

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

For The Shire of Beverley



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



making a difference

Shire of Beverley

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2007-2010

This plan is available in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille, on request.

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In particular, thanks are given to the individual community members as well as the Shire staff.

Background

The Shire of Beverley

The Shire of Beverley is located to the east of Perth and covers an area of approximately 2,310 square kilometres.

The Beverley Townsite is located in a shallow basin with the Avon River running north-south and an intersected valley east-west and is the rural service centre to the farming community which produces wheat and course grains as well as livestock. Resident population of Beverley is 1591

Tourist Attractions: Aeronautical Museum, Art Gallery, Historical Sites, Yenyenning Lakes – water skiing & boating, County Peak, Avondale Discovery Farm, Gliding,

Beverley was one of the first areas in Western Australia opened for agriculture after a glowing report to Governor Stirling by Ensign Dale. Beverley was first settled in 1838 and was named after a town in Yorkshire, Northern England. The Beverley townsite was established around 1868.

Functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) provided by the Shire of Beverley

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

Services to property: construction and maintenance of Shire-owned buildings roads and footpaths; land drainage and development; waste collection and disposal; litter control and street cleaning; planting and caring for street trees; numbering of buildings and lots; street lighting; and bush fire control.

Services to the community: provision and maintenance of playing areas, parks, gardens, reserves and facilities for sporting and community groups; management of recreation centre and pool; public library and information services; youth services and community events.

Regulatory services: planning of road systems, sub-divisions and town planning schemes; building approvals for construction, additions or alterations to buildings; Environmental Health services and ranger services for dog control.

General administration: the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates and dog licences.

Processes of government: ordinary and special Council and committee meetings; electors' meetings and election of Council Members and community consultations.

People with disabilities in the Shire of Beverley

It is estimated that there are around 379 people with disabilities living within the Shire, 24% of the permanent population of 1591 (the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2006) estimate that 20.6% of Australians identify themselves as having some form of disability). The influx of retirees will increase this number as according to the ABS survey, 50% of people aged over 60 identified themselves as having a disability. The seasonal influx of tourists, including tourists with a disability, must also be considered.

Planning for better access

The Western Australia Disability Services Act requires all Local Governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the Western Australia Equal Opportunity Act (1984) and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), both of which make discrimination on the basis of a person's disability unlawful.

Progress since 1996

The Shire of Beverley is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information facilities and services. Towards this goal the Shire adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1996 to address the access barriers within the community.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Shire has implemented initiatives and made progress towards better access. Some of these are highlighted in Appendix 1 under the relevant key outcome headings of the 1996 DSP.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The Shire of Beverley 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 disabilities, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as other people in the community.

The Shire of Beverley:

- recognises that people with disabilities 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 of its members makes for a richer community life;
- believes that people with disabilities, their families and carers should be supported to remain in the community;
- is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and disability organisations in addressing barriers to access and inclusion;
- will ensure its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the DAIP;
- is committed to supporting local community groups and businesses to provide access and inclusion of people with disabilities; and
- is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The six desired outcomes of the DAIP:

These are:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disabilities receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Environmental Health Officer/Building Surveyor 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

In 2007, the Shire undertook to review its Disability Service Plan (DSP):

- Consultation with some key stakeholders
- Drafting of a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.
- Examination of the initial DSP and subsequent progress reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work.
- Consultation with key staff
- Consultation with the community.

The Disability Services Act Regulations (2004) set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). Local Governments must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a newspaper circulating in the Local Government area or on any website maintained by or on behalf of the Local Government. Other mechanisms may also be used.

The following consultation methods were used:

- In November 2007 the community was informed through the local newspaper and Shire's website that the Shire was developing a DAIP to address barriers to access for people with disabilities and their families. They were invited to provide input either in writing, by telephone or in person. No letters, phone calls or front desk inquiries were received.
- Shire of Beverley Staff Awareness Survey Forms issued to Customer Service Officers to identify training requirements.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that most of the initial objectives in the first DSP had been achieved and that a new plan was required to address access barriers. It should also reflect legislative and regulatory changes such as striving for inclusion and access beyond the minimum compliance of the standards.

The consultation also identified a variety of remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the DAIP Action Plan.

Access Barriers

The access barriers identified in the consultation process were:

- Footpaths required in areas around the town, some footpaths require upgrading or repair.
- Shire office not readily accessible.
- Some events not readily accessible.

These barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been prioritised in order of importance, which assists in setting timeframes for the completion of strategies to overcome those access barriers.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Shire. The Disability Services Act (1993) requires all public authorities to take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

- In XXXX 2007 the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by Council.
- The community was informed through the local newspaper and Shire website that copies of the plan were available upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the Shire's website.
- As plans are amended Shire staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the above methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act requires that DAIPs be reviewed at least every five years. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan must be lodged with the Disability Services Commission. The Implementation Plan can be updated more frequently if desired.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The employee with responsibility for the DAIP will analyse progress in implementing the DAIP and provide a report to management and Council on progress and recommended changes to the implementation plan annually.

- The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed and submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2011. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2007-2010.

Evaluation

- An evaluation will occur as part of the five-yearly review of the DAIP.
- The community, staff and Elected Members will be consulted as per the endorsed consultation strategies, as part of any evaluation.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Disability Services Act requires the Shire to report on the implementation of its DAIP in its annual report outlining:

- progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and
- the strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP.

The Shire is also required to report on progress in the prescribed format to the Disability Services Commission by July 31 each year.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The following overarching strategies have been developed to address each of the six desired outcome areas of the Disability Services Act from feedback gained in the consultation process. These will form the basis of the Implementation Plan.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|---------------|
| Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services. | October 2008 |
| Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion. | Ongoing |
| Develop the links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies. | June 2008 |
| Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities. | November 2008 |

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|---------------|
| Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need. | July 2010 |
| Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable. | July 2008 |
| Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues. | December 2008 |
| Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible. | June 2008 |
| Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location. | July 2008 |

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|---------------|
| Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request. | June 2008 |
| Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats. | March 2008 |
| Accommodate the provision of interpreters to significant events on request. | June 2008 |
| Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice. | December 2008 |

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the employees of a public authority as other people receive from the employees of that public authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------|
| Ensure that all employees, existing and new, and Elected Members are aware of disability and access issues and have the skills to provide appropriate services. | June 2008 |

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|--------------|
| Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon. | October 2008 |

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|------------|
| Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes. | June 2008 |
| Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes. | March 2008 |

Appendix 1

Progress since 1996 under the Disability Service Plan

- 1. Existing functions, facilities and services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.**
 - Talking books were relocated to one specific, clearly signed location in the library.
 - Large print books were relocated to one specific, clearly signed location in the library.
 - Aisles in the library were widened
 - Large print copy of the local paper located in the library

- 2. Access to buildings and facilities has been improved.**
 - Electronic Doors installed to entrance of Shire office.
 - Unisex accessible public toilets were built in town centre.
 - Footpaths in the main street have been built or upgraded.
 - Kerb ramps have been installed at the Town Hall, Doctors' Surgery and the Shire Administration Building.

- 3. Information about functions, facilities and services is provided in formats which meet the communication needs of people with disabilities.**
 - An Accessible Information policy was developed.
 - Information was made available in alternative formats on request.

4. Employee awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and skills in delivering services is improved.

- Key Shire employees made aware of contact for disability information from the Disability liaison officer in Merredin when required.

6. Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

- Information on consultations was simplified and made available in alternative formats upon request.
- Municipal election voting was held in accessible buildings and some voting booths were modified to suit people using wheelchairs.

Shire of Beverley

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Implementation Plan 2007 – 2008

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each broad strategy to be implemented in 2007-2008 to progress the strategies of the DAIP.

It is intended that the Implementation Plan will be updated annually to progress the achievement of all the strategies over the duration of the five year plan.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised, by the Shire of Beverley.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|---------------|----------------|
| Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss access and inclusion where appropriate at all meetings with the public. | October 2008 | EHO/BS |
| Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct systematic reviews of the accessibility of services. • Inform Council of identified barriers and provide feedback to concerned consumers. | Ongoing | EHO/BS |
| Develop links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the objectives and strategies of the DAIP into the Shire's existing planning processes, particularly the Strategic Plan. | June 2008 | CEO |
| Ensure that events, whether provided or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist. | November 2008 | EHO/BS |

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Beverley.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|---------------|---------------------------|
| Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities. • Prioritise and make a submission to Council to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. | July 2010 | EHO/BS & Works Supervisor |
| Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities. • Ensure that no development application is signed off without a declaration that it meets the legal requirements. | July 2008 | EHO/BS & Works Supervisor |

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|
| Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for, and benefits flowing from, the provision of accessible venues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (available on the DSC website), on the needs of people with disabilities and of legal requirements and best practice. • Promote access to business. • Make access information available on the Shire's website. | December 2008 | CEO |
| Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct audit of Shire pool, Community Hall and playground. • Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrade. | June 2008 | EHO/BS |
| Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the need for ACROD bays at the Shire office. | July 2008 | EHO/BS |

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Beverley in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|---|---------------|----------------|
| Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the availability of other formats in the local newspaper. | July 2008 | CEO |
| Improve employee awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate employees in providing accessible information. | March 2008 | CEO |
| Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate website to ensure it complies with the W3C web content guidelines. | March 2008 | CEO |

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the employees of the Shire of Beverley as other people receive.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|---|--|---------------|----------------|
| Ensure that Elected Members and employees are aware of access needs and can provide appropriate services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff and Councillors are aware of services and access needs of people with disabilities. | June 2008 | CEO |

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Beverley.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|--|---------------|----------------|
| Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any recommendations. | October 2008 | CEO |

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Beverley.

| Strategy | Task | Task Timeline | Responsibility |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|
| Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult people with disabilities by interviews and surveys. | June 2008 | CEO |
| Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are published on the Shire's website. | March 2008 | CEO |