

News

Disability access to be Bulcock St priority

By KATHY SUNDSTROM

THEY'RE our "second-rate citizens", effectively locked out of some Caloundra shops and in others their access is only via a "back door".

The Sunshine Coast's disabled community, which comprises about 25% of the population, is calling on the Sunshine Coast Council to improve accessibility to key areas.

When it comes to main streets, Caloundra's busy Bulcock Street is "the worst in the region".

Sunshine Coast Access Advisory Network Chair Peter Ryan has urged on the council to make Bulcock Street accessible to all as part of its planned multi-million upgrade.

Mr Ryan, who is legally blind and walks with the assistance of a guide dog, struggled to enter premises in his home town because most shops have a step at their entrance way.

But his lot is better than the group's secretary, Peter



SHUT OUT: Peter Parks is frustrated Bulcock Street has the worst disability access on the Coast.

PHOTO: PATRICK WOODS

Parkes who can only "window-shop" in most of the street.

Mr Parkes has been in a wheelchair since 1992. The Maroochydore resident says "Bulcock Street is an absolute nightmare".

The good news is the council is planning to make improvements.

Caloundra's curator,

Drew Westbrook said it was a "high priority" for improved accessibility in Bulcock Street.

The council would look at getting "rid of the step up into many premises".

A council spokesman said an accredited Disability Access Consultant would be engaged as the plans progress to review the

designs and provide recommendations.

"Residents and visitors can be assured the Bulcock Street Streetscape will be an innovative design - one which provides greater access for all, enables the street to be more fully utilised and which complies with all disability legislation and requirements," he said.