

Shire of West Arthur

(Draft)Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2012 -2016

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

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Acknowledgements

The Shire of Shire of West Arthur acknowledges the input received from many individuals and groups within the community, which has been invaluable in the review of this Disability Access Inclusion Plan.

In particular, thanks are given to Home and Community Care, Westcare, Community Nurse, Seniors Coordinator, Health Services and Aged Friendly Community Committee, Council employees and individual community members.

Background

The Shire of West Arthur

The Shire of West Arthur is located in the Central Wheatbelt region of Western Australia encompasses an area of 2,850 square kilometres.

The Shire is situated in a prosperous mixed farming area with a population of approximately 890 people. Local industries include wool, sheep, timber, grain, forestry, beef, engineering and earthmoving.

The main town of Darkan is a mix of retail and commercial centres, recreation, local government and community facilities.

As a long established area, the Arthur River Precinct contains a number of historical buildings. There are also historical buildings at Duranillin, Moodiarrup and Bowelling.

Within the Shire are Lake Towerrinning and many reserves popular with locals and tourists.

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

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

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

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

Regulatory services: planning of road systems, sub-divisions and town planning schemes; building approvals for construction, additions or alterations to buildings; environmental health services and ranger services, including dog control and the development, maintenance and control of parking.

General administration: the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates, dog licences and Department for Planning and Infrastructure licensing services.

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

People with disabilities in the Shire of West Arthur:

It is estimated that there are around 197 people with disabilities living within the Shire, 21.7% of the permanent population of 904 (the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003) estimate that 20.6% of Australians identify themselves as having some form of disability) and 12.6 per cent of the population are carers. If the Shire has an increase in the number of retirees, this will have an impact as according to the ABS predictions:

- Over the 20-year period from 2006–2026, most of the increase in the numbers of Western Australians with disabilities will be a result of population ageing.
- The number of older Western Australians with disabilities will increase substantially as the 'baby boomers' move into age groups in which disability is more prevalent. There will be an overall increase of 115.7 per cent from 136,700 in 2006 to 294,800 in 2026.
- The overall increase for those aged under 65 years is only 18.0 per cent, representing an annual increase of 0.8 per cent, slightly less than the total population increase of 1.1 per cent. Most of the Commission's service users are drawn from this group.

Four million Australians (18.5%) had a disability in 2009, according to findings from the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Planning for better access

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

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

Progress since 1995

The Shire of West Arthur is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information facilities and services. Towards this goal the Shire adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the access barriers within the community.

The Shire developed a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) in 2007. Since the adoption of the initial DSP and the DAIP, the Shire has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access. Some of these are highlighted in Appendix 1 under the relevant key outcome headings of the 2007 DAIP.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The Shire of West Arthur interprets an accessible and inclusive community as one in which all Council functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) are open, available and accessible to people with disabilities, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as other people in the community.

The Shire of West Arthur:

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

These are:

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

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Community/Executive Support Officer has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan. The final plan is endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Community consultation process

In 2012, the Shire undertook to review its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) consult with key stakeholders and update the DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DAIP and subsequent progress reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- consultation with key staff;
- consultation with the community
- reference to the Age-Friendly Communities study conducted in 2010 and
- consultation with HACC, Health Services and Aged Friendly Community Committee, St John's Ambulance, Seniors Coordinator, Council staff, Seniors and community members.

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

The following consultation methods were used:

- In May 2012 the community was informed by inviting people to identify any barriers for a DAIP through the local newspaper, posters on local notice boards and the Shire's website that the Shire was reviewing the DAIP to address barriers to access for people with disabilities and their families. They were invited to provide input either in writing, by telephone or in person. Comments were received by written submissions in person and phone calls.
- Drafts of the Plan were distributed to members of the Health Services and Aged Friendly Community Committee to gain feedback on barriers and strategies to address them in November 2012. Elected Members of Council were asked for input via the weekly Councillor Update. Shire employees were asked for their input to the plan and to identify any areas of need.
- The Community Nurse, Home and Community Care, Westcare agencies, Arthritis Support Group, local St John Ambulance volunteers, Shire Councillors and Health and Resource Centre staff were consulted and asked for their input into the plan.
- Individual Councillors and Shire employees made contact with residents to discuss the barriers to services and facilities.
- The draft plan was advertised in "The Bleat" newspaper and placed on the Shires website and comments invited in October/November 2012.
- The final plan was endorsed by the Health Services and Aged Friendly Community Committee and presented to Council at the December 2012 Council meeting, where it was endorsed.

Findings of the consultation

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

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

Access Barriers

The access barriers identified in the consultation process were:

- Wheelchair access onto beach at Lake Towerrinning.
- Tree roots are a hazard when walking around town.
- Nangip Crescent is dangerous to walkers at the corner of Arthur St as pedestrians have to walk on the road and cars are unable to see them clearly.
- Elderly ladies having difficulty opening the toilet door in the Community Resource Centre. (Staff assist the elderly /frail to open doors when required. Staff will promote the use of the availability of a Disabled toilet with an easy open door).
- Darkan Town Hall kitchen taps are difficult to reach at the sink and bench height is also a problem for those of less than average height.
- More footpaths around town with proper ramps to ensure it is easy to get up and down from them. Some streets have no footpath on either side – e.g. Fisher St between Hillman and Arthur.
- Shire office front doors are quite difficult for some of the elderly and parents with prams.

The Seniors Room issues:

- Air conditioning/heating.
- Ramp access to rear door.
- Disabled toilet required (the one in the hall is located a long way from the room).
- Chairs with arm rests.
- The lighting in the current Disabled toilet is not adequate.
- Parking area adjacent to Seniors Room needs improvement.
- At present the room is an adequate size, but if numbers increase then the size will become a problem. Also the acoustics are very bad, and as most of the Senior's have hearing problems, at times find the noise a hindrance.

The access barriers identified in the Aged Friendly Study:

Outdoor spaces and buildings:

- Footpaths need attention particularly Hillman Street.
- More seating needed in Railway Reserve opposite Post Office.
- Poor access to Shire building.

- Public toilet too far from Skate Park.
- Rear access of Community Resource Centre (CRC) needs cementing for ambulance access.

Transportation:

- No public transport.
- HACC bus once a fortnight and occasionally does not come from Wagin if needed there.
- HACC car for local transport.
- Need community bus to reduce social isolation and increase activities.
- Need to have over 85 years driving test in Darkan.
- People still parking incorrectly opposite CRC.

Housing:

- Darkan perceived as very safe. Cottage homes good but more needed and some sort of hostel style accommodation with overnight supervision.
- New aged housing need to take into account access for St John's Ambulance especially if a stretcher required.
- Maintenance urgently needed on cottage homes.
- Home modifications not always timely, adequate or followed up.

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

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

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

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

- In October 2012 copies of the draft DAIP review were sent to all those who contributed to the review process. The Health and Aged Care Committee approved the reviewed Plan in November 2012 which was formally endorsed by Council at the December 2012 ordinary Council Meeting.
- The community was informed through the local media (newspaper and Shire website) that copies of the plan were available upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on CD, by email and on the Shire's website.
- As plans are amended Shire staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the above methods.

When Council adopts the Plan it will then:

- Be placed on the Shire website
- Advertised in the local newspaper "The Bleat"
- Copies made available via email and hard copies from the Shire office.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

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

Monitoring and Reviewing

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

- The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed and submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2017. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2012 -2016.

Evaluation

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

Reporting on the DAIP

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

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

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

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

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

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services.	ongoing
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	ongoing
Ensure suitable access to the information in the library.	ongoing
Continue to link between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies.	ongoing
Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities.	ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	Ongoing
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	Ongoing
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location. Ensure the bays are marked and the kerb on to the road is easily manoeuvred.	Ongoing
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues.	Ongoing
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request.	February 2013
Improve employee awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats.	Ongoing
Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice.	February 2013

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all employees, existing and new, and elected members are aware of disability and access issues and have the skills to provide appropriate services.	March 2013

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.	May 2013

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.	October 2015
Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.	May 2013

Appendix 1

Progress since 2005 under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

1. Existing functions, facilities and services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Large print, Talking books and “Playaway” mp3 books are available in a clearly signed location in the library.
- Hand rails installed in the toilets in Music and Drama rooms for use by Seniors.
- Children’s toilets have been installed at Kids Central the Darkan Sport and Community Centre.
- High back chairs and couches were provided for the Health and Resource Centre waiting areas.
- New footpaths have been installed in the Darkan town site.
- A priority bin service was developed to assist people who are unable to move their bin to and from the kerbside.

2. Access to buildings and facilities has been improved.

- A Disabled parking bay was located at the front of the Health and Resource Centre building, including kerb and ramp modifications.
- The Darkan Sport and Community Centre extensions:
 - An accessible toilet has been built and can be accessed from both Kids Central and the Sports Club.
 - All new paving is set at floor level allowing easy access for wheelchairs and prams.
 - Ramps have been installed to access the hard courts.
 - A pram and wheelchair access gate has been installed at the bowling green.
- Steps have been installed in the swimming pool to create an easy access entry area.
- Unisex accessible public toilets were built at Arthur River, Lake

Towerrinning and Duranillin

- Luminous kerbside street numbering has been installed in the Darkan town site.
- Paths in the Nangip Creek Reserve were topped with limestone to create a more stable walking surface.
- Plans for extensions to the Community Resource Centre include a male and female accessible toilets while retaining the current accessible toilet. The new entrance will be pram/gopher/wheelchair friendly.

3. Information about functions, facilities and services is provided in formats which meet the communication needs of people with disabilities.

- Information was made available in alternative formats on request.
- The availability of alternative format information was promoted via local newspaper and Shire publications.

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

- Key Shire employees received disability awareness information.

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

- Information on consultations was simplified and made available in alternative formats upon request.
- Municipal election voting is now conducted by postal ballot, removing the need for voters to attend centres to vote.
- A Hazard Report Form was developed and made available for residents to report hazards in the Shire that require attention.
- An Aged Friendly forum was held to determine the current and future needs of the Shire's senior residents.

Shire of West Arthur

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Implementation Plan 2012 – 2013

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each broad strategy to be implemented in 2012-2013 to progress the strategies of the DAIP.

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

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised, by the Shire of West Arthur			
Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services.	Involvement in preparation of Community Plans. Review of consultation process to ensure people with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute ideas(i.e. hall, CRC).	March 2013 June 2013	CEO Disability Services Coordinator
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct reviews of the accessibility of services. • Rectify identified barriers and provide feedback to consumers. 	June 2013 Ongoing	Disability Services Coordinator
Ensure suitable access to the information in the library.	Review of services and suitable materials to ensure equitable access and needs met.	June 2013	Library Manager
Continue links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Planning 	June 2013	CEO
Ensure that events, whether provided or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist and advise all staff. 	Ongoing	Disability Services Coordinator

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review identified access barriers and hazards (such as tree roots on paths) to buildings and facilities. • Work on rectifying identified barriers. 	April 2013 June 2013	Shire Builder/Works Manager Shire Builder Shire Builder/Works Manager Shire Builder
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities including the proposed Darkan Hall renovations. • Ensure that no development application is signed off without a declaration that it meets the legal requirements. • Ensure that key staff are trained and kept up to date with the legal requirements. 	April 2013(Hall) Ongoing Ongoing	Shire Builder Shire CEO Building/Health Officer Disability Services Coordinator
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in quantity and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure new parking lots comply(i.e Darkan Sport and Community Centre). 	February 2013	Works Manager

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for, and benefits flowing from, the provision of accessible venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform proprietors during routine inspections and enquiries regarding new ventures or modifications. 	Ongoing	Environmental Health Officer
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the implementation of the program of footpath upgrades including access ramps. • Remove trees that create hazards from tree roots and replace damaged sections. 	Ongoing June 2013	Works Manager Works Manager

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all documents carry a notation that it is available in alternative formats. • Publicise the availability of other formats in the local newspaper “The Bleat” 	Ongoing February 2013	All administration staff Disability Services Coordinator
Improve employee awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities guidelines available on the Shire employee intranet site. • Train employees in providing accessible information. 	February 2013 Ongoing	Deputy CEO Disability Services Coordinator
Ensure that the Shire’s website meets contemporary good practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop website to ensure it complies with the W3C web content guidelines. 	May 2013 May 2013	Deputy CEO CEO

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that elected members and employees are aware of access needs and can provide appropriate services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of knowledge and training needs of employees and conduct training as required.• Ensure reports to council include reference to statutory and moral standards.	Ongoing Ongoing	Disability Services Coordinator All Officers

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any recommendations. • Develop web-based forms for making complaints. 	May 2013 May 2013	Disability Services Coordinator Deputy CEO

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with Health Services and Aged Community Committee to provide comment on access and inclusion issues. 	May 2013	Disability Services Coordinator
Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are published on the Shire's website. Advertise in "The Bleat" 	February 2013	Administration staff & Deputy CEO