



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007 - 2012

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

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Background

The Shire of Plantagenet

The Shire of Plantagenet is located in the Great Southern region of Western Australia, 350km south of Perth. The Shire is bounded by the City of Albany and the Shires of Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Denmark and Manjimup. The total Shire area is 4,792km².

The Shire incorporates five main population centres: Mount Barker, Rocky Gully, Kendenup, Porongurup and Narrikup.

With a population of more than 5,000, the Shire of Plantagenet has an array of industrial, agricultural and tourism riches, including broad-acre cropping, cattle, sheep and wool production, forestry (predominantly blue gums), viticulture and horticulture.

The Shire is becoming increasingly popular as a desired location for people seeking a 'tree change' and hobby farmers.

The Shire also incorporates nearly half of the Stirling Range National Park, the entire Porongurup Range National Park and a large portion of the Walpole Wilderness Area.

Functions, facilities and services provided by the Shire of Plantagenet

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

Services to property:

- construction and maintenance of Shire owned buildings, roads, footpaths and trails;
- land drainage and development;
- waste collection and disposal;
- litter control;
- planting and caring for street trees and gardens, and provision and maintenance of street furniture and public art;
- numbering of buildings and lots;
- street lighting; and
- bush fire control.

Services to the community:

- provision and maintenance of playing areas, parks, gardens, reserve, outdoor bbq areas and facilities for sporting and community groups;
- management of a recreation centre, swimming pool, public library and child care centre;

- community safety and crime prevention planning;
- preparation and testing of community emergency management plans; and
- advocacy on behalf of specific community groups, eg aged persons.

Regulatory services:

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

General administration:

- the provision of general information to the public, the lodging of complaints and paying of fees including rates and dog licences; and
- administration of Department of Transport payments.

Processes of government:

- ordinary and special Council and Committee meetings; and
- Public meetings, community consultation and election of Council Members.

People with disabilities in the Shire of Plantagenet

The number of people with disabilities in the Shire of Plantagenet is estimated to be 925, based on the statistics provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and carers (2003)¹.

The Shire population is growing rapidly due to an influx of mature aged people including many retirees. The ABS statistics highlight that around half of people aged over 60 identify themselves as having a disability, therefore the proportion of people with disabilities within the Shire may increase significantly over the next 5 to 10 years.

Tourism trends also have the potential to impact on the Shire's 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), both of which make discrimination on the basis of a person's disability unlawful.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003) estimates that 20.6% of Australians identify themselves as having some form of disability.

Progress since 1996

The Shire of Plantagenet adopted a Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1996 to address the access barriers within the community.

Since the adoption of the DSP, the Shire has made significant progress towards better access. Appendix One highlights the progress of the strategies listed in the DSP.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

Policy Number: _____

Adopted: _____

Objective:

The Shire of Plantagenet is committed to ensuring that the community is an accessible and inclusive community for people with disabilities, their families and carers. An accessible and inclusive community is interpreted 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.

Policy:

The Shire of Plantagenet will plan to achieve the following strategies to ensure the community is accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities, their families and carers:

- People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Plantagenet;
- People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Plantagenet;
- The Shire of Plantagenet provides information in a format that will enable people with disabilities to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it;
- People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Plantagenet as other people;
- People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Plantagenet; and
- People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation arranged by the Shire of Plantagenet.

The Shire of Plantagenet is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and disability organisations in addressing barriers to access and inclusion.

Review Date: _____

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Manager of Community Services has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the DAIP. The final plan is endorsed by the Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Community consultation process

In 2007 the Shire undertook a review of the DSP, consulted with key stakeholders and drafted a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- Examination of the existing DSP to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- Examination of other Council documents and strategies;
- Consultation with key staff from both the Shire of Plantagenet and relevant agencies;
- Consultation with the Council; and
- Consultation with the community.

The community was informed through the Plantagenet News (local newspaper) and the Council's website that the Council was developing a DAIP to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to access Council facilities, functions and services as other people. Members of the community were given the opportunity to provide comment by telephone, written form or e-mail.

A meeting was held with the Council on Tuesday 27 March to gain feedback on barriers and strategies to address them.

Shire employees made contact with five people to discuss barriers to services and facilities.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation noted some achievement in access. It also identified a range of barriers that require redress. These access barriers include:

- Disabled parking in the Mount Barker townsite;
- Access throughout the Kendenup townsite; and
- Access into the Mount Barker Library.

(further points may be added following public consultation).

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that its officers, employees, agents and contractors implement the DAIP.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Council. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action.

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 Shire's DAIP will be reviewed and submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2012. The DAIP review will include an evaluation of activities that have occurred over the five years and will involve consultation with the community, staff, elected members and key agencies.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Manager of Community Services (employee with responsibility for the DAIP) will analyse progress of the DAIP Implementation Plan annually and provide a report to the Council on progress and recommended changes. A copy of the report must also be forwarded to the Disability Services Commission by July 31 annually.

The Disability Services Act also requires that the Shire reports on the implementation of the DAIP in the Annual Report, outlining:

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

Implementation Plan to improve access and inclusion

The following strategies have been developed to address each of the six desired outcome areas of the Disability Services Act and from feedback gained in the public consultation process:

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 Plantagenet.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their need for services and provide input on the accessibility of current services.	Place a feedback form on the Shire website, adjacent to the link to a copy of the DAIP.	October 2007	Mgr Community Services
	Prepare and distribute a community survey to identify needs of people with disabilities, including an opportunity to comment on the existing services.	March 2008	Mgr Community Services
	Investigate the formation of an Advisory Committee between members of the community, in particular people with disabilities, their carers and families, and representatives from the Shire of Plantagenet to discuss issues throughout the Shire.	October 2007	Mgr Community Services
Ensure Shire staff that are responsible for providing community services are aware of the value of inclusion.	The staff of the Recreation Centre, Swimming Pool and Library to be supported in the development and implementation of appropriate activities through the provision of training, funding and equipment.	August 2007 – ongoing	Mgr Community Services Snr Administration Officer Staff from Recreation Centre, Swimming Pool and Library
	Provide large print books in the Mount Barker Public Library.	September 2007 – ongoing	Library Co-ordinator
Access to the Shire's rubbish removal	People with disabilities to be informed that	January 2007 –	Manager of Works and

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
service.	alternative arrangements for removal of rubbish can be made available on request. This information to be made available through the Home and Community Care agency, Disability Services Commission Officer for the Plantagenet District, Mount Barker Hospital and the local Doctors surgery.	ongoing	Services.
Ensure that all parks, gardens, bbq areas, play areas and sport and community facilities are accessible to all members of the community.	Incorporate access requirements into the Shire's property inspection forms and, where necessary, train staff responsible for auditing Shire land in the access requirements.	January 2008	Variety of Shire staff (principally Safety Representatives)
Develop governance links between the DAIP and other key Shire documents.	Incorporate necessary actions arising from the property audits into the Parks / Reserves Capital and Maintenance Schedule for action, or budget consideration.	January 2008 – onwards	Safety Officer
Ensure that events, whether Shire run, Shire funded or events that require Shire permission, are accessible to people with disabilities.	Incorporate the Access and Inclusion Policy into the Shire's Policy Review program.	November 2007	Mgr Community Services Executive Secretary
	Incorporate the strategies of the DAIP into the Shire's Strategic Plan.	May 2008	Chief Executive Officer
	Incorporate components of the Accessible Events checklist into the Shire's Public Events / Celebrations Application Form.	March 2008	Environmental Health Officer
	Shire run events to be located in areas / buildings which are accessible and within close proximity to disabled facilities.	January 2008 – onwards.	Various
	Produce clear and easy to read invitations and flyers for events that include contact details.	January 2008 – onwards.	Various
	The Sport and Recreation Club Development	August 2007	Club Development

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Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
	Officer to incorporate questions regarding inclusive club policies, procedures etc into sporting club audits.		Officer

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Incorporate access requirements into the Shire's building inspection forms and, where necessary, train staff responsible for auditing buildings in the access requirements.</p> <p>Incorporate necessary actions arising from the building audits into the Building Maintenance Schedule for action, or budget consideration.</p> <p>Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any additional demonstrated need.</p>	<p>Incorporate access requirements into the Shire's building inspection forms and, where necessary, train staff responsible for auditing buildings in the access requirements.</p> <p>Incorporate necessary actions arising from the building audits into the Building Maintenance Schedule for action, or budget consideration.</p> <p>Ensure that survey results regarding needs of people with disabilities, including information on existing services, are communicated to the Principal Building Surveyor and feedback is provided as relevant actions are achieved.</p>	<p>January 2008</p> <p>June 2008 – onwards</p> <p>June 2008 – onwards</p>	<p>Principal Building Surveyor</p> <p>Principal Building Surveyor</p> <p>Mgr Community Services Principal Building Surveyor Building Maintenance Officer</p>
<p>Ensure that new developments or significant alterations to existing Shire buildings / facilities provide access to people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ensure that the legal requirements for access are met in plans for new buildings / facilities or significant alterations to existing buildings / facilities.</p> <p>Ensure that relevant staff are trained in the current legal requirements regarding access.</p>	<p>January 2008 – onwards</p> <p>August 2007 – onwards</p>	<p>Principal Building Surveyor</p> <p>Senior Administration Officer Principal Building Surveyor Building Maintenance Officer</p>
<p>Promote the benefits flowing from accessible venues to tourist operators, local businesses and service providers (for example banks).</p>	<p>Pamphlets to be distributed to tourist operators, businesses and service providers promoting access and inclusion needs. Incorporate, if relevant, feedback from public consultation.</p>	<p>May 2008</p>	<p>Mgr Community Services</p>

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Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
	Ensure accessible businesses are promoted on the relevant websites.	January 2008 onwards	Mgr Community Services
Ensure that strategic footpaths and dual use paths are accessible for all members of the community.	Ensure footpath maintenance work and capital improvements are designed to be accessible.	July 2007 – onwards	Mgr Works and Services
Town Planning Reviews	<i>Information to be incorporated following Peter Duncan's input.</i>		

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Plantagenet 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
Provide Shire information alternative formats.	Incorporate a notation on Shire documents that advise the information is available in alternative formats. Alternative formats to include: Large print Audio cassette Computer disk. Ensure appropriate equipment is available to transfer information into alternative formats. Redevelop the Shire's website to comply with the W3C web content guidelines.	February 2008 – onwards February 2008 January 2009	Snr Administration Officer Manager of Community Services Records Officer Deputy Chief Executive Officer

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure Shire staff that are responsible for providing information and customer contact are appropriately trained.	Key Shire officers to have disability awareness training.	January 2008 – onwards	Snr Administration Officer Manager of Community Services
	'In house' workshops with Shire officers to increase staff awareness of procedures to ensure access and inclusive activities.	January 2008 – onwards	Mgr Community Services
	Contractors involved in service delivery to be encouraged to participate in disability awareness training.	January 2008 – onwards	Snr Administration Officer

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities.	Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any recommendations. Incorporate a review of grievance mechanisms in the community survey.	March 2008	Mgr Community Services

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access the Shire's existing consultative processes.</p>	<p>Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are available on the Shire's website in a timely manner.</p>	<p>July 2007 (agendas and minutes on website) February 2008 (remaining actions)</p>	<p>Mgr Community Services Executive Secretary Snr Administration Officer</p>
<p>Consult with people with disabilities to identify issues involved with existing Shire public consultation practices.</p>	<p>Install microphones in the Council chambers. Request information regarding the Shire's public consultation practices in the community survey.</p>	<p>October 2007 February 2008</p>	<p>Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mgr Community Services</p>

Appendix One

Disability Service Plan progress since 1996

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

- Restricted entrance to the Shire Office and toilet facilities has been rectified following the construction of the new Administration Centre which includes automatic sliding doors, a wide entry area and corridors leading to the public conveniences (including a disabled facilities), low counter access, disabled parking by the entry to the building and ramped access from the carpark to the landscaping adjacent to the entry of the building.
- Access into other Council buildings has been partly addressed with the installation of a ramp at the District Hall and the Rocky Gully Library.

2. Access to buildings and facilities:

- A footpath maintenance and construction program has been initiated in Mount Barker to address the footpath surface and replacement of kerbing with mountable kerbing by access points.