

City of Ipswich

Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program 2024–2026



Ipswich.qld.gov.au

📍 Queens Park Environmental Education Centre





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ipswich City council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners as custodians of the land and waters we share. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, as the keepers of the traditions, customs, cultures and stories of proud peoples.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Ipswich City Council has developed the Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program 2024–2026 to better guide us in creating a city of opportunity for all residents.

Inclusion and connectedness can be seen when our community members all have the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires.

This implementation program aims to help reduce and remove barriers experienced by people with disabilities in our community.

It has been developed in consultation with the community and reflects how we can work together to achieve our united goal of all people being able to contribute and feel valued.

It's only through acknowledging barriers to inclusion that we are able to address them and enhance opportunities for people with disabilities, thereby shifting community attitudes to enable full inclusion and accessibility. This includes in the workforce, travelling around our city and social inclusion.

The community is at the heart of everything we do and currently about 6.6 per cent of Ipswich residents are living with disabilities. Improving our city and reducing barriers in our community enhances the lives of people with disabilities, their loved ones and carers and ultimately makes Ipswich a better place for all people to live, work and play.

I am very proud of the work Ipswich City Council is doing to ensure all people in our region are considered, valued and included.

As we embark on this program over the next two years, council strives to create a future where individuals with disabilities can live, work and thrive in an inclusive and connected community.

Mayor Teresa Harding
City of Ipswich



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

Ipswich City Council seeks to become a city of opportunity for all. We seek to do this by embedding our priorities and actions through a business-as-usual approach: that is, that we regard the needs of all residents as triggers for our budgetary, policy, investment and construction activities.

Through extensive consultation, we have come up with a set of principles and actions to achieve a truly liveable environment for people with disabilities, so that they can participate in our community to their full desired extent.

This includes in employment, leisure, education and digitally, and shown through connectedness with others.

We started with a review of our own facilities, infrastructure, events and digital footprint, to identify barriers to that full participation.

This includes reviewing movement across the city, creating a co-ordinated pathway for accessible links between priority areas.

This planning is informed by legislated standards and also by consultation with many people, both in and out of council.

Progress on this program will be monitored by the Community, Cultural, Arts and Sports Committee. The Chair, Councillor Andrew Fechner and the Deputy Chair Councillor Kate Kunzelmann, will continue to measure the progress against the standards and importantly, against the data achieved from the consultations, what it is that people want and will enhance their experiences. You are most welcome to add to the conversation by reaching out to your elected officials, our community services team or contributing at the annual reviews. We are always willing to review, to reflect and to learn.

Cr Andrew Fechner

Chair Community, Cultural, Arts
and Sports Committee

Cr Kate Kunzelmann

Deputy Chair Community, Cultural,
Arts and Sports Committee





INTRODUCTION

This Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program envisions a future where inclusion is woven into the fabric of our city, ensuring that everyone in our community can participate and contribute. By implementing the actions and initiatives outlined in this program, Ipswich City Council (council) strives to create a future where people with disabilities can live, work and thrive in an inclusive and connected community. It is through collaboration, innovation and a commitment to continuous

improvement that we will realise a future state where Ipswich can truly become a city of opportunity for all. Inclusion is achieved when everyone's voice is heard and their worth is acknowledged. It is about providing equal opportunities for all to participate and contribute to their community, utilising their unique talents and perspectives. Connectedness is the sense of belonging that arises from being connected with others in various aspects of life, be it social, emotional, spiritual or professional.

INCLUSION AND THE ROLE OF COUNCIL

The Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program is our roadmap to Ipswich becoming *a city of opportunity for all*. It outlines our commitments to inclusion and connection to overcome barriers that prevent full social and economic participation.

This program is aligned with council's Corporate Plan (iFuture), Community Development Strategy 2021–2026, *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*

and *Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027* and adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*.

While individual local governments are not formally required to have disability service plans, the Australian Local Government Association is a signatory to Australia's Disability Strategy.

OUR APPROACH AND ACTIONS

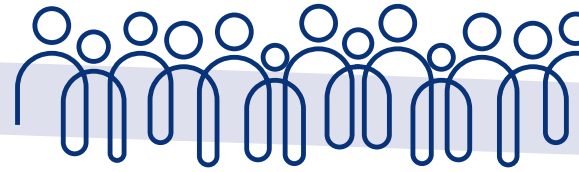
These six areas set the direction for council's Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program for the next two years. Each area (discussed further below) shares our goals and actions. We will measure our success in achieving the outcomes at a programmatic level.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

480

people in total provided feedback, consultation and input



69.5

hours of feedback provided



112

surveys were completed

15

pop-ups occurred



26

council branches and departments were involved



444

community members provided feedback

8

workshops occurred across



17
hours

1.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES



We make sure that people with disabilities can use our services and go to our buildings and places.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 3 – Inclusion and Connectedness

Continue to advocate for improved access and inclusion to support people with disabilities to participate fully in the community.

Strengthen our commitment on inclusion and access to overcome barriers that prevent full social and economic participation.

We strive to make our council services, programs, facilities and infrastructure accessible to everyone, whether in person or online. Our goal is to create a welcoming environment that prioritises inclusivity and accessibility for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. We are committed to accommodating diverse communication needs to ensure that everyone can access our services and programs with ease.

What we are doing:

- ✓ including disability and inclusive play options in new parks and refurbished playgrounds
- ✓ making accessibility technology available through libraries
- ✓ providing Assisted Household Waste Removal Service
- ✓ providing Free Dialysis and Medical Assistance Bin Service.

What we will do:

- team up with people from other departments to support inclusion and connection
- together, we will monitor how well our Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program is doing and report back to council on progress
- provide information in easy-to-read ways
- make it easier to report accessibility issues with council programs and services.

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
<p>Establish an inclusion partnership body with cross council membership to champion and enhance inclusion. The role of the inclusion partnership body is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ function as a cross functional, inter-departmental governance and coordination group which monitors and reports on the implementation and performance of the Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program ▪ actively pursue funding opportunities ▪ oversee and coordinate the operational implementation of the Inclusion and Connectedness Implementation Program. 	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
<p>Establish a Technical Working Group to prepare a scope for a future project to undertake a prioritised review of all council buildings and public spaces to identify existing barriers and prioritise improvements.</p>	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
<p>Collaboratively develop a prioritisation methodology and process which identifies future accessibility improvements to infrastructure in principal activity centres to enhance accessibility in key locations.</p>	Subject to additional resources		Y	Y
<p>Ensure adherence to relevant standards and inclusive design principles for new works or upgrades.</p>	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
<p>Ensure disability and inclusive play options are integrated into new parks and refurbished playgrounds.</p>	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Undertake a gap analysis of council's accessibility and inclusion documents to identify and prioritise the future development of guiding materials and documents.	Subject to additional funding		Y	Y
Enhance the accessibility of council's digital platforms, including websites, apps and online services.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Embed easy English and Hemingway standards for improved accessibility and readability with outward facing documents.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Promote the availability of accessibility technology in libraries through council networks.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Undertake a feasibility study to identify the need and location for the provision of Accessible Adult Change Facilities (AACF).	Subject to additional resources		Y	Y
Develop and implement a business improvement process for ongoing accessibility assessment and improvements.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Develop a plan to remove chicane barriers along shared pathways.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Designate Queens Park and Robelle Domain as priority pilot locations for comprehensive accessibility improvement that can be replicated in other areas of Ipswich.	Achievable within existing resources			Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Review and enhance transport guides, wayfinding and maps with an inclusive lens, ensuring that accessibility information, features and routes are clearly communicated to all community members.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Promote the Assisted Household Waste Removal Service and Free Dialysis and Medical Assistance Bin Service more actively to residents.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y



2.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY, ENGAGEMENT AND CO-DESIGN



We work with people with disabilities to make things better. We ask them what they need and help them be part of groups that make decisions.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 1 – Capacity

Community and charitable groups/organisations, services, businesses and government agencies are working together to achieve goals that are driven by community aspirations.

Pillar 5 – Civic Participation and Leadership

We listen to our key stakeholders. Community needs and aspirations are responded to by collectively engaging with community leaders and key stakeholders.

We prioritise the voices of individuals with disabilities in decision-making processes that affect them. We involve both individuals with disabilities and their families/caregivers in the co-design and evaluation of policies, programs, services and infrastructure. We make every effort to ensure that individuals with disabilities are included in representative groups by providing accessible engagement and feedback opportunities and making deliberate decisions to support their participation.

What we are doing:

- ✓ partnering with local disability organisations to strengthen our community
- ✓ engaging everyone to have a say in their community through the Community Panel and Shape Your Ipswich.

What we will do:

- improve partnerships with local disability organisations to be better at community engagement
- create tools, guides and processes that support inclusive community engagement
- offer accessible community engagement
- train our employees to work with people with disabilities
- partner with people with disabilities to develop more inclusive activities and events.

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Integrate disability advisory and co-design practices into existing community engagement processes and implement measures to ensure representation of people with disabilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Develop and implement an Inclusive Engagement Toolkit to guide staff in engaging effectively with people with disabilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Develop an inclusive communication and digital guide to ensure communications are accessible and understandable to all community members.	Achievable within existing resources		Y	Y
Ensure that accessible accommodations are provided when conducting community consultations.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Provide training to council staff on how to engage effectively with people with disabilities.	Subject to additional resources		Y	Y
Develop a process for staff and/or community members to report and record access issues within Customer Experience System.	Subject to additional resources	Y	Y	
Maintain and improve partnerships with local disability organisations to strengthen community engagement efforts.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of people with disabilities in the community.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Consider intersectionality with engagement, feedback and co-design (e.g. First Nations people with disabilities, people with disabilities from multicultural backgrounds or those who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community).	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y





3.

EMPLOYMENT, WORKFORCE INCLUSION AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION



We have many different people working for us. We give people jobs, help them learn new things and make sure everyone can work here if they want to.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 2 – Wellbeing

Council's procurement practices are sustainable and achieve local social impact.

The barriers to employment in Ipswich are understood and possible solutions and avenues for advocacy are explored.

Pillar 3 – Inclusion and Connectedness

Strengthen our commitment on inclusion and access to overcome barriers that prevent full social and economic participation.

Continue to advocate for improved access and inclusion to support people with disabilities to participate fully in the community.

Increased independence of the elderly and those living with disabilities.

Pillar 5 – Civic Participation and Leadership

Increased understanding of the value of, and participation in, creating change/ volunteering within the community.

Our workforce reflects the diversity of the community we serve. We promote inclusivity and diversity in our workplace and support economic participation through inclusive employment practices, upskilling our staff and accessible economic opportunities. As a significant employer in the community, we recognise our power and use it for the betterment of our community.

What we are doing:

- ✓ flexible work arrangements
- ✓ providing a variety of volunteering opportunities that can be adapted to people's skills and abilities
- ✓ adjusting the workplace to support employees with disabilities.

What we will do:

- advertise council's employment and traineeship programs to people with disabilities
- check our recruitment and employment processes are fair to people with disabilities
- buy from businesses owned by people with disabilities when possible
- provide better training for people with disabilities
- hire more people with disabilities.

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Drive the inclusion component of the People and Culture Strategy.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Provide comprehensive training programs and resources to council managers and supervisors on inclusive hiring practices, disability awareness and creating accessible and inclusive work environments.	Subject to additional resources		Y	
Implement reasonable adjustments in the workplace to support employees with disabilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Ensure all future electronic training developed for staff meets minimum accessibility standards.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Establish a program to provide work experience opportunities for people with disabilities within council.	Subject to additional resources			Y
Advocate for and support the establishment and growth of businesses owned by people with disabilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Embed inclusive procurement practices within existing procurement policies to promote doing business with disability-owned suppliers.	Achievable within existing resources			Y
Advocate for recognition categories for local businesses that demonstrate best practices in inclusive employment.	Achievable within existing resources		Y	
Develop and contextualise on-the-job learning programs for people with disabilities in the workplace.	Achievable within existing resources			Y
Set increasing year-on-year percentage of workforce targets to ensure reflective representation of people with disabilities working for Ipswich City Council in both paid and volunteer roles.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Review recruitment process and flexible work practices with the aim of attracting more people with disabilities to work for council.	Achievable within existing resources	Y		
Review emergency evacuation plans with an accessibility lens.	Achievable within existing resources	Y		



4.

SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL, SPORTING AND WELLBEING INCLUSION



We help people with disabilities have fun and be healthy by organising events and activities. We also work with others to make sure everyone has the same chances to be healthy and happy.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 1 – Capacity Building and Resilience

Community development continues to champion and lead the contemporary community development principles.

Pillar 2 – Wellbeing

Our community is progressive, innovative and community stakeholders are empowered and supported to address the social and economic issues and together we collaborate for positive change.

Increased support and initiatives for health and wellbeing in local communities.

Pillar 3 – Inclusion and Connectedness

Strengthen our commitment on inclusion and access to overcome barriers that prevent full social and economic participation.

Continue to advocate for improved access and inclusion to support people with disabilities to participate fully in the community.

Those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, social isolation are connected and engaged with the wider community.

Connect community and to facilitate and/or support community led initiatives that increase social participation, leadership and strengthen connections.

We support and promote inclusive social, recreational and cultural events and activities that cater to diverse interests. We take a holistic approach to wellbeing, recognising the complex relationship between social, cultural, physical and community health. We strive to foster a more inclusive and vibrant community by improving the wellbeing, health and community connectedness of people with disabilities. We work to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in all activities.

What we are doing:

- ✓ making quiet zones available at large events
- ✓ offering all abilities Active and Healthy classes
- ✓ working with other levels of government to bring important health services to the city
- ✓ making our advertising for council-led events, activities and locations easier to read and understand.

What we will do:

- support and fund arts, sports and cultural opportunities within the city, for people of all abilities
- partner with local businesses and event organisers to increase their awareness of access and inclusion
- provide more information about accessibility in our marketing and advertising
- support organisations that provide important health and care services to people with disabilities
- support and share more accessible tourism opportunities
- improve the accessibility of our events, activities and celebrations.



ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Develop and implement an accessibility checklist for all council-supported events.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	
Integrate accessibility criteria into existing funding programs.	Achievable within existing resources		Y	Y
Review and enhance the current portfolio of social, recreational, cultural and sporting activities to ensure inclusivity.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Create an inclusion guide for local businesses, community organisations and sports clubs to encourage the hosting of accessible events and sporting programs.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Enhance the existing council website to include a dedicated section or webpage that provides inclusion and connectedness information in the Ipswich region.	Achievable within existing resources	Y		
Advocate for and support the development of accessible tourism opportunities in Ipswich.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Support and help promote the development of disability arts events, inclusive arts training, and modified creative activities to encourage participation in accessible arts opportunities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Support and help promote the development of disability sports events, inclusive sports training, and modified sporting activities to encourage participation in physical activities and provide accessible sports opportunities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Increase the availability of sensory or quiet spaces at council-led events, activities and locations across Ipswich.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Increase the availability of accessibility information (using access symbols) in promotional material for council-led events, activities and locations across Ipswich.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Create a mobility map for Ipswich Central.	Subject to additional resources		Y	Y
Continue partnerships with health and social service providers to promote accessible and inclusive services, programs and initiatives.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Continue to promote active and healthy living programs, including physical activities, for people with disabilities to enhance their overall health and wellbeing.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Increase access and reduce digital exclusion by ensuring digital literacy programs are inclusive and accessible.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Attract health and NDIS providers and develop local capacity through education, resilience and mentoring to drive business success and growth.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

5.

ADVOCACY, PARTNERSHIPS AND AWARENESS



We help people with disabilities have a better life by working with groups and organisations that support them. We want to make sure their voices are heard and that they get choice, control and the right to dignity.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 1 – Capacity Building and Resilience

Community development continues to champion and lead the contemporary community development principles.

Pillar 2 – Wellbeing

Council will work alongside community stakeholders to develop long term solutions to social challenges within the City of Ipswich.

Our community is progressive, innovative and community stakeholders are empowered and supported to address the social and economic issues and together we collaborate for positive change.

Increased support and initiatives for health and wellbeing in local communities.

Pillar 3 – Inclusion and Connectedness

Continue to advocate for improved access and inclusion to support people with disabilities to participate fully in the community. Connect community and to facilitate and/or support community led initiatives that increase social participation, leadership and strengthen connections.

We collaborate with people with disabilities, disability advocacy groups, service providers and community organisations to advocate for the rights and needs of people with disabilities, leveraging council's position and influence to encourage positive change and inclusive practices. We understand our ability to amplify the voices of people with disabilities and advocate for policy changes, improved services and enhanced accessibility in the infrastructure and services that underpin our community. We support and encourage initiatives that improve the wellbeing and health of people with disabilities through partnership, advocacy and collaboration.

What we are doing:

- ✓ supporting and engaging in interagency meetings
- ✓ providing immunisation services in key locations across the city
- ✓ working collaboratively with other levels of government to support the rights and needs of people with disabilities and promote disability inclusion.

What we will do:

- advocate at other levels of government to promote disability inclusion
- improve representation of people with disabilities in our publications
- use our resources and influence to improve services for people with disabilities.

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Enhance the capacity of the Ipswich Disability Interagency Network to coordinate efforts, share resources, and collaborate with local disability advocacy groups, service providers and community organisations.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Regularly support community awareness events focused on disability inclusion, accessibility and the rights and needs of people with disabilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Advocate at the state and national levels for policies, legislation and funding that support the rights and needs of people with disabilities and promote disability inclusion.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Include images and representation of people with disabilities in council publications, communications and event promotions to foster inclusivity, representation and positive attitudes towards disability.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Advocate for accessible and inclusive public transport options.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Engage in a review of the planning scheme to identify opportunities for incorporating better provisions and standards for accessible and adaptable housing, ensuring compliance with accessibility requirements.	Achievable within existing resources		Y	Y

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Advocate for community-based health care models that provide accessible, person-centred and comprehensive health services for people with disabilities, including outreach programs and support networks.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Promote our immunisation services to people with disabilities and disability stakeholders.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y



6.

INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP IN DISABILITY INCLUSION



We will work hard to make Ipswich better for people with disabilities and we are getting everyone involved to make this happen.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pillar 3 – Inclusion and Connectedness

Increase resilience of people with disabilities in our community in the event of a disaster.

Pillar 5 – Civic Participation and Leadership

We listen to our key stakeholders. Community needs and aspirations are responded to by collectively engaging with community leaders and key stakeholders.

Increase community ties with council representatives.

We are dedicated to advancing disability inclusion and connectedness by implementing innovative strategies and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

What we are doing:

- ✓ participating in best practice networks
- ✓ improving disaster preparedness and response planning for people with disabilities.

What we will do:

- have more information available about the accessibility of public spaces
- make sure that disability inclusion is in our organisational practices, policies and decision-making
- help community services get more funding and resources.

ACTION ITEM	RESOURCES	2024	2025	2026
Increase the availability of information about the accessibility of public spaces and facilities.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Integrate accessibility considerations into change management methodologies and processes within the council, ensuring that disability inclusion is embedded in organisational practices, policies and decision-making.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Continue to actively participate in best practice networks and collaborate with other local governments.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Promote accessible experiences or destinations in Ipswich that is designed and promoted with the specific needs and preferences of people with disabilities in mind.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in local decision-making processes beyond council.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Continue to enhance disaster preparedness and response planning with a specific focus on disability inclusion in natural disasters.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y
Seek grant/tender writing and other funding opportunities to improve communities' capacity to deliver disability services in Ipswich.	Achievable within existing resources	Y	Y	Y

MONITORING AND REVIEWS

The Community Services Team understands that true inclusion means 'Nothing about us without us'. Therefore we will continue to seek your input to ensure we strive for excellence across our city.

The Inclusion and Connected Implementation Program will be reviewed annually, alongside other related council documents, and updates and amendments will be made available on our website.

An evaluation framework will be developed to be completed in the final year of the program, allowing community consultation, reflection and learnings.

CONCLUSION

By implementing the strategies and actions outlined in this program, we strive to create a future where individuals with disabilities can live, work and thrive in an inclusive and connected community. It is through collaboration, innovation and a commitment to continuous improvement that we will realise this vision.

FEEDBACK

Do you have an idea, feedback or would like to get involved with achieving our goals for Inclusion and Connectedness in the City of Ipswich? Let us know.

Phone (07) 3810 6666 or email community@ipswich.qld.gov.au







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