



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

2013 - 2017

The plan will be available in alternative formats such as large print or electronic format (disk or emailed, on request. Please ask the Shire of Laverton for assistance if you require one of these formats.

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Acknowledgements

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

Background

The Shire of Laverton

The Shire of Laverton is located in the north eastern Goldfields region and covers an area of 183,198 square kilometres. The Shire's main industries include mining - gold and nickel, pastoral and tourism.

The major town, Laverton is located on the Laverton/Leonora Highway with a population of approximately 300. The town was established in the late 19th century and has retained some heritage-listed public buildings from this period.

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

The Shire of Laverton 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 pool; public library and information services; youth services and community events; Great Beyond Visitor Centre, tourism and heritage.

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 and dog licences.

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

Planning for better access

The *Disability Services Act* (1993) requires all local Governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). The Disability Services Regulations were amended in June 2013. The amendments included changing the terminology to now refer to people with "disability" not people with "disabilities". A DAIP is about specific plans to ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services. Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the *Equal Opportunity Act* (1984) and the *Disability Discrimination Act*

1992 (DA), both of which make discrimination on the basis of a person's disability unlawful.

Progress since 1995

The Shire of Laverton is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability 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.

Key achievements since 2006

For a remote small town, the Shire's focus has been as much on the 'inclusive' part of the planning, as it has been on disability. In 2012 the sport and recreation services re-started, after almost two years without a service, in partnership with the Department of Local Government and Communities. This resulted in far more opportunities for young people, outside of their school hours. The service is especially beneficial for older youth at risk who are unhappy or unable to continue with schooling but unable to find employment.

Another example of a renewed focus on inclusiveness is that the Community Development team has begun to (re)-build a trust relationship with Aboriginal leaders and elders. For example the Community Resource Centre has worked hard to welcome all people. More than half of the clients are non-white. This is significant in the context of Laverton's background and demographics. Many public meetings held are sensitive to the needs and wishes of many Aboriginal people, regarding where they are comfortable meeting, the type of meeting format and when to meet. This has changed from trying to get the aboriginal people to meet in a location set by the Shire.

The focus of inclusiveness includes the planning for elderly people to be better involved in the community. An example of this is the donation of the Shire's bus for use on ANZAC day. This service was especially used by older residents to allow them to get from one event to another on the day.

The Council's forward planning for upgrading of the main street and replacement of some of the public facilities such as the pool and youth centre have been fully focused on including best practice design regarding people with disability. At all steps of the planning, staff and Councillors discussed the fundamental requirement that new public facilities be designed and operated in a way to be fully utilised by all in the local community.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

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

The Shire of Laverton:

- recognises that people with disability 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 disability, their families and carers should be supported to remain in the community
- is committed to consulting with people with disability, 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 disability, and
- is committed to achieving the seven desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The desired outcomes are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disability 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 disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Executive Manager Corporate & Community Services 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.

A progress report to the Disability Services Commission was completed in 2012 by a contract Project Officer as part of their policy and compliance work.

Community consultation process

In the 2013 review of the plan, and finalisation process, the following process was used:

- An internal review of the document Included examination of the previous plans and subsequent progress reports to determine what has been achieved and is still required
- Distribution of the draft; advertisement in local newspaper, group emails, social media and posters
- Consultation involved various agencies contributing ideas such as Breaking the Cycle and Midwest Aboriginal Employment and Economic Development (MEEDAC) Incorporated
- Various meetings were held with representatives from the hospital so as to fit with their shift work schedules
- A draft of the revised DAIP was provided to the Disability Services Commission for feedback
- The final plan completed and presented to Council for adoption
- Final plan submitted to the Commission

Findings of the 2013 consultation

There was a strong level of understanding that often the issue is about limited resources in a small town being balanced with the desire to provide best practice access and inclusiveness. Discussions about infrastructure needs, for example, always included an element of reality about people weighing up the costs and stating what they viewed as the highest priority.

All feedback had a consensus on the following priorities:

- Improving public toilets accessibility would significantly improve the town; the town hall's toilets were considered the highest priority as that space is used for funerals, public events and community activities (currently the cubicles are narrow and all doorways open inward)
- Existing footpaths would be improved if seating with shade could be provided
- Solving the lack of footpaths at the roundabout and onto the hospital was urgent

Note regarding timing: Respondents acknowledged the Shire's planning of substantial infrastructure upgrades for the main street but all respondents asked if

the priority areas could be addressed in a timely manner regardless of the progress of the main street project.

The following ideas were proposed by individuals, that whilst they were not viewed as a priority by others it is relevant to mention them as they may be important for consideration in the future reviews of the DAIP. Those ideas were:

- a pedestrian crossing be on the main street
- a new footpath and gateway be added to the Laverton Leonora Cross Cultural Association art gallery entrance
- brochures and museum displays in braille
- seating to be added to the oval's boundaries

As noted above, all conversations included the reality of knowing not everything could be done immediately so these ideas remain strongly relevant.

Many of the access barriers that were identified in the 2006 consultation process remain applicable and addressing those remains important to the Shire of Laverton:

- Processes of the Shire may not be as accessible as possible.
- Events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disability.
- Elements of the Shire's future website will require consideration of how to best meet the needs of people with disability.
- Staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to adequately provide the same level of service to people with disability.
- People with disability may not be aware of consultation opportunities with the Shire.

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.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The *Disability Services Act* requires that the DAIP is reviewed at least every five years. All consultation procedures as set out in the Disability Services Act 1993 will be followed by the Shire. 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 2013. The review of the Shire's DAIP 2006 -2010, was due in 2011 but not completed until 2013.

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* (1993) 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; and
- the strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP

In regards to informing stakeholders, the Shire of Laverton intends that the final plan will be available at the Shire office and the Community Resource Centre and a final copy will be sent to all stakeholders, especially those who generously provided feedback on the draft. The future Shire website will also have public documents available for download, such as the 2013 DAIP. The 2014 budget process by senior staff and Councillors will also utilise this planning document.

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 seven desired outcome areas of the Disability Services Act from feedback gained in the consultation process. These will form the basis of the Implementation Plan.

The **priorities**, as of 2013, are also listed on page 6 regarding the findings of the 2013 consultation.

Outcome 1

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Engage consultants to assess cost effective solutions to existing old style toilets in all public buildings. Regarding construction budgets the Town Hall toilets are the highest priority & public toilets open after hours are the second priority (see Outcome 2, regarding local businesses)	2014/15
Re-set many existing brick footpaths so as to improve access (currently uneven surface but bricks in good condition). Highest priority from community is Laver Place and the Hall area; community feedback is that prior to the Main Street Project plans being implemented, the re-doing of paths would be a modest investment for a substantial benefit	2014/15
Consider improving access to the current pool, from the existing car park, prior to the new recreational centre being built	2014/15
Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services	Ongoing
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion	Ongoing
Develop the links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies	Strategic Community Development Plan of Goals 1.3, 1.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disability, where practicable	Ongoing

Outcome 2

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need	Ongoing
Add electronic push button buzzers, so someone can get assistance with the heavy doors at the Shire Chambers and the Community Resource Centre; a staff member manually opens the existing doors when someone buzzes for assistance	2015/16 Cheaper than removal of unsuitable barrier screens and heavy timber doors
Cemetery pathways; when the Friends of Cemetery program begins, consideration will be given to accessibility of people with a disability	2015/16
Proposed new public buildings such as the multi-purpose recreational centre will increase access of people with disability (current gym does not meet requirements)	Planning for centre underway. Funding applications to proceed once planning is complete. Priority in 2013 consultation was access to & within the pool
Improve footpath access to the hospital and BP Fuel station – high priority as mentioned in many consultations - current south side Augusta Street does not have a graded kerb for wheelchair access or an island so people use the road	2015/16
Consider forward planning for pathway on Weld Drive	2015/16
Consider improving paths to the playgroup and other leased building, MacPherson Place	2014/15
Add outdoor seating with shade along key existing footpaths (could also link to heritage and/or arts funding for themed walks in town)	2014/15, 2015/16
Pram and mobility access to the renewed playground's new shade shelters	2013/14
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability, where practicable	Recommitted to, by Shire
The Main Street project and associated works including parking meets the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location	2013-14, 2014-15
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues - Links to Outcome 1 regarding improving toilets; if a consultant was hired, local businesses may also want to utilise their skills	ongoing

Outcome 3

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request	Ongoing
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats	Ongoing
Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice	2013/14

Outcome 4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the employees of a public authority as other people receive from the employees of that public authority

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure that all employees and Elected Members are aware of disability and access issues and have the skills to provide appropriate service	Ongoing awareness training
Improve community awareness about disability and access issues	Promotional campaign linked to new website

Outcome 5

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disability and are acted upon.	Ongoing

Outcome 6

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure that people with disability are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes	Stakeholders consulted in 2013
Ensure that people with disability are aware of and can access other established consultative processes	Ongoing

Outcome 7

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

Strategy	2013 Comments
Ensure all staff involved in recruitment have the awareness and resources required to implement non-discriminatory interview processes	Ongoing
Access training, where available at a reasonable cost, to ensure officers involved in the recruitment processes are aware of best practice standards in regards to staff recruitment and ongoing employment of people with disability	2014/15