

Shire of Wandering Access and Inclusion Plan 2014-2018



SHIRE OF WANDERING

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This Plan identifies barriers to access and inclusion within the Shire of Wandering and proposes solutions to ensure that people with a disability have equality of access to all municipal services and facilities.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request including electronic, audio, hard copy in standard or large print, by email and on the Shire website.

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Executive Summary

Under the Western Australian *Disability Services Act 1993*, local governments are required to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan which identifies barriers to access and inclusion and proposes solutions to ensure that people with disability have equality of access to services and facilities. This Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) intends to meet the requirements of the *Act*.

In addition, an AIP assists Council to mitigate risk and meet its obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, *Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

Such Plans are required to be reviewed every five years.

This Plan represents the third review since the original Disability Service Plan was implemented in 1995.

Outcomes

The latest AIP has seven key outcomes as follows:

Outcome One

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access the services of, and events organised by, the Shire of Wandering.

Outcome Two

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access buildings, playgrounds, outdoor spaces and other facilities of the Shire of Wandering.

Outcome Three

People with disability receive information from the Shire of Wandering in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily others.

Outcome Four

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the employees and elected members of the Shire of Wandering as others.

Outcome Five

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to make complaints to the Shire of Wandering.

Outcome Six

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to participate in any public consultation conducted by the Shire of Wandering.

Outcome Seven

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Wandering.

Strategies to achieve each of these seven outcomes is included later in the AIP.

Introduction

The Shire of Wandering is a small rural local authority located in the Central South region of Western Australia some 120km south east of Perth and covers an area of some 1,955 square kilometres. Approximately 450 people reside in the Shire including approximately 130 persons in the town site, Wandering.

Major industries are agriculture, including wheat, sheep and some beef cattle, vineyards and tourism.

Functions, Facilities and Services Provided by the Shire

The Shire of Wandering is responsible for a range of functions, facilities and services including:

- **Services to property:** including the construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths and cycle facilities; waste disposal.
- **Services to the community:** including recreation and cultural activities; management of facilities; library and information services including a Community Resource Centre; caravan park; community consultations.
- **Regulatory services:** including planning; building; environmental health services; dog control.
- **General administration:** including the provision of general information to the public; post office; savings bank agency; the lodging of complaints and payment of rates and debts.
- **Processes of government:** including ordinary and special Council and committee meetings; electors meetings and election of Council Members.

Meaning of Disability

The WA Disability Services Act (1993) defines disability as that:

- which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of these;
- which is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and
- which results in substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

Within this document the term “people with disability” includes people with various disability and people who are experiencing increasing challenges due to advanced ageing or loss of physical ability or function. The term also includes people who use wheelchairs, motorised mobility scooters and other assistance equipment.

Also within this document the term “access and inclusion” can relate to people with disability and people who use prams, wheelchairs, motorised mobility scooters and assistance equipment. It can also relate to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Persons with a Disability in the Wandering District

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6% of Australians or more than 1 in 5 people, identify themselves as having some form of disability. Based on the population estimate (450 persons) and these findings, it is estimated that there are around 90 people with disability living within the Shire.

As the Shire of Wandering becomes more attractive as a “bush change” lifestyle destination, yet still within close proximity to Perth, the number of people with disability living within the Shire is likely to increase in the future. As it is now seen that many people with disability live in the community, it is therefore important to ensure that they have the same opportunities and choices as other people to participate in community life.

The Shire of Wandering is responsible for the planning process, with a particular focus on a nurturing community where diversity, difference and a sense of identity is respected and valued. Seeking input from the local community, with personal and/or professional knowledge of disability issues, Disability Services Commission, the Shire of Wandering will continually develop, implement, review and evaluate the AIP.

Alignment with Objectives of the National Disability Insurance Scheme

The following objective of the newly-formed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) highlights the opportunities for a much greater level of community participation in overcoming access and inclusion barriers:

“The National Disability Insurance Agency’s community awareness efforts will focus on working to build awareness, develop capacity and help create improved opportunities for people with disability to access and participate in community activities.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will help services and organisations to become more inclusive of people with disability, and may help with once off small levels funding to enable an organisation to assist people with disability to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and participate in social and economic life.

People with disability have many connections with the community — for example, with other individuals, not-for-profit organisations (such as disability service providers, and community-based clubs), local councils, businesses, community health centres, schools, and public libraries”.¹

¹ Disability Care Australia website at www.disabilitycareaustralia.gov.au/community

The NDIS, when fully implemented in Western Australia, will offer the Shire a much-enhanced opportunity to continue its efforts at successfully implementing the AIP

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Shire of Wandering is committed to ensuring that the community is an accessible and inclusive community for people with disability, their families and carers.

The Shire interprets an accessible and inclusive community as one in which all Council functions, facilities and services (both in house and contracted) are open, available and accessible to people with disability, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community.

The Shire of Wandering

- recognises that people with disability are valued members of the community who make a variety of contributions to local social, economic and cultural life.
- believes that a community that recognises its diversity and supports the participation and inclusion of all its members makes a richer community life.
- believes that people with disability, their families and carers who live in country areas should be supported to remain in the community of their choice.
- is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately.
- is committed to ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the AIP.
- is committed to working in partnership with local community groups and businesses to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability through improved access to facilities and services in the community.

The seven outcomes upon which the AIP has been based will assist the Shire to design, develop and implement fair and equitable disability-related policies. These outcomes were identified on page two of this document and will be expanded upon under the section headed “strategies to improve access and inclusion”.

Development of the Access and Inclusion Plan

Development has occurred in consultation with the Disability Services Commission and the Wandering Community. A review of the previous DAIP has been undertaken to ensure that this latest plan, continues to deliver the proposed outcomes and ensures continuity.

Responsibility for the Planning Process

The Chief Executive Officer has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan. The final plan is endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Community Consultation Process

Since the adoption of the initial Disability Services Plan or AIP the Shire has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress toward better access and inclusion. Of the 29 strategies included in the 2007 AIP, 22 have been completed.

In 2014, the Shire undertook to review its AIP, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new AIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. Notice of the review was placed in the *Wandering Echo* and the Shire website.

The review found that most of the initial objects in the existing AIP had been achieved and that the AIP needed to be updated to ensure currency and relevance.

Some examples of what has been achieved in the previous DAIP –

- Building renovations and extensions to the Shire Office including wheelchair access ramp and automatic doors
- A variety of awareness programs were held, one of which was “One Life Suicide Awareness” night which highlighted the need for the community/businesses/employers and employees to look for signs within their peers to be aware of mental illness.
- Installation of kerbing and footpaths throughout the town site. The paths are fully compliant with Australian Standards and have ramps at intersections for wheel chairs etc...

The new plan should not only address current access barriers but also reflect contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and meeting more than the minimum compliance with access standards. It must also keep abreast of legislative and regulatory changes such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Strategies for each of these barriers have been developed as part of the new AIP.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- All employees are required to report their activities/implementations of the AIP to the Access Coordinator (Community Development Officer) annually.

- Information on outcomes of the AIP is reported in the Shire of Wandering Annual Report.
- Performance is rated in accordance with the percentage of strategies achieved within the time frame identified.

Financial Implications

The bulk of the cost of implementing the AIP will be borne within individual project budgets with administration requirements being met from existing staff resources and operational budgets.

Responsibility for Implementing the Revised AIP

- The Chief Executive Officer and Managers are responsible for implementation of the strategies identified in the AIP and will provide regular progress updates to the AIP Coordinator.
- All employees are responsible for implementation of the AIP wherever there is a requirement or opportunity within their everyday activities.
- Agents and contractors (if used) will be directed to the Shires AIP at the commencement of their contract term, and during the orientation and induction process.

Communication of the AIP

The adopted AIP will be sent to all those who contributed to the planning process.

All employees and elected members will be advised of their obligations under the new AIP.

The AIP will be promoted to the wider community through the use of local media promotion, newsletters, website promotion and promotion through key local service providers. Copies of the plan will be available upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on compact disc, by email and on the Shire's website.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

As part of the consultation process, access and inclusion barriers experienced by people with disability have been identified. These barriers have been placed under the seven outcome areas required as part of the AIP. Strategies including timeframes have been identified.

Reviewing and acknowledging the plan shows the Shire's commitment to providing an inclusive and accessible community.

Outcome One

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access the services of, and events organised by, the Shire of Wandering.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their	May 2014

needs for services and the accessibility of current services.	
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	Ongoing
Improve access to the information in the library/CRC.	June 2015
Develop the links between the DAIP and Shire Strategic Community and Corporate Business Plans	June 2015
Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disability.	Ongoing

Outcome Two

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access buildings, playgrounds, outdoor spaces and other facilities in the Shire of Wandering.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	June 2015
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability, where practicable.	Ongoing
Avoid abrupt vertical level changes, slopes and cambers in building access design, footpaths and paved areas.	Ongoing
Provide handrails along ramps and within ablution facilities	Ongoing
Use surface finishes that are slip-resistant and evenly laid	Ongoing
Ensure signage is of sufficient size, colour, luminance contrast, location, illumination and type for visibility	Ongoing
Encourage private dwelling builders to consider possible future access issues in the design of their homes	Ongoing
Encourage the use of Independent Living Centre-approved assistive technology in building design and fit-out	Ongoing
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	Ongoing

Outcome Three

People with disability receive information from the Shire of Wandering in a format that will enable them to access information as readily as others

Strategy	Timeline
All printed material to be in clear, easy-to-understand English of font size of 12 or greater on non-reflective paper	Ongoing
Information in alternative formats should be provided on request from a person with a disability ie website, email, CD, audio cassette or large-font print	Ongoing
Shire website designed to W3C Priority A level of accessibility*	End of 2013/14
Shire website designed to W3C Priority AA level of accessibility*	End of 2015/16
Shire website designed to W3C Priority AAA level of accessibility*	End of 2017/18

*See appendix one for more detail

Outcome Four

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the employees and elected members of the Shire of Wandering as others

Strategy	Timeline
Undertake staff access awareness survey to determine awareness levels	June 2014
Provide information and training to staff and elected members to improve the awareness of access issues, and further enhance their skills	June 2014
Improve community awareness about disability and access issues.	June 2014

Outcome Five

People with disability receive the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Wandering

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all information pertaining to the grievance procedure is available in alternative formats upon request.	June 2014
When meeting with complainant provide interpreter if required.	Ongoing

Outcome Six

People with disability receive the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation undertaken by the Shire of Wandering

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disability are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.	Ongoing
Ensure that people with disability are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.	Ongoing

Outcome Seven

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to obtain and maintain employment in the public sector

Strategy	Timeline
Promote the Shire as an inclusive workplace of choice and also promote new policies to encourage more employment of people with disability.	Ongoing
Promote the benefits of employing people with disability to all managers.	Ongoing
Review Position Description templates regularly to ensure that they are non-discriminatory and include people with disability.	Ongoing
Employment advertisements are to be available in alternative formats upon request.	Ongoing

Appendix One

Accessible websites assist to ensure people with disability can access and view your information online.

To check for more information on website design, access tools, checklists and guidelines contact www.w3.org/TR/WCAG.

Basic Guidelines:

- Is information written in clear and concise language and is it easy to understand?
- Is information available in alternative formats such as enlarged print, computer disc, audio tape and Braille on request?
- Are alternative communication strategies (such as Better Hearing Counter Kits, telephone typewriters (TTYs) and deaf interpreters) used to assist people with disability?
- Is the physical location of your public information accessible and clearly identified?
- Is information distributed using a variety of methods, such as post, newspapers or radio announcements so that it is accessible to all members of the community?
- What additional resources are available to distribute information, for example, facsimile and E-Mail?