



Shire of Laverton Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2024



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Shire of Laverton Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2024

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Shire of Laverton Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2024

1.0 Introduction

Local governments have unique knowledge of and close connections with their communities. Interaction between ratepayers and council staff occur at many levels and in a variety of ways and settings, which enable the actions of local governments to be closely guided by their communities.

This is important as the actions of local governments have a direct impact on those who live within their boundaries.

The 2019-2024 Shire of Laverton Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP or the Plan) has been created as a result of engagement with real people who are at risk of exclusion in community life. A series of conversations with Shire of Laverton staff, contractors, disability service providers, community organisations, people with disabilities and their families have been essential in the development of this DAIP.

This DAIP follows on from the Shire of Laverton's 2013-2019 plan by incorporating lessons learnt and identifying recurring themes raised by the community to make the Plan relevant, useful and achievable.

The DAIP aims to improve access for all. This includes not just people with a permanent disability, but also parents with young children and prams, the elderly and people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as those community members who have a temporary impairment.

2.0 Legislation and strategic influences

The Disability Services Act 1993 (WA) and its 2004 amendments, require that all State and local government authorities implement a DAIP.

The purpose is for the relevant authority to ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services. Other legislation relevant to access and inclusion includes:

- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA).
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act – Access to Premises/Buildings 2011 (DDA).
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) aims to support a better life for Australians with a significant and permanent disability, their families and carers. This scheme is currently being implemented across Australia and will assist people with disability.

3.0 What is a disability?

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities.

The Disability Services Act 1993 (WA) defines disability as something which:

- Is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments.
- Is permanent or likely to be permanent.
- May or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature.
- Results in substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

Hidden versus visible disability

A disability and the impact of it cannot always be easily identified. An individual in a wheelchair trying to navigate an uneven footpath is different to a person with a cognitive impairment due to dementia who may be unable to communicate all their needs.

Awareness and education are vital to prevent ignorance of the range of disabilities.

Disability data and trends

The 2015 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found the following:

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioural disorders.
- More than half of those with disability aged 15 to 64 years participated in the labour force (53.4%), which is considerably fewer than those without disability (83.2%).

The number of West Australians with disability increases with age.

According to 2016 ABS data, 51% of West Australians over 60 years of age have a disability compared to the average across all ages of approximately 18%. Between 2006 and 2026 the number of people with disability in Western Australia is expected to increase by more than 210,000, due mainly to the ageing population. While age itself is not a disability, the incidence of disability increases.

Carers

A vital part of our community is the role of carers.

A carer is defined as a person who provides any informal assistance, in terms of help or supervision, to older people (aged 65 years and over) and those with disability. In 2015, almost 2.7 million Australians were carers with the average age of carers being 55 years and approximately one third of primary care givers living with a disability themselves.

An effective DAIP aims not only to support those with disability but also the many people who care for them.

4.0 Information about the Shire of Laverton

Based on the population estimate and these findings, it is estimated that there may be approximately 159 people with disability living within the Shire Boundaries.

Although the Shire's population is considered quite small, a large number of tourists and visitors travelling on the Great Central Road have access to the town's facilities and services. It is therefore essential that visitors are also considered when making provisions for people with disability.

5.0 Facilities and services provided by the Shire of Laverton

The Shire of Laverton provides the standard functions of a local government including:

- Asset management. e.g. footpaths, roads, buildings, playgrounds, reserves and other open space
- Ranger
- Parking
- Sustainability
- Events
- Community Development
- Waste
- Environmental Health
- Building and planning approvals
- Tourism
- CRC Connections

Strategies to inform agents and contractors

The Disability Services Act 1993 (WA) requires agents and contractors of public authorities to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with the contracting public authority's DAIP, in this instance with the Council.

The intent of the Act is to increase awareness so that consideration is given to the needs of people with disability when providing a service to the public. DAIP requirements relating to agents and contractors consist of the following:

- Applies only to new contract variations.
- Applies only to services provided to the public.
- Does not apply to services provided directly to the public authority itself. Strategies that the Shire of Laverton utilises include:
 - Reference to the Council's DAIP is included in contract documents.
 - Contractors and agents are required to complete progress reports to the Council that demonstrate awareness of the DAIP.

Requirements - Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

The Western Australia Disability Services Act, 1993 (amended 2004), requires all Local Governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disability 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.

Planning to provide good access for people with disability will also provide benefits to other members of the community who may be disadvantaged in terms of access, such as parent/carers with prams, seniors, people who have a temporary disability, small children and people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

To comply with the Disability Services Act a local government is required to:

- Review its plan at a maximum of every five years. The amended or new plan is to be lodged with the Department of Communities by 31 July in any given year.
- Develop a DAIP which:
 - Furthers the principles and objectives of the Act.
 - Meets the standards in Schedule 2 of the Disability Services Regulations 2004.
- Take all practicable measures to ensure the plan is implemented by the local government, its officers, employees and relevant agents and contractors.
- Undertake public consultation, as specified in the regulations, when preparing, reviewing or amending its plan.
- Lodge review reports, amended plans or new plans with the Department of Communities.

- Report to the Commission by 30 June each year about:
 - Progress made by the local government in achieving the desired outcomes in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.
 - Progress made by any agents and contractors of the local government in achieving the desired outcomes in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.
 - The strategies used by the local government to inform its agents and contractors about its plan.
- Report in its Annual Report about the implementation of its plan.

The actions in the implementation plan outlined in this DAIP for 2019-2024 are intended to enhance and improve disability access and inclusion in the Shire district in order to encompass the diverse needs and requirements of people with disability that live and visit the Laverton area.

6.0 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 by providing a Special Condition of Contract to agents and contractors to facilitate reporting.
- 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.

7.0 Responsibility for the planning process

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the DAIP.

The final plan is endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Progress reports have been regularly completed and sent to the Department of Communities as part of the Shire's policy and compliance work.

8.0 Community consultation process

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:

- Desktop review of previous plan 2013 – 2019.
- A four week public consultation period was advertised for local businesses, government departments/agencies and the wider community to provide feedback and suggestions in relation to the draft DAIP.

- 'Easy to Read' paper survey produced and distributed through the Shire Administration Office, the Community Resource Centre (CRC), Great Beyond Visitor Centre, and Cashless Debit Card (CDC) office.
- DAIP consultation events promoted in the Shire newsletter - The Sturt Pea, on the Shire website, Facebook pages and through the Laverton Stakeholder Group meeting.
- Local Northern Goldfields newspaper produced an article on the Shire's DAIP consultation events.
- Consultation sessions took place in the CRC, Council Chambers, CDC office, at the Hospital, 1:1 sessions, at the Crisis Centre and at the Department of Communities office.
- Draft plan produced based upon the feedback received along with previous review outcomes.
- Draft Plan checked by the Department of Communities for compliance.

9.0 Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that much had been done to achieve positive progress since the last DAIP. However, it also identified a variety of remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the new DAIP Action Plan.

Thirty one people responded to the survey; made up of people with disability, carers, service providers, tourists, individuals and families.

As a result of the consultation, a number of key themes emerged including:

- Making information such as the Shire newsletter, The Sturt Pea, more accessible.
- Access improvements to footpaths.
- Increasing the number of dropped kerbs and access ramps.
- Improving the provision of accessible parking.
- Staff awareness and training.

All comments and suggestions from the community will be considered for implementation as part of the ongoing DAIP work, subject to budget constraints.

10.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Community Development Manager will co-ordinate the monitoring of progress towards achieving the stated outcomes in the DAIP.

- The Shire of Laverton will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report to Council, and the prescribed progress report template to the Department of Communities by 4 July each year.

- Agents and contractors will follow the processes within the DAIP's Agents and Contractors Guide (Department of Communities). Agents and contractors will report annually on progress towards the desired outcomes of the DAIP through the suggested reporting templates.
- A Disability Advisory Committee will be established as part of the DAIP Action Plan that will:
 - Oversee and guide the implementation, monitoring and review of the Shire of Laverton's Disability Action Plan.
 - Advise Council on how the provision of Council services and facilities can best meet the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.
 - Advise Council on policies, programs and issues that impact on people with disability, families and carers, including barriers to accessing services and facilities.
 - Provide a mechanism by which people can provide feedback.
- Access issues will be a standing item on the agenda of the Laverton Stakeholder Group.

11.0 Achievements during the 2013/2019 DAIP

Outcome 1

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

- The main street in Laverton underwent a major upgrade; works completed mainly centred on improving access by installing dropped kerbs and ramps to business centres such as the Community Resource Centre and Supermarket.
- New footpaths, pram/disability scooter ramps have been installed, in the town centre, improving access.
- Installation of a dual use footpath with pram ramps flush with the bitumen, has been completed in one part of the town area, so that it now connects as an accessible loop.
- Improved and increased numbers of outdoor seating with shade have been installed in the town centre.
- Solar lighting has been installed in a previously unlit footpath that connects a residential area to the main town.

Outcome 2

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

- The Laverton Community Hub which incorporates the Aquatic Centre and Town Hall have been completed providing accessible social and recreational facilities:
- The new Swimming Pool has been constructed and is ready for the new 2019 season.
- The pool is fully compliant with access and building requirements. This includes, accessible toilets, changing rooms, a sloped entrance into the new pool, and appropriate handrails. There is new ramped access to the pool building.
- The Shire Town Hall has undergone major redevelopment and is compliant with building regulations and requirements. This includes new accessible toilets, ramps and pathways.
- Accessible automatic doors have been fitted to the Shire Administration Office and the Great Beyond Visitor Centre.
- The Cemetery is undergoing major redevelopment and construction. The Master Plan includes the construction of external and internal roads and pathways, a shelter for visitors, seating, accessible toilets and accessible parking.

Outcome 3

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

- The Shire has recently updated and implemented a new website and is in the process of updating pages and adding information relating to services and events.
- The Shire of Laverton is committed to providing accessible information to as many users as possible and has pursued this objective in designing this website. This website has been developed to meet W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA. These guidelines are available at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>.
- A range of 'Easy to Read' and plain English information pamphlets, booklets, brochure and consultation documents have been produced.
- These documents provide improved access through clear language, accessible format and style compliance and some incorporate visual images to support some access needs.

Examples include information posters and booklets for the Cashless Debit Card, and DAIP consultation.

An ongoing new project undertaken by the children and supported by the Youth Services Team and Community Interpreters, has been the production of informative booklets, (for example 'Our Bush Story'), which share the local area, culture and language.

Focusing on simple literacy, children took photos and learnt how to write, edit and create their 'yarns' using local Wongatha words. (Booklets are available in the Shire's Great Beyond Visitor Centre as a tourism resource and fundraising activity for the Youth Centre).

Outcome 4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Laverton.

This matter has not been addressed specifically for people with a disability, however, Council staff are aware of requirements.

Outcome 5

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

The Shire website includes the opportunity to make enquiries/provide feedback/request action or make complaints.

Outcome 6

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

Consultation events were undertaken that recognised and catered for differing access needs of the community.

- The DAIP and Cashless Debit Card engagement sessions were held in a variety of different venues, locations and times. These included Shire buildings such as the Community Resource Centre, as well as at the Hospital and in meetings with small focus groups, and discrete meetings with individuals and families at their choice of venue.
- A range of 'Easy to Read' and plain English information pamphlets, booklets, brochure and consultation documents have been produced. These documents provide improved access through clear language, accessible format and style compliance, and some incorporate visual images to support some access needs.

Examples include information posters and booklets for the Cashless Debit Card (CDC), and DAIP consultation.

- Translators were made available for the CDC consultations.

Outcome 7

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

- The Council has built an accessible house for staff accommodation that can be easily converted to meet the access needs of staff with a disability.

12.0 Promotion of the new DAIP

The DAIP will be promoted to staff, contractors and the wider community on the Council's website, through advertisements in the local newsletter (The Sturt Pea), social media and by direct communication with individuals and appropriate networks.

