



## ATTACHMENT BOOKLET FOR ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

12 December 2024 at 5:00pm

### INDEX

<b>13. MANAGER GOVERNANCE &amp; COMMUNITY</b>	
13.1.1 Shire of Mingenew Annual Report 2023/24	-
13.2.1 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2029	1
13.3.1 Discussion Paper – Frequency of Council Meetings	27
13.6.1 Council Policy 1.2.18 Dealing with Challenging Behaviours	38
13.6.2 Shire of Mingenew Customer Service Charter	42

# DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2024-2029



## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
Background.....	3
Principles of Disability Services legislation.....	3
Definition of ‘disability’ .....	4
ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT .....	5
2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS .....	6
DAIP REVIEW.....	12
Integrated Planning.....	12
Mingenew Profile .....	12
Methodology .....	12
Community Priorities .....	16
2024-2029 OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLAN .....	17
<b>DAIP Outcome 1: Services and events</b> .....	17
<b>DAIP Outcome 2: Buildings and facilities</b> .....	18
<b>DAIP Outcome 3: Accessible information</b> .....	20
<b>DAIP Outcome 4: Service</b> .....	21
<b>DAIP Outcome 5: Complaints</b> .....	22
<b>DAIP Outcome 6: Consultation</b> .....	23
<b>DAIP Outcome 7: Employment</b> .....	24
MONITORING AND REPORTING.....	25
DISABILITY SUPPORT IN THE MIDWEST .....	26

# INTRODUCTION

## *Background*

The Shire of Mingenew is committed to ensuring Mingenew is inclusive and supportive of people with disability and empowers people with disability to participate meaningfully in all parts of our community.

As identified in the Shire's Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033, Council acknowledges that to ensure Mingenew is valued as a liveable community that supports diversity it must support and include disabled and vulnerable community members. A key Corporate Business Plan Action for 2024-2028 is to review and implement the Shire's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

Part 5 of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (the Act) and r.6-10 of the *Disability Services Regulations 2004* (the Regs), requires that public authorities, including local governments, must prepare a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and annually report on its progress for achieving the mandated outcome areas and Shire-implemented strategies. Schedule 3 of the Regulations include standards for disability access and inclusion plans.

The development and review of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan provides us with the opportunity to ensure we have a good understanding of our community make up, its needs and can work to address barriers to access and inclusion and drive positive changes within our community. We consider the communities' priorities and develop improvement strategies around services and events, buildings and facilities, information, quality of service, complaints, consultation processes and employment.

## *Principles of Disability Services legislation*

Guiding Principles for developing and implementing a disability access and inclusion plan, as outlined within the Act, are as follows:

1. People with disability are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity without discrimination and with equality of opportunity.
2. People with disability, whatever the origin, nature, type or degree of disability, have the same human rights as other members of society and should be enabled to exercise those human rights.
3. People with disability have the same rights as other members of society to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional, intellectual, cultural and spiritual development.

4. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to access services that will support their choices, assist them to be as independent as possible and enable them to participate in all aspects of life.
5. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to participate in, direct and implement the decisions that affect their lives.
6. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to receive services in a manner that respects and protects their rights and opportunities and is the least restrictive option in the circumstances.
7. People with disability have the right to pursue any grievance concerning services.
8. People with disability have the right to access the type of services and supports that they believe are most appropriate to meet their needs.
9. People with disability who reside in country areas have a right, as far as is reasonable to expect, to have access to similar services provided to people with disability who reside in the metropolitan area.
10. People with disability have a right to an environment free from neglect, abuse, violence, intimidation, and exploitation.

### *Definition of 'disability'*

The current definition of disability in the *Disability Services Act 1993* is as follows:

**Disability** means a disability —

- (a) which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; and
- (b) which is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- (c) which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and
- (d) which results in —
  - (i) a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
  - (ii) a need for continuing support services.

## 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.

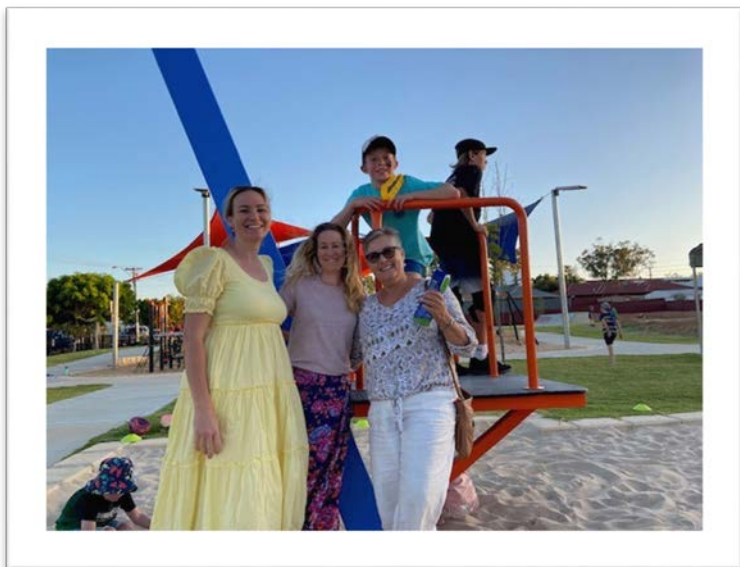
The Shire is also committed to achieving the seven standards of its disability access and inclusion plan which are as follows;

- 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.

## 2019-2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Some of the key projects and initiatives achieved from the DAIP 2019-2024 included:

- Adoption of key policies to support accessibility:
  - 1.2.10 Access and Inclusion Policy
  - 1.2.11 Accessible Information Policy
  - 1.2.12 Reasonable Adjustment Policy
- Installation of universal access toilet during refurbishment of the Mingenew Railway Station
- Construction of sensory playground and pathways for connectivity and wheelchair / mobility scooter access at Cecil Newton Park
- Installation of ACROD parking on Phillip Street to service Mingenew Health Centre, Day Care Centre and Autumn Centre
- Disability access ramp and paths, unisex, disabled toilets and ACROD parking installed in new Tennis Clubhouse build
- Renovation of Aged Persons Units (4) bathrooms to improve accessibility
- Consideration of people with disability in new Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033



**DAIP Outcome 1: Services and events**

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

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Promote feedback mechanisms for use of all services, provided or funded.	ONGOING
Develop consultation guidelines for all future reviews of services.	COMPLETED
Continually monitor library services and technology to facilitate accessibility for library and information services.	ONGOING
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
Incorporate the objectives and strategies of DAIP into the Shire's existing planning processes, including the Strategic Community Plan.	COMPLETED
Develop and implement key policies to support accessibility	COMPLETED

**DAIP Outcome 2: Buildings and facilities**

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

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities.	ONGOING
Prioritise and implement any recommendations as resourcing allows.	ONGOING



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.	ONGOING
Legal requirements with regard to disability access are checked prior to approval of development and building applications.	ONGOING
Undertake an audit of ACROD bays and implement a program to rectify non-compliance. (Checklist, from ART)	COMPLETED
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
Provision of Unisex disabled toilet/s for wheelchair persons visiting the Shires facilities are considered and planned for.	ONGOING
<b>DAIP Outcome 3: Accessible information</b>	
People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that enables them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.	
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Ensure all public documents carry a notation regarding availability in alternative formats	ONGOING
Advise the community via local newspaper, social media, newsletters and other mediums as appropriate, that information is available in alternative formats	ONGOING
Provide information about technology and providers that support people with a disability	ONGOING
Make accessible information guidelines available on the internet	ONGOING
Develop an accessible information policy	COMPLETED

Provide accessible information training and resources to employees, including as part of the induction of new staff.	ONGOING
Monitor and maintain website compliance with W3C standards.	ONGOING
Investigate methods for improving accessibility on the Shire's website	COMPLETED
<b>DAIP Outcome 4: Service</b>	
People with disability receive the same level and quality of services from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.	
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Update staff on any identified disability and access issues through internal means	ONGOING
Develop a Customer Service Charter that establishes some guidelines on how to provide good service to people with a disability	COMPLETED
Provide information and training in the induction for new staff and Councillors	ONGOING
Maintain a network of organisations/people who can be called upon to provide advice on access and inclusion options for people with disability	ONGOING
<b>DAIP Outcome 5: Complaints</b>	
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.	
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Review current grievance mechanisms and develop any appropriate policies or guidelines as appropriate	COMPLETED
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

Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community.	ONGOING
<b>DAIP Outcome 6: Consultation</b>	
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.	
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Promote the existence and role/purpose of the DAIP to the community.	ONGOING
Consult with people with disability using a range of mediums, including survey, focus groups and interviews, as required.	ONGOING
Include appropriate questions about access and inclusion in general Shire surveys and consultative events.	ONGOING
Actively pursue ideas and thoughts from people with disability.	ONGOING
The shire will regularly monitor the progress of the plan and be involved in the annual reviews.	ONGOING
DAIP reviews to be included in the Shire's Compliance Calendar	ONGOING
<b>DAIP Outcome 7: Employment</b>	
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.	
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Make sure job advertisements and career information is available in an accessible format	ONGOING
Promote the Shire's Equal Employment Opportunity statement when advertising vacancies.	ONGOING
Make sure the interview is held in an accessible venue.	ONGOING
Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Policy	COMPLETED

Review Workforce Plan to ensure inclusion of inclusive recruitment practices	COMPLETED
Undertake training and education of Elected Members and staff to improve awareness of people with disability	COMPLETED
Update Elected Member and staff inductions to include DAIP	COMPLETED
Examine current methods of recruitment	ONGOING
Collect data on disability and diversity to monitor trends and needs	ONGOING
Seek assistance from Disability Employment Service providers within 100km radius, as appropriate	ONGOING
Review current job descriptions to ensure relevance of essential criteria	ONGOING
Seek assistance with advertising, interview, and employment requirements including reasonable adjustment.	ONGOING
Conduct annual reviews of policies and procedures	COMPLETED
Identify and implement any new policies or procedures that support improved recruitment practices.	COMPLETED



## DAIP REVIEW

### *Integrated Planning*

This Plan considers the community vision of the Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033 (SCP) to ensure “Mingenew is a safe, inclusive and connected community with a thriving local economy that provides opportunity for all to succeed.”

The SCP includes the strategic priority:

**“7.2 Support and include disabled and vulnerable community members.”**

A Corporate Business Plan (2024-2028) includes the following action:

**“a. Review and implement the Shire’s Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.”**

Capital projects included as actions are based on the Shire’s Long Term Financial Plan

### *Mingenew Profile*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that the resident population of Mingeneew in 2021 is 407<sup>1</sup>.

Modelled estimates from ABS indicate 15.7% (67 people) of the population are represented by people with disability (living in private dwellings) and 13.1% are reported carers (primary and non-primary) for people with disability. Furthermore, 8.7% of those people have profound or severe core activity limitations, whilst 11% have moderate or mild core activity limitations.

The modelled ABS data also indicates that approximately 3.6% of people aged 0-64 years, who report as having disability, have their needs for assistance with core activities fully met and 1.1% are only partly met or not at all.

### *Methodology*

To inform the updated Plan, the Shire has conducted a desktop review of the previous DAIP, considered current processes and practices, and analysed community consultation sources, such as the Community Satisfaction (MARKYT) survey results from 2022, and the DAIP survey in 2024.

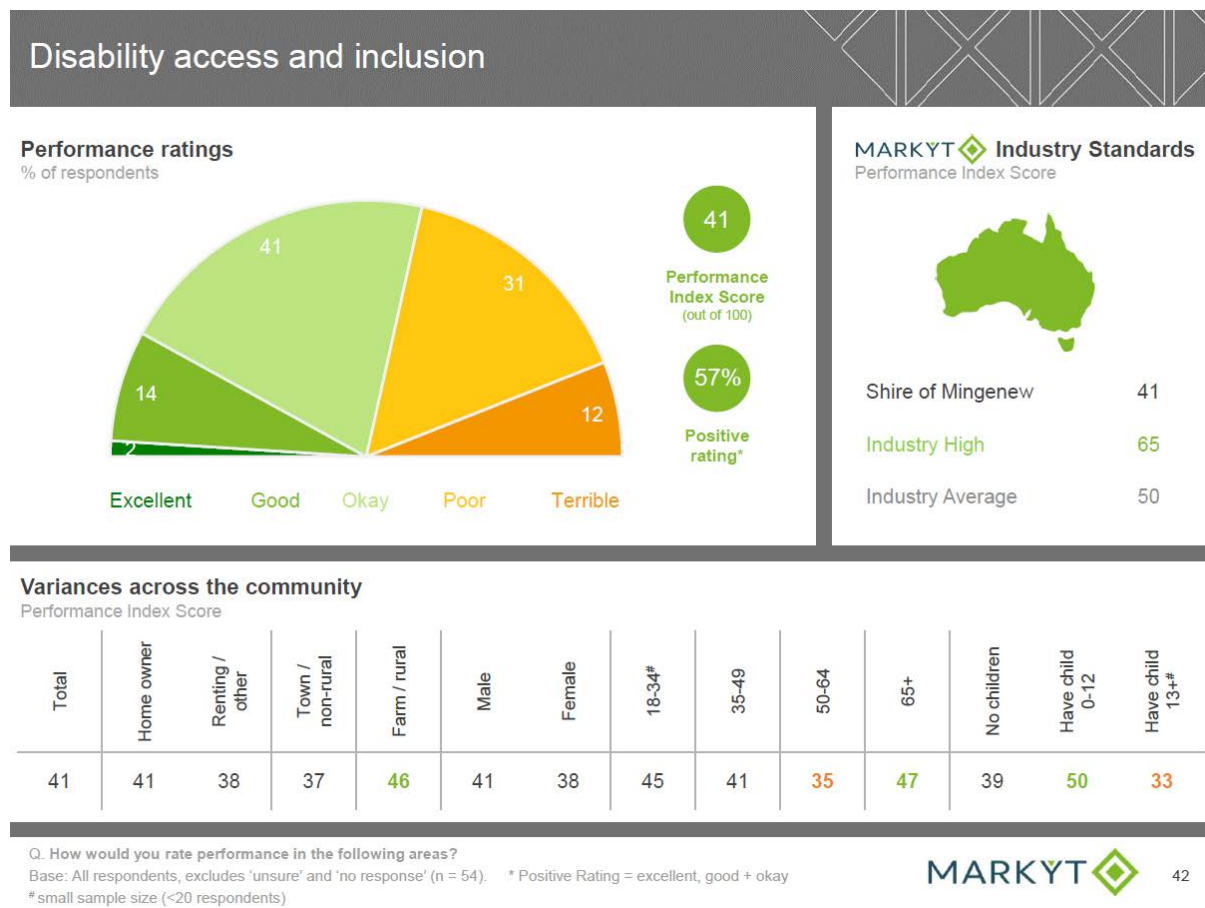
Any actions to address feedback is measured and checked against the principles and legislated standards for disability access and inclusion.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS Census Data, 2021)

## MARKYT Scorecard 2022

Based on the Shire’s Community MARKYT Scorecard results from 2022, the community scored the Shire’s performance in Disability access and inclusion to be “Okay”.



Of the 97 respondents of the survey, 10 people were identified as living with disabilities.

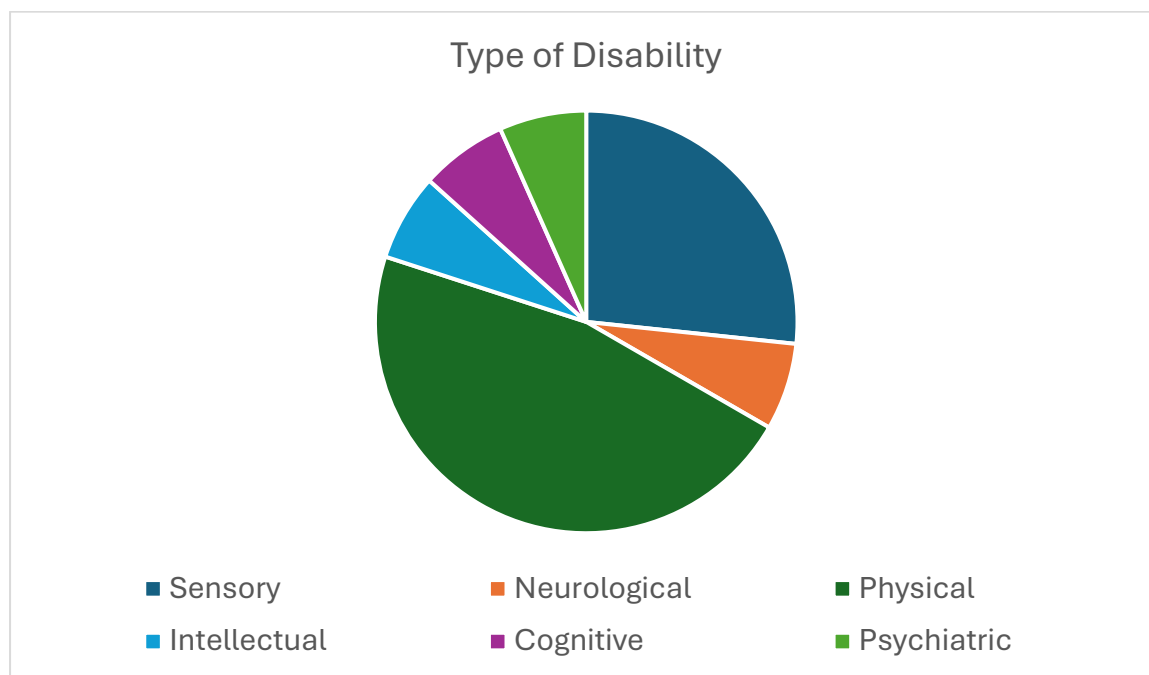
## DAIP Survey 2024

The Shire conducted a survey in 2024 to gain an understanding of local needs and priorities in terms of supporting people with disability, to help inform the development of this Plan.

We received 25 responses, 8 of which indicated they were living with disability and 4 are informally caring for a friend or family member with disability. The Shire only received 2 responses from the last DAIP-specific survey conducted in 2019 therefore we are please to be reaching a larger portion of this cohort within our community.

To understand the types of disabilities people are living with in our community and the challenges they be facing, the survey asked respondents:

Q6 What types of disabilities are relevant to you or someone you care for?



The following definitions were provided (indicates number of responses per type):

**Sensory** - affecting vision and/or hearing (4)

**Neurological** - affecting a person's ability to control their movements, for example, cerebral palsy (1)

**Physical** - affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their upper or lower body (7)

**Intellectual** - affecting a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate (1)

**Cognitive** - affecting a person's thought processes, personality and memory resulting, for example, from an injury to the brain (1)

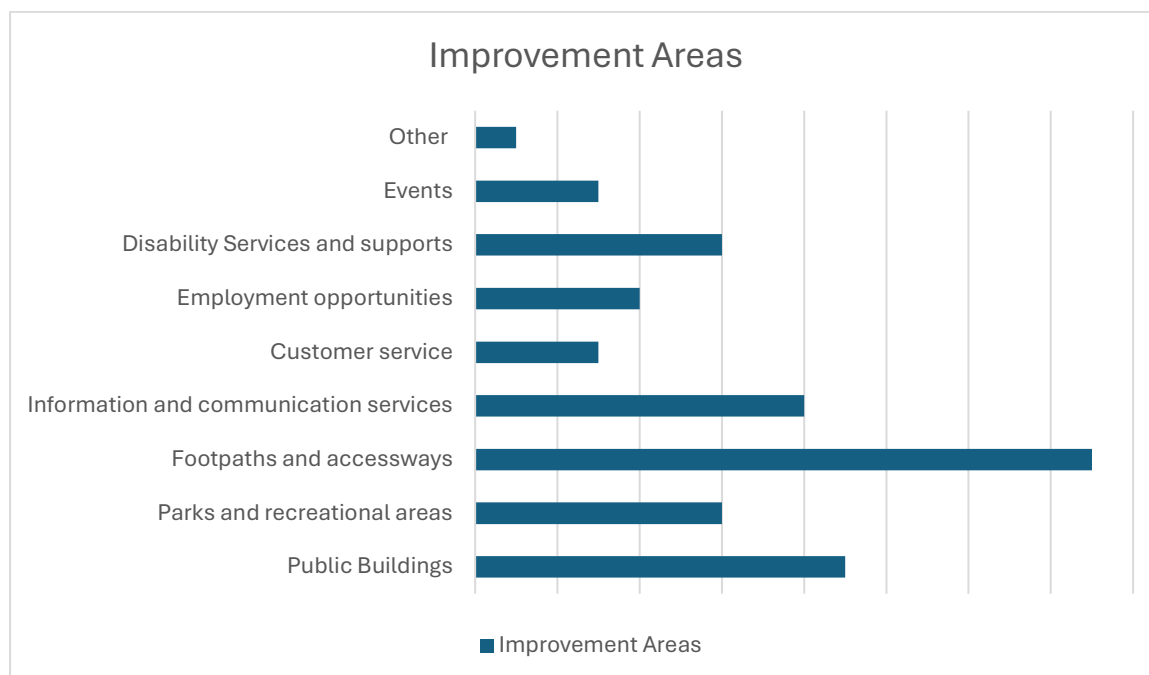
**Psychiatric** - affecting a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and manic depression (1)

Q8 What, if any, specific challenges have you faced or witnessed in people with disability accessing services, programs, or places in the Shire of Mingenew?

This was a freetext response therefore, themes are summarised below:

- No disabled access toilet at Rec Centre
- Existing footpaths are in disrepair, uneven and kerb ramps too high
- Insufficient paths for people using walkers, wheelchairs, gophers and prams
- Fencing at Cecil Newton Park not disabled friendly
- Townsite roads in poor state and not suitable for gophers and wheelchairs etc.
- Limited setup for people with visual impairment

Q9 Which areas do you think need improvement in terms of accessibility and inclusion? Select all that apply.



Suggestions for improvement was generally consistent with responses to Q8 but included:

- Use matt paper so less reflective
- Transport Service for services outside of Mingenew
- Ensuring building handrails are in good condition
- More footpaths and employment opportunities
- Move the obstructing fence from the pathway on Shenton Sreet, at Cecil Newton Park
- Add path to the Caravan Park, through the Windmill Park
- Re-lay or replace brick paving in town
- Set Budget to upgrade pathways and seek suitable grants
- New paving (no bricks)
- Improve roads and footpaths. Provide better access for disabled people in areas such as the Old Railway Station and the Recreation Centre

Q11 Can you provide an example of a positive experience related to disability accessibility and/or inclusion within the Shire of Mingenew?

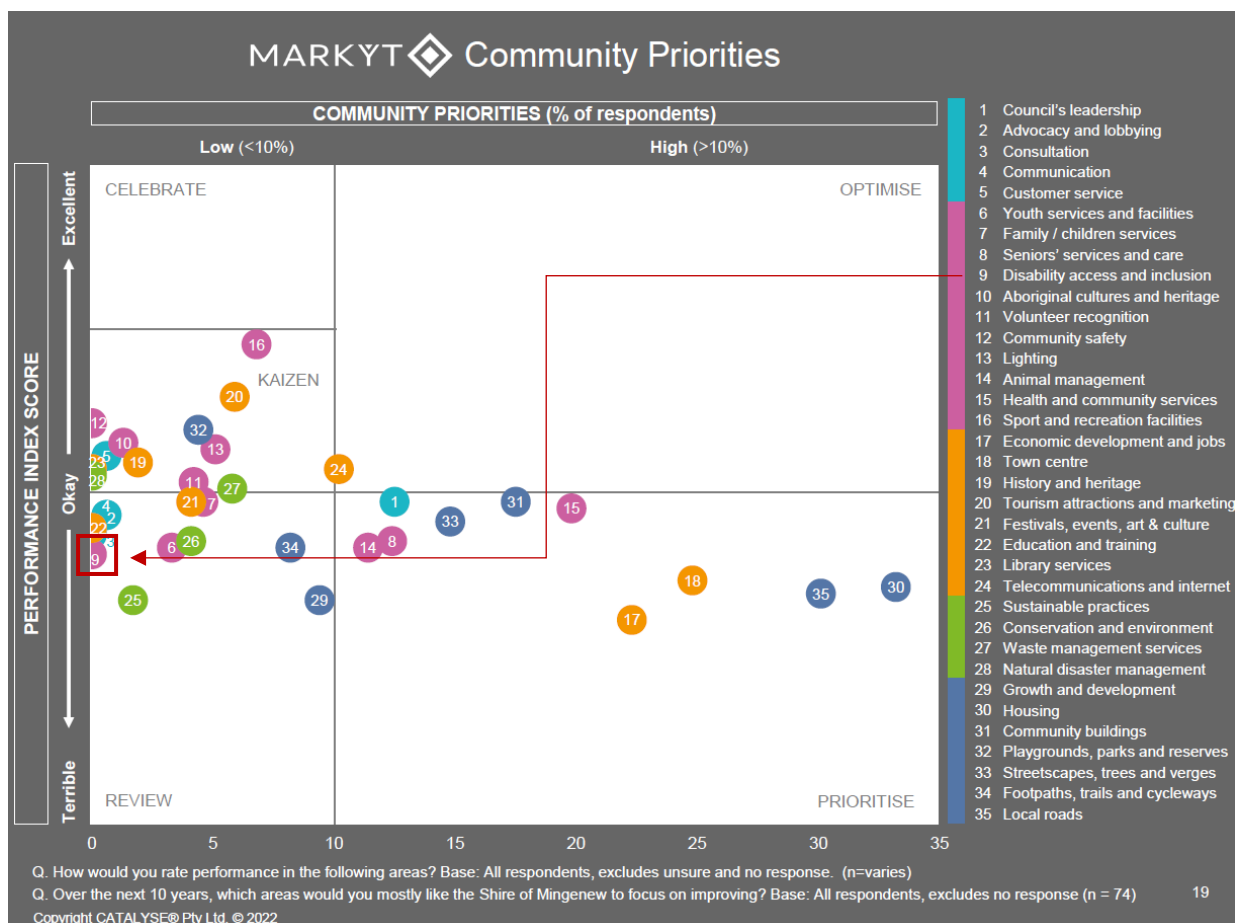
Respondents noted they were satisfied with ramps to access the Shire, shop, the CRC / Post Office / The Exchange.

To access the full results from the survey, visit our website at <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/shire-news/disability-survey-results/> or contact the Shire to receive in an alternative format.



## Community Priorities

Due to a relatively low population of people with disability, it is unsurprising that disability rates as a low priority from feedback. What the MARKYT survey results do demonstrate (as shown in the image below) is that the Shire is performing below an acceptable level, and we therefore consider it important that there are improvements we can make with the resources available.



To determine the strategies for 2024-2029 the Shire considers how the disability-specific feedback feeds into our communities' priorities. Therefore, we note:

- Disability access and inclusion (9) is considered a low priority but below the expected standard
- Footpaths (34) are considered to be a low to medium priority but below the expected standard
- Community buildings (31) is a medium to high priority but at an acceptable standard

## 2024-2029 OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLAN

The below Action Plan 2024-2029 is a guide for implementation, with indicative timelines and is subject to Budget approval and/or availability of resources.

<b>DAIP Outcome 1: Services and events</b>		
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Mingenew.		
<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
1.1 Promote feedback mechanisms for use of all services, provided or funded.	Ongoing	1.1a Promote availability of the Shire’s feedback forms on the Shire’s website, Facebook page and through the Mingenew Matters (add as action in Compliance Calendar).
1.2 Utilise and promote event guidelines and/or resources to ensure events held in the Shire of Mingenew are accessible and as inclusive as possible.	Ongoing	1.2a Share the ‘Create accessible events’ checklist on the Shire’s website and issue to any external event organisers.
1.3 Continually monitor library services and technology to facilitate accessibility for library and information services.	Ongoing	1.3a Identify and promote services and library materials that cater to people with disability, such as large print and audiobooks
	April 2025	1.3b Link community members with WA’s VisAbility Library
1.4 Appropriate transportation is available to ensure people with disability and/or mobility issues can access local services and events	Ongoing	1.4a The Shire continues to subsidise the use of the Community Bus for seniors, vulnerable members of the community and/or people with disability
	March 2025	1.4b The Shire’s Community Bus Hire Policy be updated to expand the Category 1 to be more inclusive of people with disability and identifying capabilities and limitations of the Bus for this purpose.

## ***DAIP Outcome 2: Buildings and facilities***

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Mingenew.

<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
2.1 Buildings, footpaths, parking bays (e.g. ACROD), public space designs and other infrastructure are considerate of accessibility and inclusion needs.	2024-2028	2.1a Implement the Shire's 10 Year Shared Pathways Plan to connect key community assets for all abilities.
	2025	2.1b Review the fencing design at Cecil Newton Park to provide clear and safe pathways for all abilities.
	2025	2.1c Interpretive signage and connecting infrastructure in the town centre / main street and including the Railway Station, to be designed for access and mobility.
	2025	2.1d Install new unisex toilet at hockey oval, incorporating accessibility designs.
	2025	2.1e Rec Centre upgrade (evacuation centre) to include unisex, accessible toilet and have consideration for accessibility design features.
	2025	2.1f The new Daycare facility to incorporate accessibility designs.
	2026	2.1g Construction of key worker housing to have consideration of liveable housing guidelines design elements.
	2027	2.1h Fire shed replacement to comply with accessibility design elements.

	2028	2.1i Construction of new aged persons units (2) to support living for ageing in place and mobility issues.
	2028	2.1j Refurbishment of Town Hall to include accessibility design elements.
	2028	2.1k Refurbishment of Yandanooka Hall toilets to include unisex toilet and accessible design elements.
2.2 All new or redeveloped facilities have consideration for access for people with physical, neurological, intellectual, cognitive, sensory and psychiatric disability, based on user needs.	2025	2.2a Water play space to consider disability needs for socialisation, including sensory and physical accessibility.
	2027	2.2b Construction of bike track to consider inclusive and accessible features.
	2028	2.2c Tennis Club playground replacement to consider disability needs for socialisation, including sensory and physical accessibility.
2.3 Legal requirements for disability access are checked prior to approval of development and building applications.	Ongoing	2.3a Development and building applications assessed by qualified and competent personnel and have access to current Building Code requirements and standards.
2.4 Local businesses are encouraged to implement changes to infrastructure and activities that promote inclusiveness and accessibility.	Ongoing	2.4a Identify and promote financial support opportunities for local businesses to make accessibility improvements to infrastructure and/or services.
	Ongoing	2.4b Communicate and partner with businesses to upgrade infrastructure where access is shared with Shire facilities and shared costs may incentivise improvements.

### **DAIP Outcome 3: Accessible information**

People with disability receive information from the Shire of Mingenew in a format that enables them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
3.1 Monitor and maintain website compliance with web accessibility standards.	Ongoing	3.1a Coordinate with the Shire’s external website manager to ensure standards are implemented and maintained
3.2 Ensure that Shire information is made available in accordance with its Accessible Information Policy.	Ongoing	3.2a Documents are developed in clear and easy to read formats e.g. legible sans serif fonts, 12 or larger font size, matt paper etc.
	Ongoing	3.2b Information is available in or can be re-formatted e.g. in audio, large print, plain background, left-aligned text etc.
	Ongoing	3.2c Use accessibility statements to ensure users are aware they can request information in alternative formats
3.3 Shire wayfinding and signage considers accessibility and inclusion	Ongoing	3.3a Where practical and relevant, Shire maps, trails signage and other navigation materials are updated to include information highlighting accessible networks and features or barriers.

### **DAIP Outcome 4: Service**

People with disability receive the same level and quality of services from the staff of the Shire of Mingenew as other people receive from the staff of the Shire.

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
4.1 Ensure customer service staff are appropriately trained to support people with disability	Ongoing	4.1 Identify and run appropriate training for staff, as required (minimum disABILITY AWAREness e-learning)
4.2 Connect with disability support and advisory service providers to ensure services can be effectively and appropriately provided, where required	Ongoing	4.2 Support and refer community members to relevant services, including through the Mingenew CRC's Ageing in Place program.

## **DAIP Outcome 5: Complaints**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Mingenew.

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
5.1 Review current grievance mechanisms and develop any appropriate policies or guidelines as appropriate	Ongoing	5.1a Continue to review policies and Customer Service Charter, at least every two years
	Ongoing	5.1b Continue to review and improve web-based forms and grievance systems
5.2 Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community and encourage advocacy from carers of people with disability	Ongoing	5.2a Actively invite feedback and complaints from people with disability or their carers to ensure continuous improvement through various mediums

## **DAIP Outcome 6: Consultation**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Mingenew.

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
6.1 Promote the existence and role/purpose of the DAIP to the community.	Ongoing	6.1a Invite submissions on the development or review of the Shire's DAIP
	Ongoing	6.1b Make the DAIP available on the Shire's website, in print and other alternatives, and promote through various mediums
6.2 Ensure a diverse range of mediums are available to provide people with disability an opportunity to connect with the Shire and participate in consultation.	Ongoing	6.2a Utilise print and digital media, as well as in-person opportunities to share and consult on Shire matters, ensuring that people with disability and vulnerable community members may participate
	Ongoing	6.2b Include appropriate questions about access and inclusion in general Shire surveys and consultative events.



## **DAIP Outcome 7: Employment**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Mingenew.

<b>STRATEGIES &amp; ACTIONS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>ACTIONS</b>
7.1 Ensure the Shire's employment practices are free from discrimination and are aligned with the Shire policies.	Ongoing	7.1a Include the Shire's Equal Employment Opportunity and Reasonable Adjustment Policy is accessible during recruitment and inductions.
7.2 Provide workers with support and training on inclusion of people with disability in the workplace.	Ongoing	7.2a Include disability awareness in staff and elected member inductions, including awareness of DAIP
	Ongoing	7.2b Utilise JobAccess and other appropriate resources to support workers with disability

## MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Shire will be measuring its performance and tracking changes to community priorities in 2025, after conducting another community survey. The DAIP will be reviewed again following this process to ensure it adopts to any changes and sentiments.

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.

## DISABILITY SUPPORT IN THE MIDWEST

Disability Support Guide - [www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au](http://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au)

Provides a comprehensive list of service providers in WA who support people living with disabilities, listing services that offer accommodation, advisors, equipment and technology, in-home and community support, therapists and specialists. There is also a range of resources that provide clear and comprehensive information about disability support options, what to consider and how to get the best support for your needs and circumstances.

There are also two registered support organisations based in the Midwest:

- Midwest Community Living Association
- Access to Leisure and Sport

Access Disability Services WA - <https://adsw.com.au/>

**If you are unable to find a resource you need, please visit the Shire office or contact us and will assist you with any enquiries.**

**PH: (08)9928 1102**

**E: [enquiries@mingenew.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@mingenew.wa.gov.au)**





## FREQUENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS – DISCUSSION PAPER

This Discussion Paper explores the regularity of holding Council meetings; monthly (excluding January) versus every two months to inform a decision to determine the frequency of meeting dates for 2025.

### Actual Meetings Held

For the past three years (2022-2024), Council have set a bi-monthly ordinary council meeting schedule, including Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct and Dec meetings. Prior to 2022, council meetings were held monthly, excluding in the month of January, totaling 11 ordinary meetings each year, plus special meetings as required. Summary data of the total number of meetings held is provided below:

Month / Year	Meeting Schedule	Council Meetings	Special Meetings	TOTAL
2024	Bi-monthly	6	5	11
2023	Bi-monthly	6	4	10
2022	Bi-monthly	6	5	11
2021	Monthly	11	2	13
2020	Monthly	11	3	14
2022	Monthly	11	2	13

### Special Meeting Requirements

In 2024, there were five Special meetings called and held, as outlined below:

Meeting Date	Purpose of Meeting / Agenda Reports
20 March 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compliance Audit Return 2023</li> <li>2. Local Emergency Management Arrangements</li> </ol>
29 April 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposed Gas Extraction Wells, Gas Processing Facility and Workforce Accommodation</li> </ol>
6 May 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request for Tender – Childcare – Design and Construct</li> <li>2. Turf Bar Shade Structure Proposal</li> <li>3. Proposed Closure of Road Reserves</li> </ol>
17 July 2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Community Benefits Policy</li> <li>2. Proposed Workforce Accommodation</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Proposed Second-hand Dwelling</li> <li>4. Marketing &amp; Communications Strategy</li> </ol>
<b>18 September 2024</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Request for Quote for RRG Bitumen Sealing Works</li> </ol>

In 2023, there were four Special meetings called and held, as outlined below:

Meeting Date	Purpose of Meeting / Agenda Reports
<b>15 March 2023</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development application</li> <li>2. Request for Tender decision (Yandanooka NE Rd intersection realignment)</li> <li>3. Determining the method for conducting the local government elections</li> <li>4. ALGA call for motions and Budget Review</li> </ol>
<b>19 July 2023</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amendment to rates instalment dates 2023/24</li> <li>2. Calling for quotes for a Marketing and Communications Strategy</li> </ol>
<b>20 September 2023</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposed workforce accommodation</li> <li>2. Draft strategic community plan</li> <li>3. Setting of Polling Day for extraordinary election</li> <li>4. Nomination of projects for LGRF and RPPP</li> <li>5. RAV Access Application</li> <li>6. Confidential item to repurchase land.</li> </ol>
<b>15 November 2023</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointment of committee delegates</li> <li>2. Fees &amp; Charges amendment</li> <li>3. Request for Tenders decision (Day Care).</li> </ol>

In 2022, there were five Special meetings called and held, as outlined below:

Meeting Date	Purpose of Meeting / Agenda Reports
<b>2 March 2022</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commencement of CEO Recruitment</li> </ol>
<b>5 July 2022</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appointment of CEO</li> </ol>
<b>20 July 2022</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Appoint of elected member</li> <li>2. Request for Tender – Local Supplier Panel</li> <li>3. Request for Tender – Mingenew Tennis Clubhouse</li> </ol>

	4. Request for Tender – Regional Waste Collection and Management 5. 2021/22 Budget
16 November 2022	1. Proposed temporary caravan occupation 2. Mingenew Day Care Centre Redevelopment Reserve
9 December 2022	1. Temporary land use by CBH

### Benefits and Challenges

The following are list of benefits and challenges when considering holding meetings every two months:

For	Against
Reduces time commitment of Councillors and staff to attend to formal council duties	Special meetings are almost as frequent if holding monthly council meetings, therefore some efficiencies lost
Reduce staff time in compiling agendas and minutes	Decrease opportunity for community participation in meetings
Provides additional time for meeting preparation	Meeting monthly anyway for Concept Forums (although attendance is not statutory) which provides for regular information sharing
May reduce risk of Elected Member disqualification for non-attendance without leave approval for 3 consecutive meetings (s2.25 LGA)	Typically, larger agendas and longer meeting times for ordinary meetings
With requirement to record meetings, additional meeting setup time and data storage will be reduced with less meetings	Delays in regulatory decision making for planning development / building applications (delays for customer)
Reduced time commitment may assist to attract nominees for Elected Member positions (election year)	Large workload / reading commitment per meeting for new Elected Members may be perceived as a barrier
Has resulted in reduction of total number of meetings held over a year (there has also been a change in practice to facilitate earlier adoption of Budget, to occur in June which had been adopted by special meeting in earlier years)	Additional workload of preparing for special meeting includes written request from President, issuing public notice, and date and time can be difficult to set, when Elected Members not committed to formal monthly schedule
Demonstrates leadership and vision to challenge the status quo and could be used for case study for other local governments to learn from	

The following are list of benefits and challenges when considering holding monthly meetings:

For	Against
Consistent schedule, known in advance	Increases workload to prepare agendas and minutes every month
Decision making is more timely and better manages community expectations	Increased Elected Member and staff time commitment for formal meetings
Reduce the need to call Special meetings	May increase risk of Elected Member disqualification for non-attendance without leave approval for 3 consecutive meetings (s2.25 LGA)
Monthly Elected Member commitments may present opportunity to better schedule other events and/or meetings	With requirement to record meetings, additional meeting setup time and data storage would be required with additional meetings
Aligned with other local government meeting schedules / common practice	May deter people from nominating for Council due to workload and time commitments for monthly meetings

### **2022 Justification for Bi-monthly meetings**

#### *Accessibility and Transparency:*

Less frequent meetings provide less opportunity for the public to attend meetings and be heard on issues. Whilst this is a valid concern, in Mingenew over the previous few years there have been very few instances of public attendance at Council Meetings. The proposal would only reduce the number of meetings, not impact in any way the ability of members of the public to attend the meetings which do take place (or engage with the local government outside of these meetings).

#### *Decisions with Statutory Timeframes:*

Some decisions, particularly those related to planning matters, have statutory timeframes that Council is required to meet. Again, as a small rural Shire, these are infrequent in Mingenew and could be managed through Special Meetings as required. It is anticipated that the number of special meetings required in a given year to address these matters would be less than the 5 Ordinary Meetings that would be potentially reduced through this proposal. Council also has the ability to set decision-making parameters through delegations to the CEO and can call for Special meetings where the timeline of set meetings is not suitable.

#### *Lead-time on Decisions:*

There may be some items, without statutory timeframes, that could take longer to be resolved (especially where decisions are required at consecutive meetings). The Shire is not aware of any matters that have been impacted. Again, important matters may and have been managed through a Special Council Meeting if required.

*Community Perception of Councillor Workload:*

There is a reputational risk that such a move could be seen as Councillors attempting to abrogate their responsibilities (whilst still collecting their annual fees). In larger local governments where Councillors receive higher fees, this risk would be very real. In Mingenew, Councillor fees are set at around one-third of the maximum allowed by SAT for a Band 4 Council and the role is largely viewed as a voluntary service. That said, this proposal will only reduce the number of Ordinary Meetings, not the overall volume of meeting papers that Councillors will need to review and consider. Further, the proposal does not intend to reduce the number of Concept Forum meetings, which will still occur monthly and which Councillors will still be expected to attend.

*Council Agenda Length and Councillor Workload:*

In contrast to the item above, there is a risk that two-monthly meetings could result in unreasonably large agendas for Council to consider. This risk can be managed, in part, by administrative staff seeking to spread items – where possible – across the calendar year (as currently happens through the use of our Governance Calendar). It may also be possible to release agendas further in advance of meetings to provide greater preparation time.

*Loss of Connection Between Council and the Administration:*

Council meetings are an opportunity for Councillors and senior staff to check in and maintain positive working relationships, which are important to the effective operation of the Shire. Whilst the proposal will reduce the number of Ordinary Meetings, Councillors and senior staff will still meet monthly at Concept Forum meetings, so this risk is minimal.

*Likely Efficiency Gains:*

As previously noted, staff would still be required to prepare a similar number of reports for Council, however time would be saved through:

- Reducing the number of times staff are required to:
  - o Review, format and compile agendas and attachment booklets
  - o Distribute agendas to Councillors and post to the Shire website

It is also expected that there would be a small reduction in the overall amount of time Councillors and staff generally spend in meetings.

**Trends and other Factors for consideration**

Increase in development applications (outside of delegated authority), trend in alternative, affordable build designs.

Local government reform – Standardised meeting procedures, recording of meetings, other reform proposals that could impact decision making and procedural requirements.



Local Government Ordinary Elections – every second-year local government ordinary elections are held, and it is typically necessary to hold a special meeting to swear in new Councillors, hold an election for the President and Deputy positions and nominate Council representatives for Committee and other meetings.

Under the two monthly meeting schedule, December council meetings are quite content heavy, and it is suggested that because of this and election commitments, the November meeting be scheduled in addition.

The Shire has received no specific feedback from members of the public on the move to bi-monthly meetings.

### 2025 Meetings – Monthly Meeting Schedule

The below table is only an indicative meeting schedule timeline, with the minimum, known (due to statutory requirements) or anticipated decision-making requirements. It does not identify the number or range of additional decision-making reports typically required throughout the year but based on the previous year's meeting content, it could be estimated there may be an additional 2-3 agenda items per month.

Date	Meeting Type	Proposed / Typical Meeting Agenda
3 February 2025	Local Emergency Management Committee	General Business Local Exercise
5 February 2025 (TBC)	Audit & Risk Committee	Compliance Audit Return 2024 Independent Member Appointment Risk Register Review
5 February 2025	Annual Meeting of Electors	Annual Report 2023/24 General Business
19 February 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Local Emergency Management Committee outcomes Audit & Risk Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – December 2024 Monthly Financial Report – January 2025 Accounts for Payment Annual Budget Review 2025 Annual Meeting of Electors outcomes Local Planning Scheme Review

10 March 2025 (TBC)	Local Emergency Management Committee	Review of Local Emergency Management Arrangements (informed by Feb 2025 exercise)
10 March 2025 (TBC)	Bush Fire Advisory Committee	Appoint BFCO / Election of Brigade Captains and Deputies Review Firebreak Notice 2025 Minimum Training Standards
19 March 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Local Emergency Management Committee outcomes Bush Fire Advisory Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – February 2025 Accounts for Payment
30 April 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – March 2025 Accounts for Payment Quarterly Budget Review Differential Rates and Minimum Payment Setting (if applicable)
21 May 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – April 2025 Accounts for Payment Regulation 17 and Financial Management Review outcomes Method for Conducting Local Government Ordinary Election 2025
10 June 2025 (TBC)	Audit & Risk Committee	Internal Audit Review – Q2 Audit Theme Review of Risk Register
18 June 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Audit & Risk Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – May 2025 Accounts for Payment Budget 2025/26 Long Term Financial Plan Review (2025-2036) Corporate Business Plan Review (2025-2029) Annual Delegation Register Review
16 July 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – June 2025 Accounts for Payment – Jun 2025 Policy Manual Review – Community Policies (biannual review)
28 July 2025 (TBC)	Executive Management Committee	CEO Performance Review 2024/2025
20 August 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Executive Management Committee outcomes

		Monthly Financial Report – July 2025 Accounts for Payment – Jul 2025 WALGA State Council Nominations
8 September 2025 (TBC)	Local Emergency Management Committee	General Business
8 September 2025 (TBC)	Bush Fire Advisory Committee	General Business
17 September 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – August 2025 Accounts for Payment – Aug 2025 Policy Manual Review – Finance Policies (annual review)
15 October 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – September 2025 Accounts for Payment – Sep 2025
19 November 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Swearing in of new Elected Members Election of President and Deputy Monthly Financial Report – October 2025 Accounts for Payment – Oct 2025 Nomination of Council Representatives and Committee Appointments (post-election) Policy Manual Review – Elected Member Policies (biannual review)
25 November 2025	Audit & Risk Committee	Annual Report 2024/25, Annual Financial Statements and Audit Report Internal Audit Plan – Q4 Audit Theme Risk Register Review
10 December 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Audit & Risk Committee meeting outcomes Monthly Financial Report – November 2025 Accounts for Payment – Nov 2025 Council Meeting Dates for 2026

## 2025 Meeting Schedule – **Bi-monthly Meetings**

The below table is only an indicative meeting schedule timeline, with the minimum, known (due to statutory requirements) or anticipated decision-making requirements. On average, based on a review of meeting content over the past year, there are typically an additional four agenda reports per meeting, with the highest number of agenda reports typically occurring in February, June and December.

Date	Meeting Type	Proposed / Typical Meeting Agenda
3 February 2025	Local Emergency Management Committee	General Business Local Exercise
5 February 2025 (TBC)	Audit & Risk Committee	Compliance Audit Return 2024 Independent Member Appointment Risk Register Review
5 February 2025	Annual Meeting of Electors	Annual Report 2023/24 General Business
19 February 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Local Emergency Management Committee outcomes Audit & Risk Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – December 2024 Monthly Financial Report – January 2025 Accounts for Payment – Dec 2024 and Jan 2025 2025 Annual Meeting of Electors outcomes Local Planning Scheme Review Annual Budget Review
10 March 2025 (TBC)	Local Emergency Management Committee	Review of Local Emergency Management Arrangements (informed by Feb 2025 exercise)
10 March 2025 (TBC)	Bush Fire Advisory Committee	Appoint BFCO / Election of Brigade Captains and Deputies Review Firebreak Notice 2025 Minimum Training Standards
30 April 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Local Emergency Management Committee outcomes Bush Fire Advisory Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – February 2025 Monthly Financial Report – March 2025 Accounts for Payment – Feb and March 2025 Quarterly Budget Review

		Differential Rates and Minimum Payment Setting (if applicable)
10 June 2025 (TBC)	Audit & Risk Committee	Internal Audit Review – Q2 Audit Theme Review of Risk Register
18 June 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Audit & Risk Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – April 2025 Monthly Financial Report – May 2025 Accounts for Payment – Apr and May 2025 Budget 2025/26 Long Term Financial Plan Review (2025-2036) Corporate Business Plan Review (2025-2029) Annual Delegation Register Review Regulation 17 and Financial Management Review outcomes Method for Conducting Local Government Ordinary Election 2025
28 July 2025 (TBC)	Executive Management Committee	CEO Performance Review 2024/2025
20 August 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Executive Management Committee outcomes Monthly Financial Report – June 2025 Monthly Financial Report – July 2025 Accounts for Payment – Jun and Jul 2024 WALGA State Council Nominations Policy Manual Review – Community Policies (biannual review)
8 September 2025 (TBC)	Local Emergency Management Committee	General Business
8 September 2025 (TBC)	Bush Fire Advisory Committee	General Business
15 October 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Monthly Financial Report – August 2025 Monthly Financial Report – September 2025 Accounts for Payment – Aug and Sep 2025 Policy Manual Review – Finance Policies (annual review)
19 November 2025	Special Council Meeting	Swearing in of new Elected Members Election of President and Deputy Monthly Financial Report – October 2025

		Accounts for Payment – Oct 2025 Nomination of Council Representatives and Committee Appointments (post-election) Policy Manual Review – Elected Member Policies (biannual review)
25 November 2025	Audit & Risk Committee	Annual Report 2024/25, Annual Financial Statements and Audit Report Internal Audit Plan – Q4 Audit Theme Risk Register Review
10 December 2025	Ordinary Council Meeting	Audit & Risk Committee meeting outcomes Monthly Financial Report – November 2025 Accounts for Payment – Nov 2025 Council Meeting Dates for 2026



## 1.2.18 DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR POLICY

### Administration

<b>Title:</b>	1.2.18 DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR POLICY
<b>Adopted:</b>	12 December 2024
<b>Reviewed:</b>	New Policy
<b>Associated Legislation:</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1995</i> <i>Freedom of Information act 1994</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure act 2003</i>
<b>Associated Documents:</b>	Shire of Mingenew Customer Service Charter Code of Conduct for Employees
<b>Review Responsibility:</b>	Governance & Community Manager
<b>Delegation:</b>	Nil.

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Previous Policy Number/s N/A

### Objective:

This policy explains how the Shire of Mingenew staff will deal with persons who:

- are aggressive complainants;
- are rude, abusive, and harassing complainants;
- cannot be satisfied despite the best efforts of the Shire;
- constantly raise the same issue with different staff; and/or
- make unreasonable demands on the Shire where resources are substantially and unreasonably diverted away from its other functions or unfairly allocated (compared to other customers).

### Scope

All workers (including employees, volunteers and contractors) with potential customer interaction.

### Policy Statement:

The Shire of Mingenew is committed to delivering excellence in customer service however, at times, a customer's demands or expectations may exceed the Shire's ability to deliver.

As a general rule, when a person approaches the Shire with a request, application, concern or complaint they first need to be heard, understood and respected.

Customers have a right to:

- be given an apology if required;
- be given information or an explanation;
- have action taken to address their concerns or fix their problem; and
- have the matter dealt with quickly, fairly and properly.

### A. Customers who cannot be satisfied:

Customers who cannot be satisfied include members of the public or groups who do not accept that the Shire is unable to assist them, provide any further assistance or level of service than has been provided already and/or disagree with the action the Shire has taken in relation to their complaint or concern.



If, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, a person cannot be satisfied and all appropriate avenues of internal review or appeal have been exhausted and the customer continues to write, telephone, email and/or visit, the following actions may be taken:

- The Chief Executive Officer may write to the customer, restating the Shire's position on the matter if necessary, advising that if the customer continues to contact the Shire regarding the matter, the Shire may:
  - not accept any further phone calls from the customer;
  - not grant any further meetings;
  - require all further communication to be put in writing; and
  - continue to receive, read and file correspondence but only acknowledge or otherwise respond to it if:
    - the customer provides significant new information relating to their complaint or concern; or
    - the customer raises new issues which in the Chief Executive Officer's opinion warrant fresh action.
- The Chief Executive Officer shall advise Councillors of a person who is deemed to be '*a person who cannot be satisfied*', the person's concerns, and any proposed management strategy by Shire Officers.

**B. Customers who make unreasonable demands:**

Customers who make unreasonable demands include members of the public whose demands on the Shire start to significantly and unreasonably divert Shire resources away from other functions or create an inequitable allocation of resources to other customers. Such demands may result from the amount of information requested, the nature or scale of services sought or the number of approaches seeking information, assistance or service.

If in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer a customer is making unreasonable demands on staff and the customer continues to write, email, telephone and /or visit the offices the following actions may be taken:

- The Chief Executive Officer may write to the customer advising them of the Shire's concern and requesting that they limit and focus their requests and that if the customer continues to place unreasonable demands, staff may:
  - Not respond to any future correspondence and only take action where, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer the correspondence raises specific, substantial and serious issues; or
  - Only respond to a certain number of requests in a given period.
- If the customer continues to contact staff after being advised of the proposed course of action, the Chief Executive Officer may, after considering representations from the customer, advise the customer that either or both of the points listed above will now apply.

**C. Customers who constantly raise the same issue with different staff:**

If, in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer, a customer is constantly raising the same issues with different staff or elected members, the Chief Executive Officer may notify the customer that:

- only a nominated staff member will deal with them in the future;
- they must make an appointment with that person if they wish to discuss a matter; or
- all future contact with Shire must be in writing.





The customer may wish to make a formal complaint in accordance with the Shire's Customer Service Charter.

**D. Customers who are rude, abusive or aggressive:**

The Shire of Mingenew will not tolerate or condone intimidating or offensive behaviour toward staff members by members of the public under any circumstances. Any staff member who is the victim of such behaviour may, at their own discretion, refuse service and if warranted, report the matter to Police for further action.

Rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour may include rude or otherwise vulgar noises, expressions or gestures, verbal abuse of a personal or general nature, threatening or offensive behaviour, physical violence against property or physical violence against a person.

If, in the opinion of any staff member, rude, abusive or aggressive comments or statements are made in telephone conversations or in person, the staff member may:

- warn the caller that if the behaviour continues the conversation or interview/meeting will be terminated;
- terminate the conversation or interview/meeting if the rude, abusive or aggressive behaviour continues after a warning has been given.

Where a conversation or interview/meeting is terminated, the staff member must notify their relevant Line Manager of the details as soon as possible.

Where a member of the public has displayed inappropriate behaviour towards a worker, and a worker is required to enter the person's property for a valid reason in the course of Shire business, and is authorised to do so, the worker may be accompanied by another more senior, experienced worker or the police, as appropriate. This may also be appropriate where the Shire business is in response to a non-compliance matter, where the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour increases.

If in the opinion of the Chief Executive Officer any correspondence to the Shire contains personal abuse, inflammatory statements or materials clearly intended to intimidate, it will be returned to the sender and not otherwise acted upon.

Violence, damage to property or threatening behaviour may be reported to the Police, depending on the severity of the actions

**E. Documentation and reporting:**

In all of the situations referred to in this policy, adequate documentary records must be made and maintained on the appropriate file.

If an elected member feels that a customer is being difficult in a manner specified in this policy, they may notify the Chief Executive Officer who will consider taking action as per avenues described above.

Where the Chief Executive Officer determines to limit a customer's access in any of the ways specified in this policy, the Chief Executive Officer will advise Councillors as soon as possible of the relevant circumstances



and the action taken and forward such advice, where appropriate, to the Department of Local Government and the Western Australian Ombudsman for information.

### **Right of Appeal**

Customers are entitled to one appeal of a decision to change/ restrict their access to Council's services. This review will be undertaken by a senior staff member who was not involved in the original decision to change or restrict the customer's access. This staff member will consider the customer's arguments along with all relevant records regarding the customer's past conduct. They will advise the customer of the outcome of their appeal by letter which must be signed off by the General Manager. The staff member will then refer any materials/ records relating to the appeal to the Public Officer to be kept in the appropriate file.

If a customer continues to be dissatisfied after the appeal process, they may seek an external review from an oversight agency such as the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman may accept the review (in accordance with its administrative jurisdiction) to ensure that Council have acted fairly, reasonably and consistently and have observed the principles of good administrative practice including, procedural fairness.

### **Managing health and safety**

Dealing with customers who are demanding, abusive, aggressive or violent can be extremely stressful and at times distressing or even frightening for Councillors and staff – both experienced and inexperienced. It is perfectly normal to get upset or experience stress when dealing with difficult situations.

As an organisation, Council has a health and safety responsibility to support workers who experience stress as a result of situations arising at work and will do its best to provide Councillors and staff with debriefing and counselling opportunities, as needed. The Employee Assistance Program is also available on an as needs basis.



# Customer Service Charter

## OUR VISION

Mingenew Shire is a safe, inclusive and connected community with a thriving local economy that provides opportunity for all to succeed.

## WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

### People

Council will work with our community and region to shape opportunities for Mingenew to grow and prosper. Council will provide key services that retain and improve the quality of life in Mingenew. Together we will be a place where people are welcomed, can live a healthy life and where people can reach their potential.

### Place

Council will work to deliver infrastructure, facilities, and community services that assist the community to have a great life. Mingenew will be a positive place to live and will be cohesive and connected. It will engage and attract new people to come share our special place. A healthy natural resource base underpins the health of our community.

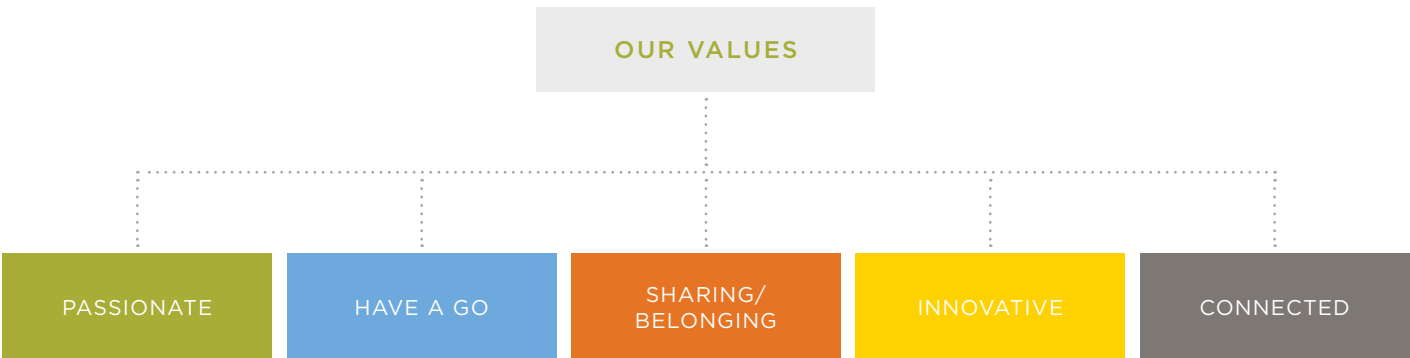
### Partnerships

The leadership, energy, capability and resources of the Mingenew community and region is a great asset, and we must leverage it wherever possible. Together we will plan and deliver projects and initiatives that deliver on growth goals.

### Prosperity

Council will work with local businesses (town and rural) to create an enabling environment for businesses to thrive. In turn, those businesses will generate employment, attract families to Mingenew and create enterprises in which people can reach their potential.

## OUR VALUES



## CONTACT US

**ADDRESS** 21 Victoria St, Mingenew, WA 6522  
**POST** PO Box 120, Mingenew, WA 6522  
**PHONE** (08) 9928 1102  
**EMAIL** [enquiries@mingenew.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@mingenew.wa.gov.au)  
**WEBSITE** [www.mingenew.wa.gov.au](http://www.mingenew.wa.gov.au)  
**FACEBOOK** [facebook.com/ShireofMingenew](https://facebook.com/ShireofMingenew)

## CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

The Shire of Mingenew welcomes your feedback. Access the customer feedback form via the Shire website:  
[www.mingenew.wa.gov.au/contact-us/](http://www.mingenew.wa.gov.au/contact-us/)

## Customer service commitment

The Shire of Mingenew is committed to delivering excellence in customer service that reflects the Shire's Values and upholds the principles of good governance.

## CONTACT AND SERVICE STANDARDS

### 1. Answering the telephone

We aim to answer calls promptly (within 3 rings if reception is manned or within 6 rings if not) and satisfy your request immediately. Where this is not possible, your call may be referred to the relevant officer. If that person is unavailable, you will be given the opportunity to leave a message or have that person call you. All first point-of-contact staff answering the phone will provide a welcoming greeting and include their name and state the Shire's name. E.g. "Thanks for calling the Shire of Mingenew, you're speaking with \_\_\_\_\_." If the service you are seeking is not provided by the Shire, we will endeavour to direct you to the correct service provider.

### 2. In person

We will ensure that we are available to greet customers at reception during business hours and, if possible, that staff are available to answer enquiries in departmental areas. We can ensure relevant staff will be available if you assist us by making an appointment in advance. Where the front counter is unattended, a bell or other means will be available to help attract staff attention.

### 3. Written contact

We will respond to your written correspondence within ten (10) business days. If your request is more complex and requires greater attention, we will contact you and explain the reason for any delay and, where possible, tell you when a response can be expected. If prolonged investigations are needed, we will keep you informed on the progress. All reply correspondence will have a name and contact phone number for your reference.

### 4. Visits by Shire staff

Any Shire staff visiting your home, business or property, will be identifiable. If you have any doubt about the authority of a particular officer, you should contact the Shire Offices for confirmation. If you require a member of staff to visit your home, business or property, please contact the Shire Offices to arrange a time and place.

### 5. Shire website

The Shire of Mingenew's website is maintained to ensure that online content responds to most queries, and we suggest this as an initial source of information regarding our services. The website includes a great range of publications and links – catering for residents, visitors and anyone interested to learn more about our great community!

### 6. Responding via social media

The Shire's Facebook page is monitored regularly, and you can generally expect a response within one (1) business day. Please note that the Shire does not monitor any other Facebook pages such as community noticeboards, therefore please ensure that any matters are raised directly with us.

### 7. Responding via email

We will get back to you within ten (10) business days. Where we are out of the office for more than 1 week there will be an autoreply in place.

### 8. Contact with Elected Members

Liaison with your Elected Members is encouraged, and their contact details are available on the Shire's website. However, should you wish to have an operational matter dealt with, the fastest way is to report this is through the Administration. Please see the Contact Us section for details.

### 9. Alternative formats and special considerations

The Shire is able to provide information and access to services in alternative formats upon request. Please speak with staff should you, or someone you care for, have a disability or cultural need.

### 10. After hours contact

The Shire offers an after hours service whereby all calls made outside of office hours are referred to a call centre. Details are recorded and action is taken based on urgency. The appropriate Shire officer is contacted, or a message is issued to the appropriate officer the next business day. Please provide details as prompted and ensure you have accurate and important information relating to the matter at the ready.

Please respect our staff's right to enjoy time away from work and refer any matters through the means provided above.

## COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND REQUESTS

A complaint is different to a suggestion, a request for service or a request for information. For convenience, the following definitions are provided:

- **Complaint** – a statement of dissatisfaction by a customer regarding the unsatisfactory delivery of a product or service offered by the Shire or the unsatisfactory conduct of Shire staff.  
**Example:** After advising your neighbour of the disturbance to no effect, you wish to formally complain about a consistently barking dog or you believe that in an interaction with Shire staff you have been discriminated against.
- **Compliment** – positive feedback about a product or service or Shire staff member.  
**Example:** You would like to recognise and thank the Shire for an event that was successful and provided positive benefits to you, your family or a community group you represent.
- **Suggestion** – suggested service/product improvement or an innovation or idea.  
**Example:** You have noticed some information on our website is not up to date or you become aware of an initiative for generating renewable energy that could be adapted and used in our community.
- **Request for information** – an enquiry or request for information about our services, facilities, policies or procedures.  
**Example:** You would like to know the requirements for building a shed on your property.
- **Request for service** - request for action to be taken in relation to a service or product.  
**Example:** You have recently driven on one of our roads that is quite corrugated and would like us to inspect its condition and repair/grade if required.

### How complaints will be handled

1. When we receive your complaint it will be recorded and you will receive acknowledgement from us that your complaint has been received.
2. Your complaint will be directed to the most appropriate person within the Shire of Mingenew who will be responsible for keeping you up to date on the progress of your complaint. Throughout the process, we may need to contact you to discuss your concerns or to ask for more information.
3. Providing us with current contact details (such as a telephone number or email address) will ensure we provide a response as soon as possible.
4. After investigating we will respond and aim to resolve your complaint – giving reasons for our view.
5. We will do our best to resolve your complaint within ten (10) working days, but if we require more time, we will keep you informed of our progress.

Please note that the Shire is unable to accept anonymous formal complaints as this does not provide an acceptable level of accountability and procedural fairness.

The Shire values your privacy and, unless required to do so by law, will keep your personal information confidential and not disclose without your consent. Complaints regarding the conduct of staff should be referred to the CEO or Governance Officer to ensure sensitivity and confidentiality is maintained and procedural justice can be protected. Complaints regarding the conduct of Elected Members must be reported to the designated 'Complaints Officer' in accordance with s5.105 of the Local Government Act 1995, which is the Chief Executive Officer. A Complaints Register is maintained and published on the Shire's website.

### How your information or work request will be handled

1. When we receive your request, if it cannot be responded to on the spot, we will record and acknowledge the request.
2. Your request will be directed to the most appropriate person within the Shire of Mingenew who will be responsible for keeping you up to date on the progress of your request.
3. We will do our best to meet your request, or, if not appropriate to do so, we will advise of any delays or issues.
4. All requests requiring urgent action will be prioritised for action within one (1) business day (or sooner, as deemed appropriate) where the health and safety of members of the public, staff or property is at risk.
5. Where possible, we will contact you within ten (10) business days to advise that:
  - the request has been met;
  - is scheduled for action (timeframe to be set and met);
  - will be considered for action beyond the current financial year;
  - the request has been referred to another agency;
  - further information is required before a decision is made; or
  - the request will not be met (reasons to be provided).

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

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The Shire of Mingenew is committed to delivering excellence in customer service that reflects the Shire's Values and upholds the principles of good governance.

When you contact us you can expect to be treated courteously, professionally, honestly and fairly.

We are committed to:

- Responding to your enquiries promptly
- Dealing with complaints fairly, promptly and with respect
- Keeping you informed and engaging with you on topics of interest
- Providing an open and accessible Shire.

### Help us to help you

There are some things you can do that will assist us in better handling your enquiry or request:

- Check our website for the information or resources you may need;
- Supply us with complete and relevant information;
- Provide information within the agreed timeframes;
- Treat our staff courteously and with respect;
- Respect the rights of other customers;
- Make an appointment to see us so we can arrange the best possible time;
- Advise us of any special needs you may have so that we can accommodate for diversity and disability;
- Provide us with feedback on our operation and services;
- Give us an opportunity to respond to issues you may have;
- Understand that sometimes, because of our legislative and statutory responsibilities, the Shire may be unable to comply with your request or certain matters might take longer to resolve than expected;
- Understand that the Shire of Mingenew's staff reserve the right to not deal with you should your behaviour and/or actions be unacceptable.

