

SHIRE OF MINGENEW



DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2013 -2018

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan for the Shire of Mingenew

1.0 Background

1.1 The Shire of Mingenew

The Shire of Mingenew is located 383 kilometers north of Perth on the scenic Midlands Highway and 110 kilometers south east of Geraldton. Mingenew Shire Council is a rural Local Government with a population of approximately 620. The primary industries in the region are cropping and livestock production. The Shire of Mingenew is bounded by the Shires of Three Springs, Morawa, Mullewa and Irwin.

The Shire's economy is reliant on a range of agricultural pursuits including grain production and wool growing. Mingenew boasts the largest inland grain receival point in the southern hemisphere. Wildflowers which abound in the region during spring attract a large number of tourists. Basic camping is provided at the Coalseam National Park where tourists might enjoy the flowers and look for fossils in the Coalseam.

1.2 Functions, facilities and services provided by the Shire of Mingenew

The Shire of Mingenew provides;

Services to properties including-

- Construction and maintenance of shire owned roads, buildings, footpaths, walk trails, rubbish collection and disposal, caring of trees, street lighting, and bushfire control.

Services to community include-

- Provision and maintenance of recreation grounds, playing areas, and reserves, management of community centre, library and information services.

Regulatory services include-

- Planning, building and ranger services. Planning of roads and subdivisions in accordance with the town planning scheme, building approvals for construction, additions and alterations. Ranger services, including enforcement of local laws, dog, litter and pools/spas inspections.

General Administration including-

- The provision of general information to the public, rates notices, vehicle licensing and inspection services.

Process of Government including-

- Ordinary and special council meetings, committee meetings, electors meetings and election of councilors.

1.3 People with disabilities in the Shire of Mingenew

There is a small estimate of people with disabilities living within the Shire. The ABS figures were inconclusive of the number of people with disabilities in the Shire; however the officers, council and community are aware there are people with disabilities, who live in the community,

1.4 Planning for better access

The Western Australian Disability Services Act (1993) 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 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 persons disability illegal.

Since the adoption of the Disability Services Plan, the Shire has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access within the Shire of Mingenew, these are as follows;

Improvement of existing functions, facilities and services to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Talking books positioned in a clearly designated and easily accessible section of the library.
- Building surveyors and planners have assisted in increasing disability access awareness of developers, and the introduction of disabled access to all newly constructed or altered public buildings, including playground and recreational areas.

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

- Council services, functions and facilities are available on request in large print, and computer disc alternative formats.
- Council ensured that voting for municipal elections takes place in accessible buildings and that alternative voting arrangement is available where required.

2.0 Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Shire of Mingenew is committed to ensuring that the community is an accessible community for people with disabilities, their families and carers, via the following;

- The Shire of Mingenew believes that people with disabilities, their families and carers who live in country areas should be supported to remain in the community of their choice.
- The Shire of Mingenew is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and, where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access are addressed appropriately.

- The Shire of Mingenew is committed to ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

The Shire is also committed to achieving the six standards of its disability access and inclusion plan which are:

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

3.0 Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion

The Shire of Mingenew is committed to achieving the following outcomes.

Timeliness of these outcomes is addressed in the implementation table in section five (5) of this DAIP document.

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.

Strategies
Ensure people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.
Make library technology as accessible as possible.
Council will ensure that any events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.
Council will ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of Council facilities, functions, and services are consistent with Council Policy regarding access.

Outcome 2

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

Strategies
Ensure all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.
Ensure adequate ACROD parking to meet the demand of people with disabilities in terms of quantity, quality, and location.
Ensure that parks and reserves are accessible.
Ensure that public toilets meet the associated accessibility standards.

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.

Strategies
Improve community awareness that Council information can be made available in alternative formats upon request, such as large print.
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.
Ensure that the Shires website meets contemporary and universal design practices.

Outcome 4

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

Strategies
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide good service to people with disabilities.
Improve the awareness of new staff and new Councillors about disability and access issues.
When required, Council will seek expert advice from the disability field on how to meet the access needs of people with disabilities.

Outcome 5

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

Strategies
Council will ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.

Outcome 6

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

Strategies
Improve community awareness about the consultation process in place.
Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative process of Council.
Seek broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.

4.0 Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

4.1 Responsibility for the planning process

The Shire's Community Development Officer was given responsibility to oversee the review and evaluation of the plan and efforts have been made to include the participation of a person with a disability.

4.2 Community consultation

In 2013, the Shire of Mingenew undertook to review its Disability Services Plan (2009), and consult with key stakeholders to draft a revised Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to guide further improvements for access and inclusion.

The process included:

- Examination of the initial Disability Services Plan and review to see what has been achieved and what still needs work
- Examination of other council documents and strategies
- Investigation of current good practice in access and inclusion
- Consultation with key staff; and
- Consultation with the community and in particular people with disabilities.

The community was advised that Council was reviewing its disability access and inclusion plan to address the existing barriers that people with disabilities and their families experience in accessing council functions, facilities and services, and invited to contact Council officers in June 2013 to discuss and submit comments on the DAIP (2009).

4.3 Findings of the consultation

A number of respondents noted that they were pleased with the work that Council had undertaken in 2012/13 on the Midlands Road CBD area to improve access into a number of commercial operations. Respondents also requested that Council should continue the access program to the remaining shops along Midlands Road.

Respondents also encouraged Council to continue with its Town footpath and ramp upgrade program.

The review also identified that improving access to the historic Old Railway Station building was a priority.

The identification of these issues will help determine the development of strategies in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. The issues will be prioritised in order of importance, to assist in setting timeframes for the completion of appropriate strategies.

4.4 Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Shire of Mingenew. 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.

4.5 Communication of the plan to staff and people with disabilities

The community will be advised through the local media (newspaper and radio) that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required.

As plans are amended Shire employees and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the above methods.

4.6 Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Service Act requires that DAIP's be reviewed at least every five years. The DAIP Implementation Plan can be amended more frequently to reflect advancements of access and inclusion issues. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan must be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Monitoring and reviewing

The DAIP will be reviewed annually for progress and implementation with all progress and recommended changes reported to council.

Evaluation

An evaluation will occur as part of a five yearly review of the DAIP. Community, staff and elected members will be consulted as part of the evaluation and implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received. Copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by council, will be available to the community in alternative formats.

4.7 Reporting of 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.
- The strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP.

5.0 Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each strategy to be implemented in 2013-2018 to progress the strategies of the DAIP.

It is intended that the Implementation Plan will be updated annually through Council's operations, to progress the achievements of all the strategies over the duration of the five year plan.

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

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	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shire's Disability Services Coordinator will liaise with contractors, who are developing and implementing the Shire evaluation activities, to increase their awareness of the importance of getting comments on services by people with disabilities. Develop feedback mechanism for use of all disability services provider to by the Shire. 	Ongoing Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Make library technology as accessible as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make library technology as accessible as possible 	Ongoing	Library Officer
Council will ensure that any events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the needs of people with disabilities are planned for and provided by using the checklist provided through the access resource kit as provided by DSC. 	Ongoing	CEO and CDO
Council will ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of Council facilities, functions, and services are consistent with Council Policy regarding access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all buildings, facilities and services are accessible to people with disabilities through ongoing review and evaluation using devised checklists and annual audits. Through these audits a report will be generated that clearly identifies improvements to ensure the inclusion and accessibility for everyone. Again using the guide and checklist provided through the access resource kit developed by the DSC. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO

Outcome 2

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Demonstrate a willingness to ensure all buildings and facilities are accessible where practicable, to meet the access standards and any additional need in consideration of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and collate information on facilities. • Generate an improvement report. • Complete improvements from report where possible 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facilities allow for access for people with physical, cognitive, sensory and psychiatric disabilities through the application of specific building and planning codes. This includes ramped elevations, rails, and appropriate signage, line marking and raised footholds at intersections where practicable. 	Annually/ Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure adequate Accessible Parking meets the demand of people with disabilities in terms of quantity, quality, and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review appropriateness of ACROD bays (number and location) and implement a program to rectify non-compliance. (Checklist, from ART) 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure that parks, reserves and facilities are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parks and reserves allow for access for people with physical, cognitive, sensory and psychiatric disabilities. This includes ramped elevations, rails, and appropriate signage, line marking and raised footholds at intersections where practicable. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure that public toilets meet the associated accessibility standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Unisex disabled toilet/s for wheelchair persons visiting the Shires facilities are considered and planned for. The Shire currently has disabled toilet facilities at the Recreation Ground and Town Centre Public Toilets. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO

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.

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve community awareness that Council information can be made available in alternative formats upon request, such as large print, and audio.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all documents carry a notation regarding availability in alternative formats • Advise the community via local newspaper, radio, newsletters that other formats are available via electronic and audible formats. 	Ongoing Annually	CEO and EHO
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make accessible information guidelines available on the internet • Develop an accessible information policy • Conduct accessible information training and include as part of the induction of new staff. 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure that the Shires website meets contemporary and universal design practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-develop website to conform with updated W3C guidelines as outlined by the state government access guidelines 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO

Outcome 4

People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from The Staff of that public authority.

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide good service to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise staff of minimum requirements 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Improve the awareness of new staff and new Councilors about disability and access issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information and training in the induction for new staff and councillors 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
When required, Council will seek expert advice from the disability field on how to meet the access needs of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an updated database on people who can be called upon to provide advice on access and inclusion options for people with disabilities 	Ongoing	Administration Officers

Outcome 5

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Council will ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly review mechanisms for access. Consult with people with disabilities and seek expert advice. Develop other methods for making complaints, such as web based forms, access to interpreters, advocacy services, and alternative arrangements such as carer, parents, and guardians acting as advocates. Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
		Ongoing	CEO and EHO
		Ongoing	CEO and EHO

Outcome 6

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve community awareness about the consultation process in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the existence and role/purpose of the DAIP to the community. Shire representatives to meet regularly to discuss and review DAIP and processes used to develop DAI policies, and make improvements where possible. 	Annually	CEO and EHO
		Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative process of Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with people with disabilities using a range of mediums, including survey, focus groups and interviews, on a regular basis. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Seek broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include appropriate questions about access and inclusion in general Shire surveys and consultative events. Actively pursue ideas and thoughts from people with disabilities. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
		Ongoing	

Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The shire will regularly monitor the progress of the plan and be involved in the annual reviews. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
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Achievements 2012/2013

- ✓ Brick paving on Midlands Road footpath, between Williams Rd and Victoria Street, replaced with non-slip concrete surface.
- ✓ Access ramp constructed to entrance to National Bank building, Midlands Road.
- ✓ Accessible public toilet constructed at BP self-serve fuel point on Mingenew-Mullewa Road.
- ✓ 600 mtrs of asphalt footpath constructed between Primary School and Fogarty Street.
- ✓ Weather shelter constructed over access ramp to Senior Citizens Centre.