

SHIRE OF MINGENEW



DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2019-2024

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is available in alternative formats upon request including large print, electronically by email and on the Shire's website at www.mingenew.wa.gov.au

Ref: NCR191122

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 Road and 110 kilometers south east of Geraldton. The Shire of Mingenew is a rural Local Government with a population of approximately 460. The primary industries in the region are cropping and livestock production. The Shire of Mingenew is bounded by the Shires of Three Springs, Morawa, Irwin and the City of Greater Geraldton.

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. Self-contained RV parking is also available at the Yandanooka townsite and Enanty Barn.

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 centres, public buildings, 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 Councillors.

1.3 People with disability in the Shire of Mingenew

There is a small estimate of people with disabilities living within the Shire. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS figures) were inconclusive with regards to the number of people with disability in the Shire; however, officers, Council and community are aware there are people with disability 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 person's 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 and large print 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 disability 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 other alternative formats.
- Council ensures 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 disability, their families and carers, via the following;

- The Shire of Mingenew 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.
- The Shire of Mingenew is committed to consulting with people with disability, 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 seven standards of its disability access and inclusion plan which are as follows;

- People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.
- People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.
- People with disability 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.
- People with disability 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.
- People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
- People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.
- People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

3.0 Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

3.1 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 disability.

3.2 Community consultation

In 2019, the Shire of Mingenew undertook to review its Disability Services Plan (2013) 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 disability.

The community was advised that Council was reviewing its disability access and inclusion plan to address the barriers that people with disability and their families experience in accessing council functions, facilities and services, and invited to contact Council officers in June / July 2019 to discuss and submit comments on the DAIP (2009 - 2013).

During the period of June/July 2019 an advertisement was placed in the Mingenew Matters inviting community members to make any suggestions via a online survey on the Shire's website or a hard copy survey available from the Shire Office. Community members were also advised that submissions could be made in other formats including in-person, over the phone, email or mail. The Shire also identified a number of key stakeholder groups and targeted them through direct correspondence.

Consultation with key staff members have also provided valuable input into the development of this Plan, with particular focus on developing achievable strategies and goals that can be integrated into operations for continuous improvement.

3.3 Findings of the consultation

The Shire received only 2 responses through its online survey. One respondent, who indicated they did not have a disability or care for or support someone with a disability, outlined they considered the Shire's Shire Office, Rec Centre, footpaths, public toilets, parking and parks to be 'very' accessible, whilst the Shire's roads were 'somewhat' accessible. Specifically, the respondent provided feedback that they were not aware of the location of ACROD parking bays in town and would like to see improved parking and disability access outside the Silver Chain with a suggestion to review access to toilets, the shop, Silver Chain, open spaces and Expo

The second respondent indicated they cared for or supported someone with a disability. In their experience Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers were considered 'not very' friendly and welcoming when interacting with people with a disability. However, no further feedback was provided on specific issues or barriers they may have experienced. Public toilets and parks were considered 'not very' accessible and footpaths, roads and parking were considered 'somewhat' accessible, whilst all other buildings and infrastructure were rated as 'very' accessible. This respondent also outlined they considered information provided through printed documents, emails and signage were 'not very' accessible and the Shire's website and social media was 'somewhat' accessible. No suggestions for any particular issues, barriers or improvements were provided.

Neither respondent was aware of the Shire's DAIP.

During the consultation period, key stakeholder groups were written to asking for member feedback. The Mingenew Silver Chain Branch Committee wrote to advise that a member wished to specifically highlight the following:

"One thing that has come to my attention is that where the disability ramp (such as in front of Our local IGA hits the road), there is a lip which means wheelchairs (& trolleys) need to step up or come down with a "thud". I find this to be difficult & I'd imagine uncomfortable for wheelchair riders & really difficult for wheelchair drivers as it does take a lot of effort when mounting the curve going UP a ramp. If the ramp from the road to the pavement was FLUSH- i.e. no lip creating difficulty in transfer from one hard surface to another, this would possibly make it easier to use the ramps. Thanks for your consideration on this topic"

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

3.4 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.

3.5 Communication of the plan to staff and people with disability

The community has been advised through the local media 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 an appropriate variety of communication methods.

3.6 Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services 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 Department of Communities.

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.

3.7 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 seven desired outcomes.
- The strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP.

Agents and contractors of the Shire of Mingenew will be provided access to the Shire's DAIP and be made aware of any specific actions required of them to comply with the DAIP outcome areas in undertaking work on behalf of the Shire, including requirements being stated within contracts and inductions as appropriate.

4.0 Progress of the DAIP 2013-2019

Outcome 1

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

- Audio and large print books located in a specific, clearly signed area of the Library.
- DVDs with subtitles available in the Library

Outcome 2

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

- Public toilets meet standards and unisex toilets available at Recreation Centre, Turf Club and Town Centre.

Outcome 3

People with disability 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.

- Information made available in alternative formats, on request.
- Information availability publicized in the Shire's Information Statement, through the local newspaper and on its website.
- Staff and Councillor inductions include disability access and inclusion matters to promote awareness of information accessibility.
- The Shire's website is set out under W3C guidelines

Outcome 4

People with disability 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.

- Information made available in alternative formats, on request.
- Staff and Councillor inductions include disability access and inclusion matters to promote awareness of information accessibility.
- Expert advice is sought when required

Outcome 5

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

- Grievances can be lodged using a number of mediums including submissions over the phone, written correspondence/form, electronic forms and face-to-face submissions with staff transcribing.

Outcome 6

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

- Local government elections are held in a suitable location that provides for those with a disability
- The Shire communicates using a range of methods and mediums and makes information available in accessible formats.

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

- Employment opportunities are open to all.
- In-person interviews are conducted in an accessible building and reasonable modifications can be made for individual needs. Interviews may also be conducted using other various methods, such as over the phone, using the internet and other electronic applications.
- New policies and procedures are being developed with regard to Recruitment and Selection

5.0 Strategies and Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each strategy to be implemented in 2019-2023 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 on request.

Outcome 1

People with disability 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 disability are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote feedback mechanisms for use of all services, provided or funded. • Develop consultation guidelines for all future reviews of services. 	Ongoing December 2019	CEO CEO and GO
Make library technology as accessible as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually monitor library services and technology to facilitate accessibility for library and information services. 	Ongoing	LO
Council will ensure that any events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the needs of people with disability are planned for and provided at events by using the access resource kit as provided by Disability Services. 	Ongoing	CEO and CS
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"> • Incorporate the objectives and strategies of DAIP into the Shire’s existing planning processes, including the Strategic Community Plan. • Develop and implement key policies to support accessibility 	SCP Review 2020 June 2020	CEO CEO and GO

Outcome 2

People with disability 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 disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities. Prioritise and implement any recommendations as resourcing allows. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability, where practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new or redeveloped facilities allow for access for people with physical, cognitive, sensory and psychiatric disability 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. Legal requirements with regard to disability access are checked prior to approval of development and building applications. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO PS and BS
Ensure adequate ACROD parking to meet the demand of people with disability in terms of quantity, quality, and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit of ACROD bays and implement a program to rectify non-compliance. (Checklist, from ART) 	June 2020	CEO and EHO
Ensure that parks and 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 disability. 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. 	Ongoing	CEO and EHO

Outcome 3

People with disability 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
<p>Improve community awareness that Council information can be made available in alternative formats upon request, such as large print, and audio.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all public documents carry a notation regarding availability in alternative formats • Advise the community via local newspaper, social media, newsletters and other mediums as appropriate, that information is available in alternative formats • Provide information about technology and providers that support people with a disability 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>CEO and GO</p>
<p>Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make accessible information guidelines available on the internet • Develop an accessible information policy • Provide accessible information training and resources to employees, including as part of the induction of new staff. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO and GO</p> <p>CEO and GO</p>
<p>Ensure that the Shires website meets contemporary and universal design practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and maintain website compliance with W3C standards. • Investigate methods for improving accessibility on the Shire's website 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>September 2019</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>GO</p>

Outcome 4

People with disability 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 disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update staff on any identified disability and access issues through internal means • Develop a Customer Service Charter that establishes some guidelines on how to provide good service to people with a disability 	Ongoing October 2019	CEO GO
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 GO
When required, Council will seek expert advice from the disability field on how to meet the access needs of people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a network of organisations/people who can be called upon to provide advice on access and inclusion options for people with disability 	Ongoing	AO

Outcome 5

People with disability 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 disability and are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current grievance mechanisms and develop any appropriate policies or guidelines as appropriate 	Ongoing	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop other methods of making complaints, such as web-based forms, access to interpreters, advocacy services, and alternative arrangements such as carers, parents, and guardians acting as advocates. 	Ongoing	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	Ongoing	CEO

Outcome 6

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with a disability are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the existence and role/purpose of the DAIP to the community. 	Annually	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with people with disability using a range of mediums, including survey, focus groups and interviews, as required. 	Ongoing	CEO
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. 	Ongoing	CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively pursue ideas and thoughts from people with disability. 	Ongoing	CEO
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. 	Annually	GO/CEO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DAIP reviews to be included in the Shire's Compliance Calendar 	Annually	GO

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Use inclusive recruitment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure job advertisements and career information is available in an accessible format • Promote the Shire’s Equal Employment Opportunity statement when advertising vacancies. • Make sure the interview is held in an accessible venue. • Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Policy • Review Workforce Plan to ensure inclusion of inclusive recruitment practices • Undertake training and education of Elected Members and staff to improve awareness of people with disability • Update Elected Member and staff inductions to include DAIP 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing June 2020 December 2020 June 2020 December 2019	CEO CEO CEO GO and CEO CEO CEO and GO GO and CEO
Improve methods of attracting, recruiting and retaining people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine current methods of recruitment • Collect data on disability and diversity to monitor trends and needs 	June 2020 Annually	CEO CEO
Work with disability employment support providers to support any employees with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek assistance from Disability Employment Service providers within 100km radius, as appropriate • Review current job descriptions to ensure relevance of essential criteria • Seek assistance with advertising, interview, and employment requirements including reasonable adjustment. 	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	GO, LGPWA, DSC CEO, LGIS, DSC CEO
Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual reviews of policies and procedures • Identify and implement any new policies or procedures that support improved recruitment practices. 	March 2020 October 2019	CEO and GO CEO and GO

Abbreviations used throughout this report:

Administration officers (AOs)

Building Services (BS) – currently outsourced

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Community Services – currently provided in-house with additional support outsourced

Environmental Health Officer (EHO) – currently outsourced

Governance Officer (GO)

Library officer (LO)

Local Government Insurance Services (LGIS)

Local Government Professionals WA (LGPWA)

Planning Services (PS) – currently outsourced