

Access & Inclusion Plan

2021—2026

SHIRE OF
WANDERING



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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. 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



I am pleased to present the Shire of Wandering's Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2026.

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 now 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).

Belinda Knight,

Chief Executive Officer

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; animal 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 23 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 including the town oval, tennis / basketball / netball courts, bowling green, clay target shooting ground and a golf course.

3.4 Development of the Plan – Community Consultation

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 community consultation session held at the Community Resource Centre.
- In person feedback session in collaboration with the Community Resource Centre.

Development has occurred in consultation with the Department of Communities 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 is to be sent to the Department of Communities 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
- Joining 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 internal review and also 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.

- Incorporate at least two accessible parking bays, an access ramp, as well as a universal toilet stall to the Wandering Community Centre
- Sensor lighting to the car park and lawn area of the Wandering Community Centre to assist packing up after evening events have finished
- Councillor Elect packs distributed to potential Councillors to be aware of the Shire's AIP and expectations
- Replace / alter the current counter in the administration office to ensure it is accessible for all community members
- Application to hold an event form to include asking for information about whether accessible access is required
- New Caravan Park units to feature universal access
- Footpath for gopher / walking / bicycle / prams (all access pathway)
 - from the Primary School to the CWA Rooms
 - from the Wandering Caravan Park to the town centre
 - All access pathway from the Wandering Community Centre to the Oval
- All Shire information to be available in printed format, not just on Facebook and the Shire website
- Responses from Council that address correspondence, or that is given at public community meetings, to contain more simplified information and be more explanatory
- More signs around the town pointing out amenities so they are easier to locate

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

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 and visitors.

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.

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 and other 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 eight (8) outcomes the Shire strives to achieve between 2021-2026.

7.1 Outcome One: Events and Services

Shire of Wandering will provide events and services that are accessible to all community members.

What	How
Adapt services to meet the needs of a changing demographic.	Staff will react positively to changes as they arise, and where possible implement changes as a matter of priority
Events held will include requirement for universal access to all facets of the event	Event booking forms will include reference to universal access to ensure all events are accessible to everyone.
Shire staff will ensure they are able to provide support and assistance when required.	Implementation of a training program for all staff to ensure they are equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills.
Provide appropriate directional signage to town facilities	Increase signage in the main street to indicate where facilities are.

7.2 Outcome Two: Buildings and Facilities

The Shire of Wandering buildings and other facilities will be accessible to all community members.

What	How
Improve accessibility to community buildings, halls and toilets	Plans are currently being drawn up to incorporate at least two accessible parking bays and access ramp to the Wandering Community Centre, as well as universal toilet facilities.
Provide and maintain safe and accessible parking and footpaths	Planning underway for a universal access pathway connecting the Wandering Caravan Park, Wandering Community Centre and oval, to the town centre
Upgrade Wandering Caravan Park to provide a range of accommodation options that are accessible to all users.	Two universal access accommodation units will be constructed at the Caravan Park in Stage 1, with a view to increasing the number to five in the future.
Provide accessible and inclusive open spaces	Parks and open spaces to be monitored and reviewed to ensure there are no barriers to access.

7.3 Outcome Three: Accessible Information

Shire of Wandering information will be accessible to all community members.

What	How
Create Shire of Wandering documents in a range of suitable formats, including hard copy and digital.	Ensure documents are presented in an appropriate range of formats to meet the needs of the individual.
Provide information in alternative formats on individual request	Shire staff are training in the use of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).
Effectively communicate to our community.	Ensure communication is provided in a form that contains simplified information with sufficient explanation.

7.4 Outcome Four: Quality of Service

All community members will receive the same level and quality of service from Shire of Wandering employees and elected members.

What	How
Ensure facilities are welcoming and inviting, and staff are in a position to assist with access when called upon to do so.	Planning is underway to replace or modify the current counter in the administration office to ensure it is accessible for all community members
Provide high quality service to our diverse community	Shire employees to complete training and professional development, as applicable, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for all community members.
Promote the Access & Inclusion Plan to the community, staff and elected members	All Shire staff and elected members to have knowledge of the Access and Inclusion Plan; and Election packs distributed to potential elected members to be aware of the Shire's AIP and expectations

7.5 Outcome Five: Opportunities to Provide Feedback

All community members will have the same opportunities to provide feedback or make complaints to the Shire of Wandering.

What	How
Ensure a range of methods are available to capture complaints and feedback	Ensure complaints can be received in various avenues and actioned appropriately, Complaints can be submitted via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email • Phone • Letter/Post • In Person • Through the Shire website feedback form
Communicate and respond in an appropriate manner to complaints received.	Ensure concerns are reviewed with a compassionate manner and in confidence.
Ensure feedback regarding access is considered and reflected in the Access & Inclusion Plan	Complaints with regards to access to be referenced on an annual basis and monitored, reviewed and incorporated into the formalised actions of the next AIP.

7.6 Outcome Six: Public Consultation

All community members have the same opportunities to participate in public consultation conducted by the Shire of Wandering.

What	How
Engage with the community in a proactive manner utilising a range of consultation tools and methods.	Ensure public consultations are well advertised in both print and online.
Maintain community networks that can provide advice and guidance on access matters.	Ensure all community engagement and consultation is conducted in a safe, inclusive and accessible way.
Encourage diversity in all Shire represented committees and forums.	Ensure recommendations and areas of improvement to continually be built into organisational structure and priority areas.

7.7 Outcome Seven: Employment Opportunities

All community members are encouraged to pursue employment opportunities within the Shire of Wandering.

What	How
Recognise and apply the skills, knowledge, and experience of people with disability.	Ensure recruitment practices are inclusive and encourage everyone to apply for employment with the Shire.
Foster a workplace culture that is inclusive and welcoming for people of all abilities and backgrounds	Continuing to improve organisational culture that recognises access and inclusion issues, and encouraging diversity within the workforce.
Implement the actions outlined in the Shire of Wandering Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity Plan.	Actively support and advocate for the Shire's Equal Employment Opportunity & Diversity Plan.

7.8 Outcome Eight: Capacity Building

The Shire of Wandering will build community capacity and advocate for inclusion.

What	How
Support residents to access information and services including the National Disability Insurance Scheme and mental health support networks.	Collaborate with the Shire of Wandering Community Resource Centre to provide NDIS information sessions.
Provide education to encourage inclusive recruitment in the local business community.	Collaborate with the Shire of Wandering Community Resource Centre to provide appropriate training sessions for the local business community.
Increase the capacity of local groups, clubs and organisations to be more inclusive.	Collaborate with the Shire of Wandering Community Resource Centre to assist local groups, clubs and organisations become more inclusive.

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) 9884 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.