with a core activity in the 2011 Census – up from 4,684 people (5.9%) in 2006 – and higher than the rate for Regional NSW in 2011 (5.8%) and NSW (4.9%).

Table 3 Need for assistance with core activities, 2011

Age group	Tweed Shire		Regional NSW	NSW
	Number	%	%	%
0 to 4	50	1.0	1.1	1.0
5 to 9	132	2.7	3.0	2.6
10 to 19	290	2.7	2.6	2.2
20 to 59	1,343	3.4	3.2	2.4
60 to 64	420	7.2	7.3	6.7
65 to 69	422	8.3	7.7	7.7
70 to 74	452	10.4	9.6	10.6
75 to 79	609	15.4	14.8	16.6
80 to 84	775	24.2	24.7	26.4
85 and over	1,373	47.3	48.3	48.3
TOTAL	5,866	6.9	5.8	4.9

(source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id (Usual residence data).

Based on the forecast population increase of 43,759 people and current rates of people with disability (6.9%), we can assume that by 2031 there will be an additional 3,019 people with disability, and in need of assistance with core activities, living in Tweed and a high proportion of these will be aged 65 years and over.

While Tweed Shire had a higher proportion of persons in need of assistance with core activities, this varied across the Shire. Proportions ranged from a low of 2.4% in Mid Coast-Casuarina to a high of 8.8% in Tweed Heads. The geographical locations with the highest proportions of people who reported need for assistance with a core activity in Tweed Shire in 2011 were:

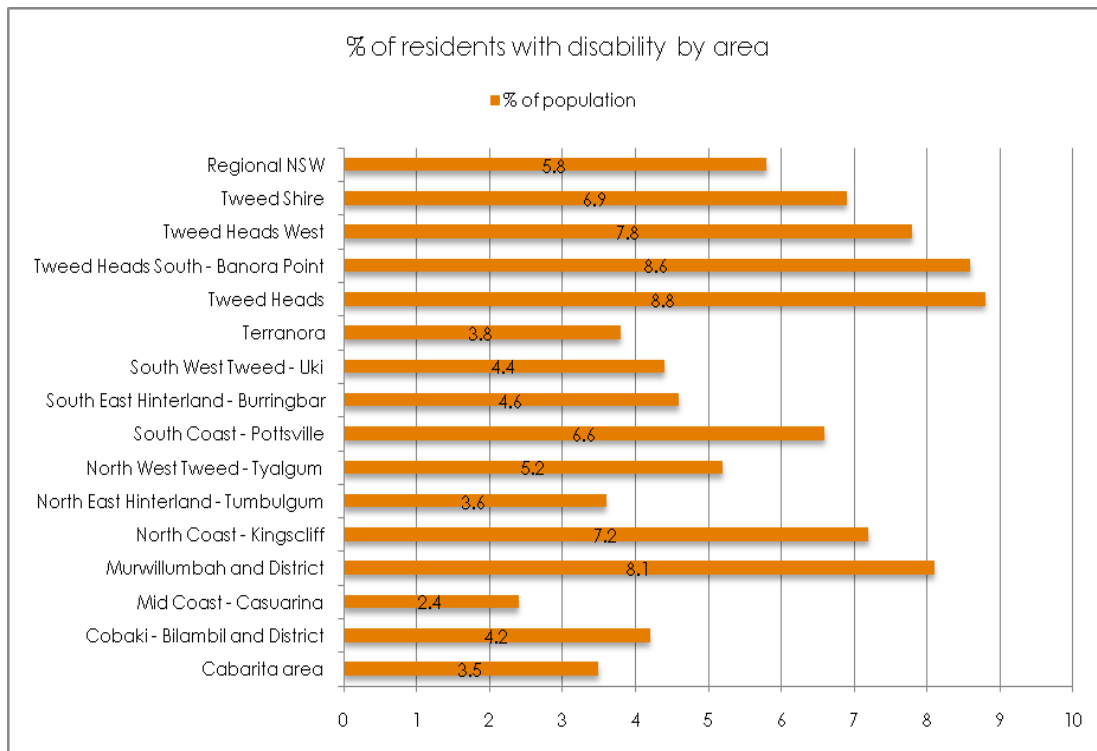
- Tweed Heads (8.8%);
- Tweed Heads South - Banora Point (8.6%);
- Murwillumbah and District (8.1%);
- Tweed Heads West (7.8%); and
- North Coast - Kingscliff (7.2%).

Table 4 People in need of assistance with core activities by geographical area 2011

Geographical Area	Number	Total population	% of area's population
Cabarita area	117	3,344	3.5
Cobaki - Bilambil and District	176	4,182	4.2
Mid Coast - Casuarina	65	2,737	2.4
Murwillumbah and District	777	9,568	8.1
North Coast - Kingscliff	639	8,880	7.2
North East Hinterland - Tumbulgum	103	2,850	3.6
North West Tweed - Tyalgum	139	2,664	5.2
South Coast - Pottsville	462	7,046	6.6
South East Hinterland - Burringbar	138	3,011	4.6
South West Tweed - Uki	99	2,269	4.4
Terranora	103	2,733	3.8
Tweed Heads	720	8,173	8.8
Tweed Heads South - Banora Point	1,989	23,163	8.6
Tweed Heads West	456	5,822	7.8

(source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id (Usual residence data).

Figure 3 People in need of assistance with core activities by geographical area 2011



(source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id (Usual residence data).

3.4 Unpaid care

The proportion of people providing unpaid care for the ageing population and people with disability is an important indicator of the value of unpaid work in Tweed Shire and the potential level of demand for ageing and disability care services provided by government. In Tweed Shire 8,667 people aged 15 years and over (12.2%) provided care to a person living with a disability, long-term illness or old age in 2011. This percentage is slightly lower than the rate for Rural NSW (12.5%) and higher than the rate for the whole of NSW (11.4%).

While Tweed Shire had a lower proportion of persons providing assistance, it is important to note that this varied across the Shire. Proportions ranged from a low of 10.7% in Mid Coast - Casuarina to a high of 13.9% in North West Tweed - Tyalgum. The five areas with the highest percentages were:

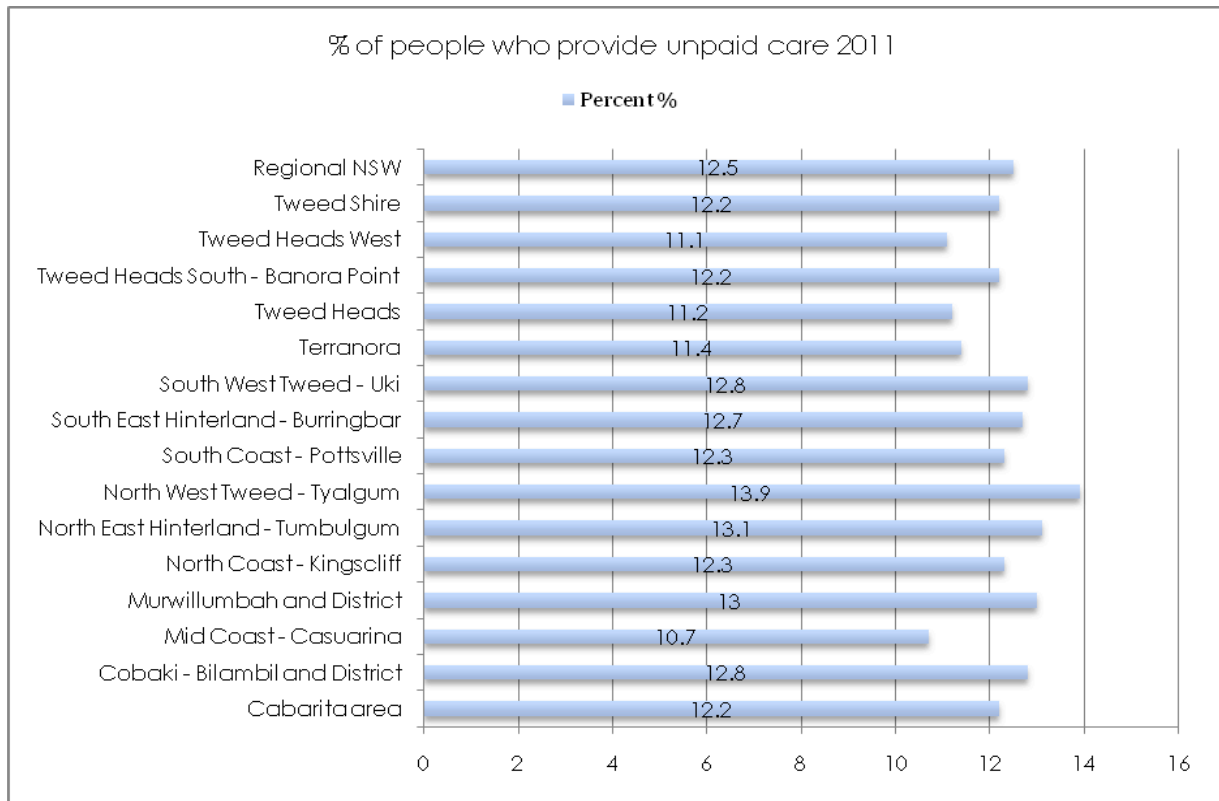
- North West Tweed - Tyalgum (13.9%);
- North East Hinterland - Tumbulgum (13.1%);
- Murwillumbah and District (13.0%);
- South West Tweed - Uki (12.8%); and
- Cobaki - Bilambil and District (12.8%).

Table 5 People aged 15 and over who provide unpaid care, 2011

Geographical Area	Number	Total persons aged 15+	Percent %
Cabarita area	319	2,621	12.2
Cobaki - Bilambil and District	420	3,283	12.8
Mid Coast - Casuarina	221	2,070	10.7
Murwillumbah and District	988	7,615	13.0
North Coast - Kingscliff	917	7,480	12.3
North East Hinterland - Tumbulgum	292	2,222	13.1
North West Tweed - Tyalgum	299	2,147	13.9
South Coast - Pottsville	671	5,448	12.3
South East Hinterland - Burringbar	310	2,434	12.7
South West Tweed - Uki	228	1,776	12.8
Terranora	243	2,130	11.4
Tweed Heads	818	7,305	11.2
Tweed Heads South - Banora Point	2,384	19,518	12.2
Tweed Heads West	557	4,997	11.1
Tweed Shire	8,667	71,046	12.2
Regional NSW	252,675	2,026,485	12.5
New South Wales	636,899	5,564,829	11.4

(source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, [Census of Population and Housing](#) 2006 and 2011. Compiled and presented in profile.id (Usual residence data).

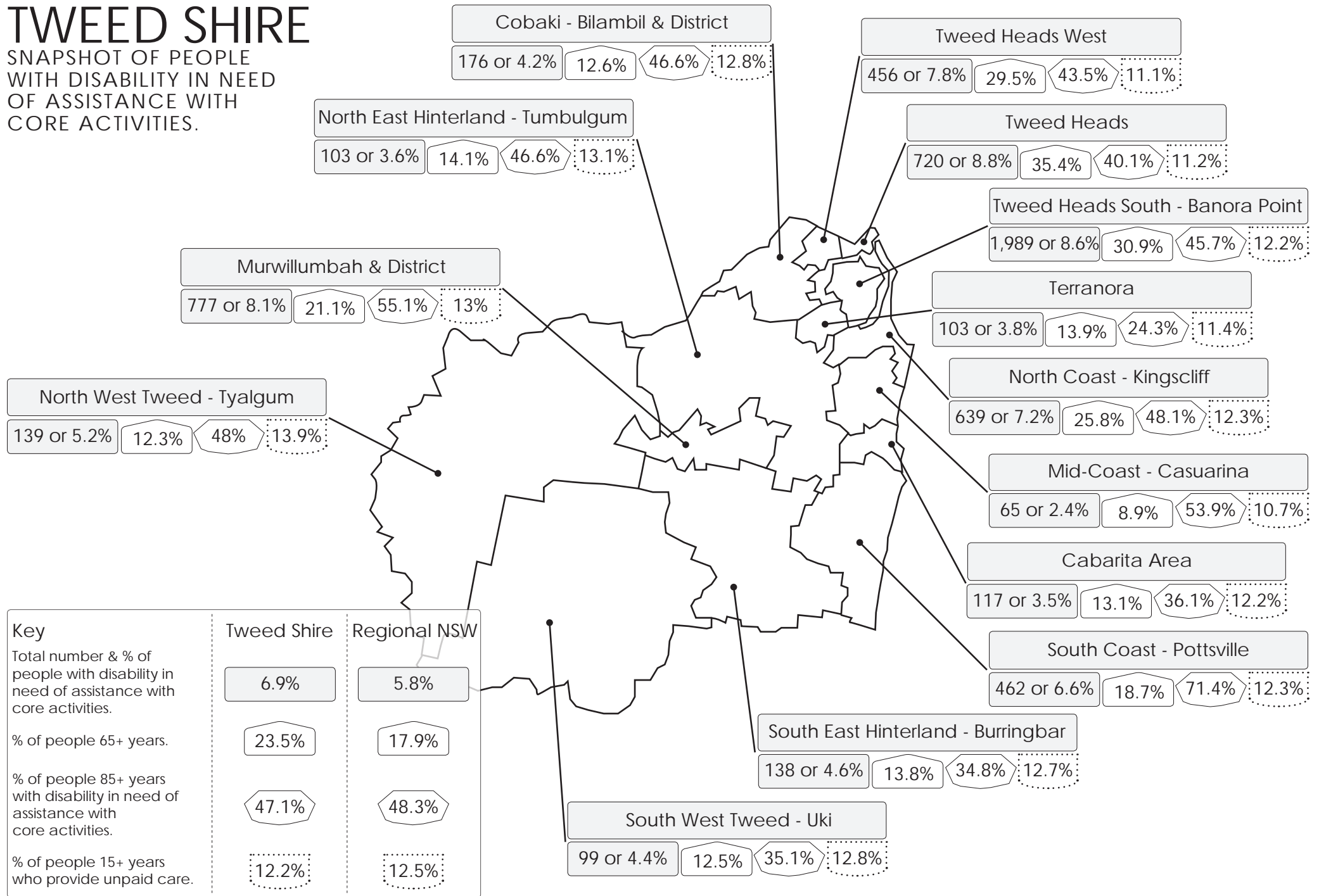
Figure 4 People aged 15 and over who provide unpaid care by geographical area, 2011



The infographic overpage shows the distribution of unpaid carers and people in need of assistance with core daily activities by geographical area. Core activities include self-care, body movements or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition, or old age.

TWEED SHIRE

SNAPSHOT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE WITH CORE ACTIVITIES.



Key	Tweed Shire	Regional NSW
Total number & % of people with disability in need of assistance with core activities.	6.9%	5.8%
% of people 65+ years.	23.5%	17.9%
% of people 85+ years with disability in need of assistance with core activities.	47.1%	48.3%
% of people 15+ years who provide unpaid care.	12.2%	12.5%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing 2011, Compiled and presented in profile.id (usual residence)

4 Issues identified through consultation

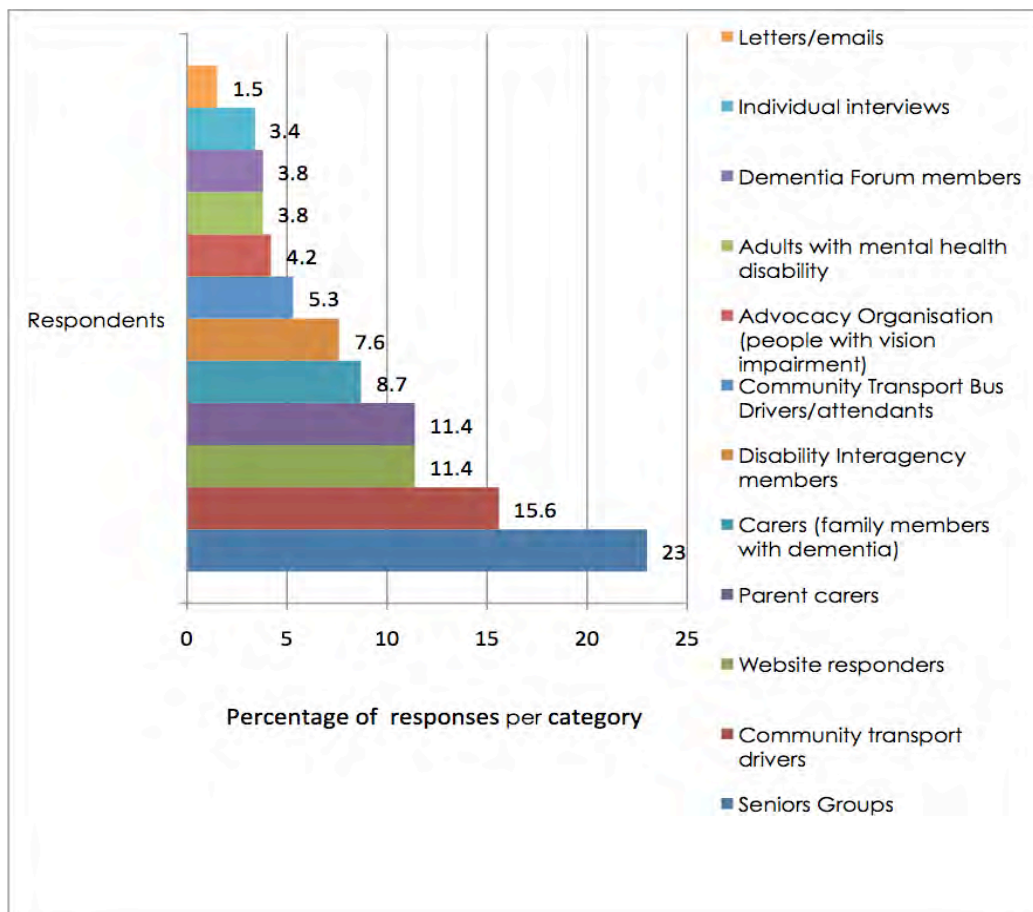
4.1 Background

Between November 2011 and March 2012 over 260 people across Tweed Shire participated in a community consultation around access and inclusion issues and needs. The purpose of the consultation was to provide the community with the opportunity to make access and inclusion issues known to Council. This will assist in the development of a formal policy and Access and Inclusion Plan that responds to community experience.

4.2 Consultation completed

A range of consultation methods were used to ensure opportunities for people to participate. These included face-to-face, website survey and discussion and written submissions. Figure 5 shows the range of methods and groups consulted.

Figure 5 Consultation completed 2012



4.3 Who participated in the consultation?

People from all parts of Tweed Shire contributed to the community consultation. The “yoursaytweed” website tracked respondents from Bogangar, Banora Point, Burringbar, Chillingham, Crystal Creek, Hastings Point, Kingscliff, Murwillumbah, Pottsville, Stokers Siding, Tweed Heads, Tweed South and Uki. A number of forums, discussions and individual interviews were held with people from a range of fields including people with disabilities, carers, seniors and service providers in locations across Tweed Shire.

4.4 Issues identified by type

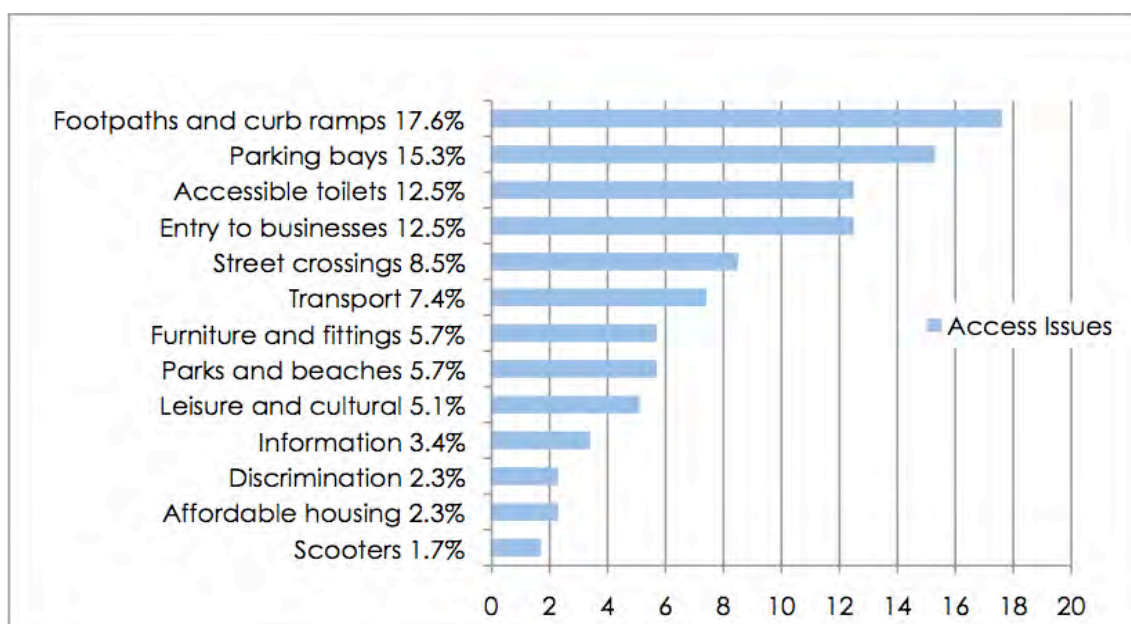
Two-thirds (66%) of all the matters raised by community members were clustered in four areas. These were:

- Access on footpaths, kerb ramps and crossings;
- Accessible car parking spaces;
- Access to businesses (Tweed Shire and other local government areas in the north coast of NSW all have older villages with heritage-listed buildings and stepped entries into businesses); and
- Accessible toilet facilities.

This tells us that people with disabilities in Tweed Shire are experiencing significant barriers in the ability to be involved in community life.

The remainder (24%) involved accessible transport, parks and beaches, furniture and fittings, leisure and cultural activities, and (10%) related to information, affordable housing, employment, discrimination and mobility scooters.

Figure 6 Access Issues Reported by the Tweed Community by Frequency



A continuous path of travel is the basic requirement for people with disability to go about the community and do the things that need to be done in the course of everyday life. The continuous path of travel includes footpaths, curb ramps and crossings, ramped access into businesses, accessible car parking and accessible toilets.

More than 66.4% of the total access matters raised in the consultation involved these elements.

4.4.1 Footpath construction and maintenance

People who participated in the consultation contributed a wide range of suggestions and solutions to improve access in Tweed Shire. In response to the question, what would make a big difference in terms of access and inclusion, suggestions largely mirrored the issues already identified as problems. These include the need to improve the maintenance of existing footpaths and to build additional footpaths in locations where a continuous path of travel is needed to make access possible for people with disabilities.

4.4.2 Footpath trading and accessibility

Businesses need to keep the footpaths clear along the building side and place advertising, merchandise, tables and chairs along the road edge. This makes it possible for people with vision impairment to navigate their way safely by using the building line as a guide. There is an equally strong message for businesses to make their premises accessible with ramped entryways in order for people to enter and keep clear aisles so people can move about with safety.

4.4.3 Seats for resting

A number of people suggested the inclusion of more seats at intervals along footpaths and walking routes in built up areas and park lands so that people could rest along the way. This is particularly important for older people and people who have disabilities relating to mobility. The position of seating can make the difference between independence and dependence for someone with disabilities or who is older.

4.4.4 Accessible car parking spaces

Along with footpaths and access to premises the placement of accessible car parking bays was identified by many respondents as something that would make a big difference in their lives. These need to be strategically and appropriately placed as part of the continuous path of travel and to meet the minimum standard in design. Where possible, accessible parking bays need to be covered to provide protection from the weather for people who may take longer to exit and enter cars.

4.4.5 Access in parks, beaches and water ways

A number of respondents want to see better access to beaches and other water ways especially with the construction of viewing and fishing platforms.

4.4.6 Accessible toilets

The ability to be involved in community life for many people with disabilities depends on the availability of accessible toilets. This is a basic requirement that everyone needs. Consistent and understandable signage can also make toilets more accessible. Signage helps people with intellectual or mental health disability or people who don't speak English access appropriate toilet facilities in a dignified way.

4.5 Issues identified by geographical area

Forty-four percent (44%) of the total access issues in the consultation identified specific locations. While there may be other locations in Tweed Shire where people are experiencing problems with access, this feedback does provide a general idea on the types of access issues that are location-specific. Figure 7 refers.

4.5.1 Murwillumbah

As might be expected in a heritage area, Murwillumbah was mentioned most frequently in relation to lack of access to businesses in particular due to stepped entries. In Murwillumbah, many businesses and banks have steps to gain entry, making it impossible for many to gain access. Some shops have racks of wares so close together it is difficult to get a wheelchair between them. Footpaths, car parking and toilets were also identified as problems in Murwillumbah. Murwillumbah also scored highly in terms of access along footpaths where businesses have footpath trading. People with vision impairment need to navigate along the building line, which needs to be kept clear of goods, signs and cafe furniture. A number of people said they no longer shopped in Murwillumbah because of access difficulties and chose to shop in other parts of the Tweed.

4.5.2 Kingscliff and Pottsville

The coastal towns from Kingscliff south to Pottsville were mentioned a number of times with concerns about access on footpaths and lack of accessible car parking.

4.5.3 Tweed Heads, Banora Point and Tweed Heads South

The big population centres of Tweed Heads, Banora Point and Tweed Heads South were criticised for inadequate and unsafe road crossings, lack of accessible car parking and problems with transport. Tweed Heads South had the highest number of mentions for accessible car parking spaces and accessible and safe road

crossings, while Tweed Heads was noted for lack of accessible car parking spaces and problems with transport.

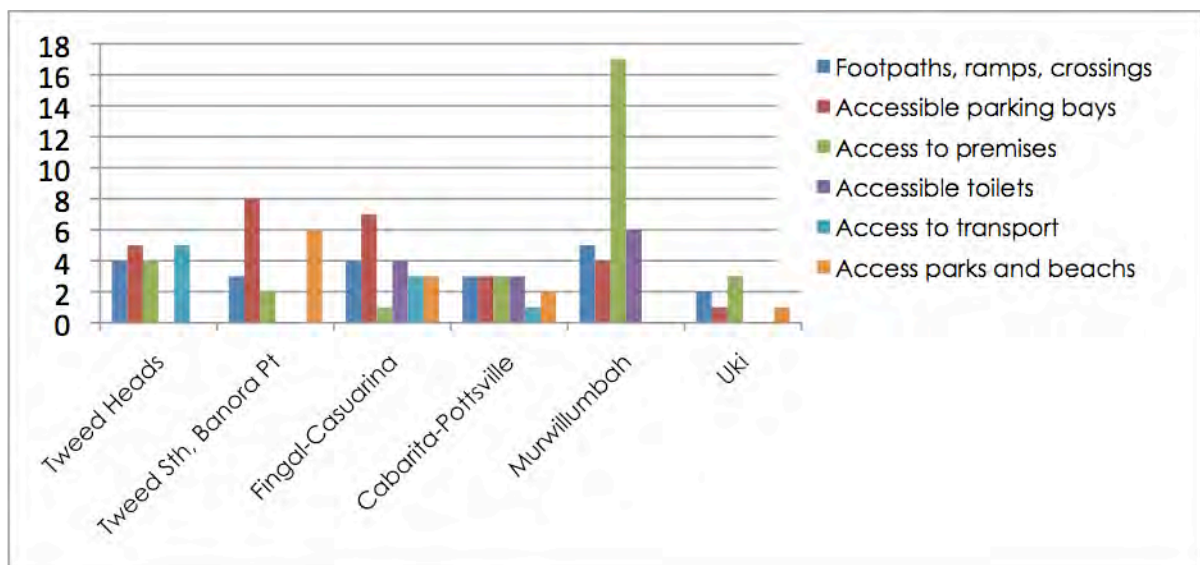
4.5.4 Uki

Uki, like many older villages has many access barriers. Almost every shop in Uki has a step of some kind. The public hall has no wheelchair access either. Footpaths are a nightmare for those in a wheelchair because of cracked cement tiles. In some places there are no footpaths or ramps so manoeuvring around traffic in a wheelchair/scooter is extremely frightening because you are at eye level with a bull bar.

4.5.5 Fingal to Casuarina

The northern coastal strip was mentioned for access in parks and beaches, and access to transport and crossings. In Kingscliff, footpaths and accessible parking spaces were identified as issues that needed to be improved.

Figure 7 Issues Identified in Specific Locations



4.6 Conclusion

This *Issues Paper and Profile of People with Disability* will underpin the development of a Tweed Shire Access and Inclusion Policy and Plan. Tweed Shire has a steadily ageing population profile highlighting the need to plan for access and inclusion as the rate of disability in older people is higher than other age groups in most communities.

The community consultation on access and inclusion highlights that much needs to be done to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in Tweed Shire. The information collected in the consultation provides a strong basis for planning and staged implementation of infrastructure improvements over the next few years.

It is important to remember that access is a universal concept and applies to the whole community. People with disabilities have families and friends that depend on accessibility in order to participate in the community together. When a business is not accessible whole groups of customers are being lost not just individuals with disabilities. Business and local government need to work together to make the community accessible to all residents and visitors.

Highlighting locations where access issues are affecting the daily lives of people with disabilities will help in developing the Access and Inclusion Plan. The Plan will include priority areas and issues and how to work towards solutions that improve physical and social inclusion in community life. The information gathered in the community consultation puts the voices of the community into the planning process and gives weight to decisions on priorities.