

ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN 2021—2026

SHIRE OF
WANDERING

VERSION – DRAFT



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1 DEFINITIONS

Disability: A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities.

Access: Access refers to an individual's physical ability to get to, into, and around facilities and services.

Inclusion: Inclusion refers to social inclusion, in that all people of diverse abilities and backgrounds have the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in programs and services provided by organisations, in an integrated and holistic manner, and in a welcoming community.

1.1 Alternative Formats

The Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-26 is available on the Shire of Wandering's website at www.wandering.wa.gov.au/my-community/access-and-inclusion-plan.aspx. This document is also available upon request in alternative formats including standard and large print, electronically by email, or audio format. Please contact the Shire of Wandering on (08) 9884 1056 or send an email to reception@wandering.wa.gov.au.

1.2 Language Assistance

If you do not speak or read English but would like information about this document, please ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 and ask them to contact the Shire of Wandering on (08) 9884 1056.

2 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wandering is a diverse community with a wide range of needs, and the Shire is committed to fostering independence for those of all abilities, ensuring everybody can engage in everyday services as well as actively participating in the events that the Shire offers.

The Shire of Wandering believes that a community that recognises and supports the participation and inclusion of all of its members makes for a richer community life and contributes to positive social outcomes. This updated plan will continue to promote accessible outcomes for all community members.

The aim of this Access and Inclusion Plan is to ensure services and facilities can be made more open, inclusive and accessible for everyone, and we have reached out to all the community to make sure everyone has had the opportunity to provide input into the new Plan.

This Plan will guide us on our way forward to delivering access and inclusion for all.

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the development of the revised AIP. We will continue to develop positive outcomes of this plan over the next five years.

Cr Ian Turton

Shire President, Shire of Wandering.

3 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Executive Summary

The Shire of Wandering (The Shire), recognises that many members of the community experience barriers to access and inclusion. This includes people with disability, their families and carers, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees, the elderly, and people who experience other access and inclusion barriers such as temporary illnesses, injuries, or parents with prams.

To ensure all of the Shire's facilities and services are accessible and inclusive for all community members, the Shire has developed an Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP). This Plan fulfils the requirements of the Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004), that all local government authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure all community members have equal access to facilities and services.

The Shire is committed to ensure its diverse community needs are addressed within the Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-26. Additional legislation underpinning the Plan is the WA Equal Opportunity Act and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. This legislation can assist the Shire and local businesses to become more accessible and inclusive.

This Plan represents the fourth review since the original Disability Service Plan was implemented in 1995. This plan has been revised to become more inclusive of community members and will now be known as the Access Inclusion Plan (AIP).

3.2 The Shire's Role

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 agency; bank agency; the and payment of rates and bills.
- **Processes of government:** including ordinary and special Council and committee meetings; electors' meetings and election of Council Members.

As the Shire of Wandering becomes more attractive as a "bush change" lifestyle destination, yet still within close proximity to Perth, the number of community members living within the Shire has been steadily increasing and is likely to keep increasing in the future.

The development and implementation of this Plan aligns with the Shire's Strategic Community Plan 2018-28, particularly:

7. Our permanent and transient population grows

- 7.3 Wandering support Early Years and Youth - Children and Youth actively participate in the community
7.4 We encourage Aging in Place - Our Seniors can age confidently in Wandering

8. People feel safe, connected and actively involved in the community

- 8.1 Facilitate and support activities that optimise use of our facilities
 - Our residents are engaged and actively participate in events and activities
 - Our facilities and services can be accessed by everyone

3.3 Shire Profile

Wandering is located 120km to the south east of Perth off Albany Hwy on the edge of the Darling Escarpment. The Shire of Wandering has an area of 1,955km² of which some 900km² is State Forest. The population of the district, according to the ABS census in 2016, was 444 persons.

The town of Wandering is located at latitude 32°40'35" south, longitude 116°40'07" east at an elevation of 280 metres, and enjoys an average rainfall of approximately 600mm per annum. We are part of the Wheatbelt South Region. Wandering is recorded as being first settled in 1861 when applications were made for the first freehold lots by George and John Watts, whose wandering horses found what is now Grassdale farm. The local authority (Wandering Roads District) was created on 10th October, 1874. The district's name was changed to the Shire of Wandering on 23rd June, 1961.

Major agricultural activities include cereal crops, oil seed, livestock, vineyards and olive groves. Education services provided include a local primary school with daily return bus services to Boddington and Narrogin for district high school education. The Shire also supports light industrial services. The Shire is home to a high level of community amenity and major sporting and recreational facilities include the town oval, tennis / basketball / netball courts, bowling green, clay target shooting ground, and a golf course.

3.4 Development of the Plan

Developing, implementing, reviewing and amending the Plan is a whole of organisation responsibility.

The Plan has been informed by research and community engagement, resulting in a plan designed to support all community members to enjoy safe, healthy and connected lives.

In 2019 the Shire consulted with the Wandering Community to undertake a full and open review of the Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). In 2021 the results were incorporated with another invitation for community input on the Plan, which has been used for the outcomes of this Plan. This included the following:

- Desktop review of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2014 – 2018 including achievements and required improvements.
- Advertising on the Shire Website, Wandering Echo newspaper, Facebook, Front Counter and Notice Board at the Shire Office about the review and an invitation to comment or make a submission via email, telephone or in person at a session held at the Community Resource Centre.

Development has occurred in consultation with the Department of Community Disability Services and the Wandering Community. A review of the previous AIP has been undertaken to ensure that this latest plan continues to deliver the proposed outcomes and ensures continuity. The draft plan was sent to the Department of Communities Disability Service for review before being submitted to Council for approval.

4 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the adoption of the Shire's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2014 – 2018, the Shire has implemented many initiatives and accomplished some progress towards improving access and inclusion for all community members.

Key achievements include:

- Incorporating AIP strategies into the Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan
- Joined the Companion Card Program
- Staff undertook online disability awareness training
- Community Information Board signage improved and area around the board has been paved for easier access
- Pedestrian ramp installed from the Community Centre car park to the forecourt area
- Ramp installed to access the Bowling Green.
- Caravan Park toilet and shower facilities upgraded to allow for more accessibility.
- Registered for Interpreting Services through the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs
- Shire website designed within the overall WCAG 2.1 AA compliancy.

5 KEY FINDINGS

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

The Shire's consultation depicted a satisfactory performance with regard to access and inclusion, which enables the organisation to act further on gap areas and recommendations as per below.

- Wandering Community Centre Upgrade – plans to incorporate at least two accessible parking bays.
- Councillor Elect packs distributed to potential Councillors to be aware of the Shire's AIP and expectations
- Wandering Community Resource Centre access ramp construction in progress
- Planning underway for an all ages pathway from the Wandering Caravan Park to the town centre
- Planning underway to replace the current counter in the administration office to ensure it is accessible for all community members
- Planning underway for all ages access path from the Wandering Community Centre to the Town Oval.
- Application to hold an event form will include asking for information about whether accessible access is required

Key findings have formed outcome strategies and will be actioned operationally by the Shire of Wandering throughout the Plan Implementation

This is where anything else from community consultation session will be added

6 PRIORITIES

6.1 Access and Inclusion Statement

The Shire of Wandering is committed to ensuring that the community is an accessible and inclusive community for all residents, 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, providing all community members the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community.

The Shire of Wandering

- recognises that all residents 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 all community members, 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 all community members, 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 all community members through improved access to facilities and services in the community.

The Shire's AIP complies with and expands on the seven required DAIP outcome areas under the Disability Services Act 1993. This document expands on each outcome, and can be downloaded from

<http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/business-and-government1/business-and-government/disability-access-and-inclusion-plans/implementing-your-daip/>

7 OUTCOMES

The findings from the previous mentioned development initiatives, informed the seven (7) Outcomes the Shire strive to achieve between 2021-2026.

7.1.1 Outcome One: Shire events, communications and services will be accessible to all community members.

- Communications to be delivered in alternative formats upon request;
- Programs to be built around practical access and inclusion;
- Buildings and restroom facilities to be continually reviewed to ensure disability access;
- Parks, amenities, general access and footpaths to be monitored and reviewed to ensure they are accessible to everyone;

7.1.2 Outcome Two: Shire buildings and facilities will be accessible to all community members.

- Leisure facilities to continue to be monitored and reviewed for access and inclusion, and Shire Officers trained to support and provide assistance;
- Kal Shire Centre Project to accommodate a multipurpose changing places facility and parent's room;
- Shire to review the Department of Local Government keyed access program; and
- Improve the accessibility of footpaths in and around the Shire and Community Facilities.

7.1.3 Outcome Three: Shire information will be accessible to all community members.

- Ensure all information provided complies with Local Government Guidelines, and is available to all community members
- Ensure there is information available to assist people with a disability, their families and carers, to plan for program offerings and facility visitation
- Provide alternative format communication upon request.

7.1.4 Outcome Four: All community members to receive the same level and quality of service from the staff at the Shire

- Where suitable, Shire Officers to complete training and professional development on an annual basis, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for people with a disability, their families and carers;
- Ensure facilities are welcoming and inviting, and that staff are in a position to assist with access when called upon to do so; and
- All Shire staff knowledge of the Plan.

7.1.5 Outcome Five: All community members will have the same opportunities to make complaints to the Shire.

- Ensure complaints can be received in various avenues and actioned appropriately, Complaints can be submitted via:
 - Email
 - Phone;
 - Letter/Post.
- Ensure concerns are reviewed with a compassionate manner and flexibility; and
- Complaints with regards to access to be referenced on an annual basis and monitored, reviewed and incorporated into the formalised actions.

7.1.6 Outcome Six: All community members have an opportunity to participate in all public consultation conducted by the Shire.

- Encourage diversity in all Shire represented committees and forums;
- Enforce and report on progress towards the outcomes depicted within the Shire's Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management Plan;
- Ensure all community engagement and consultation is conducted in a safe, inclusive and accessible way; and
- Thereafter the Plan implementation, recommendations and areas of improvement to continually be built into organisational structure and priority areas.

7.1.7 Outcome Seven: All community members are encouraged to pursue employment opportunities within the Shire.

- Continuing to improve organisational culture that recognises access and inclusion issues, and encouraging diversity within the workforce;
- Focus on opportunities for improving access and inclusion during the annual business planning and budgeting cycles;
- Ensure recruitment practices are inclusive and encourage people with disability to apply for employment with the Shire; and
- Actively gauge external support and advocate for the Shire's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Plan.

8 REVIEW

8.1 Reviewing the Plan

Achieving the Outcomes set out within this Plan involves key internal and external stakeholders. The Outcomes will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

The Shire values feedback and encourages the local community to provide feedback and suggestions on the Plan, and ways in which the Shire can improve access and inclusion for all members of the community. Shire Officers can be contacted on (08) 98984 1056 or reception@wandering.wa.gov.au.

8.2 Reporting on the Plan

Under the Disability Services Act 1993, public authorities must include information surrounding the implementation and progress of an Access and Inclusion Plan, in their annual report. The Shire will also provide an annual progress report to the Department of Communities.