



## **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

**2022 - 2027**

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



## Wickepin Shire Council

### Disability Access and Inclusion plan

#### Introduction

Wickepin offers a safe, pleasant, healthy lifestyle, quality services, with a strong and expanding community to those considering coming to live here. Business opportunities, inexpensive land and housing prices, together with its relatively close proximity to Perth make Wickepin a great prospect for business people, retirees or young families.

#### Functions, facilities and services provided by the Shire of Wickepin.

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

**Services to property:** construction and maintenance of council owned buildings; construction and maintenance of roads; dual use paths; street lighting; planting and caring for trees; street cleaning and litter control; numbering of buildings and lots; and bush fire control.

**Services to the community:** provision and maintenance of playing areas; parks and reserves; provision and maintenance of facilities for sporting and community groups; including Swimming Pool, Health Centre, Library and Information Service; Aged Care Facility, Emergency and Environmental Health Services.

**Regulatory services:** planning of road systems, sub-divisions and town planning schemes; building approvals for construction additions or alterations to the building control.

**General administration:** the provision of general information to the public, lodging of complaints and payment of rates, police licensing and dog licenses.

**Processes of government:** ordinary and special council and committee meetings; electors meetings and election of council members; and community consultations.

### **People with disability within the Shire of Wickepin**

The shire covers an area of 198,900 hectares, which includes the quaint townsites of Yealering, Harrismith and Tincurrin with a combined population of approximately 716 people. The Avon, Blackwood and Murray Rivers rise in the shire, which produces large quantities of cereal grains and boasts more stud farms than any other district within Australia.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), approximately 20.6% of West Australians or more than 1 in 5 people identify themselves as having some form of disability. Though a disability restricts the person's ability to participate, 97 % of people with a disability live in the community, with over 12% providing direct care to a person with a disability.

As the Shire of Wickepin becomes more attractive due to its close proximity to Perth, the number of people with disability living within the Shire is likely to increase in the future. As it is now seen that a majority of people with disability live in the community, it is therefore important that they have the same opportunities and choices as other people to participate in community life. The Shire of Wickepin is responsible for the planning process, with a particular focus on a nurturing community where diversity and a sense of identity is respected and valued. Seeking input from the local community, with personal and/or professional knowledge of disability issues, the Shire of Wickepin will continually develop, implement, review and evaluate the plan.

### **Planning for better access**

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act (1993) that all local governments develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which they will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services. Annual Reports on activities relating to the progress of these plans are reported to state government at the end of each financial year.

Access and Inclusion plans are not just about ensuring buildings have wheelchair access, they also incorporate inclusion at a participatory and service level. The vision of the DAIP is for an accessible and inclusive community and the format will concentrate on seven key areas:

1. Quality of existing and future services
2. Access to buildings and facilities
3. Access to shire supported events and projects
4. Information and communication
5. Opportunities to make complaints

6. Opportunities to participate in public consultation
7. The same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act (1984) and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA). While Action Plans are not compulsory under the DDA, they can assist organisations to become more accessible and inclusive, and can provide some clarity during disability discrimination proceedings. A DAIP may also satisfy the DDA'S requirements for Action Plans.

### **Progress**

The Shire of Wickepin is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. Towards this goal, the Shire adopted its first DSP in 1995 to address the barriers within the community for people with disability. The DSP addressed both its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993) and its obligation under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Shire has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better success. (Refer to Appendix 1).

### **Access and Inclusion Policy Statement for People with Disability, their Families and Carers.**

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

The Shire of Wickepin 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 enjoyed by all other people in the community.

The Shire of Wickepin recognises that people with disability are valued members of the community who contribute to local social, economic and cultural life. The Shire believes that a community that recognises its diversity and supports the participation and inclusion of all its members makes a richer community life.

The Shire of Wickepin further believes that people with disability, their families and carers who live in country areas should be supported to remain in the community of their choice.

The Shire of Wickepin is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately.

The Shire of Wickepin is committed to ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the DAIP.

The Shire of Wickepin is committed to working in partnership with local community groups and businesses to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities through improved access to facilities and services in the community.

The seven outcomes upon which the DAIP has been based will assist the Shire of Wickepin to design, develop and implement fair and equitable disability related policies. These outcomes are:

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

## **Development of the DAIP**

### **Responsibility for the planning of the DAIP**

#### **Community consultation process**

The Shire of Wickepin reviewed the DAIP with discussions with its major key stakeholders. The Shire ensured wherever possible consultation was made with representatives from a variety of different sectors of the community.

The process included:

- Examination of the initial Disability Services Plan and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs to be completed
- Examination of other council documents and strategies
- Investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion
- Consultation with key staff

### **Findings of the consultation**

The review found that the DAIP is included in discussions at all Council meetings relating to any proposed new and upgraded infrastructure owned or vested in Council.

The review also identified a variety of remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

### **Access Barriers**

While the review and consultation noted a great deal of achievement in improving access it also identified a range of barriers that require redress. These access barriers include:

- Absence of a concise policy to guide and inform access and inclusion activities
- Processes of Council and information in other formats may not be as accessible as possible
- Footpaths for people with disability may not be meeting the needs of this growing demographic

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

### **Responsibilities for implementing the DAIP**

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

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of council. Some actions in the Action Plan will apply to all areas of the Council while others will apply to a specific area. The Action Plan sets out who is responsible for each action.

### **Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability**

Council has advertised through the local newspaper that copies of the plan are available upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette, CD, by email and on the Council's website.

As plans are amended, both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans using the same methods.

### **Review and Evaluation Mechanism**

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to the DAIP. The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed at least every 5 years, in accordance with the Act, and on an annual basis in establishing budget priorities for the forthcoming financial year. The DAIP implementation plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues that may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Department of Communities.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing**

- As part of the review process for this project and to ensure individuality of the DAIP outcomes, strategies and implementation, there will be consultation with key stakeholders, community members and shire staff who will meet biannually to review the progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP
- The review and monitoring of the Shire's DAIP will be included in the 2022 - 2027 DAIP which will be submitted to the Department of Communities. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP
- Council will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan;
- Council will provide a DAIP progress report. These progress reports will be included in Council's Annual Report

### **Evaluation**

Council will seek feedback from the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and its effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented.

- Endorse any progress reports on the implementation process which forms part of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- Notices about consultation process will be placed in the local newspaper
- Seeking feedback the Shire will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation
- Some of the consultation processes used during the initial consultations will be included; ie meeting with people with disabilities
- Identify additional strategies for consideration;

The Shire is required to report on the progress in the prescribed format to the Department of Communities annually.

### **Reporting on the DAIP**

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPS.

Council will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its annual report and the prescribed proforma to the Department of Communities by 4th July each year, outlining:

- Its progress towards the desired outcomes of the DAIP;
- The progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the seven desired outcomes; and
- Where applicable, agents and contractors will be informed of the DAIP prior to carrying out any work for the Shire.

### **STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION**

The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for strategies aimed at improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities. The following strategies will be reflected in Council's 2022 -2027 Implementation Plan.

#### **Outcome 1:**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organized or sponsored by Council.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Consult people with disability on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	July each year
Monitor the Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion	Ongoing
Promote the inclusion of the DAIP values and goals into other Shire plans and strategies	Ongoing as required
That events provided and/or funded are accessible and inclusive to people with disability	Ongoing per event



**Outcome 2:**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by Council.

Strategies	Timeline
Progress public building upgrades to incorporate standards for access and requested additional needs for access	Ongoing as required
Redevelopment building works to have where practical mobility disability access and disability access where required	Ongoing where required
New building works have mobility disability access and disability access where required	Ongoing where required
Advocate to local businesses the benefits of accessible venues and the importance where identified of requirements for disabled access	Ongoing

**Outcome 3:**

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

Strategies	Timeline
Make available Council and Shire information on request in suitable electronic form to assist visually and hearing impaired persons to easily understand information published	Ongoing as requested
When information is available in physical form that it is easily accessible and also available in another format on request to assist persons to easily understand information published	Ongoing as requested

**Outcome 4:**

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from Council staff as other people receive from the staff of Council.

Strategies	Timeline
Maintain the existing and future confidence and professionalism of staff to work together with persons with disability	Ongoing
Staff to be encouraged to identify any areas where the quality of service to people with disability can be initiated and/or improved	Ongoing per staff meetings

**Outcome 5:**

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Council.

Strategies	Timeline
Maintain the existing and future staff confidence and professionalism to interact with persons with disability when complaints are being lodged	Ongoing
Make available on request mediums suitable for persons with disability to lodge complaints	Ongoing as requested

**Outcome 6:**

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

Strategies	Timeline
Public consultation is facilitated in suitable buildings to permit inclusion of persons with mobility disabilities	Ongoing
On request that suitable technology is made available to assist persons with disability participate in public consultation	Ongoing as requested

**Outcome 7:**

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline
Use inclusive recruitment practices.	Plan job interviews in an accessible venue as required after consulting with the job applicant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a statement in the job advertisement highlighting that the Shire is an equal opportunity employer</li> </ul>	Continuing as needed
Work with local disability employment support provider to employ a person with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enquire with local Disability Employment in Narrogin to investigate employment opportunities of persons with disability</li> </ul>	Continuing as needed

## APPENDIX 1

### Progress Since 2015 to 2022 under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

#### **Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organized or sponsored by Council.**

- The Shire Library has increased the number of audio books (talking books) and large print books held at the library, and these are regularly rotated through the WA LISA rotation program. These books are located at easily accessible levels and are well signed.
- Capital works on the Shire office to improve accessibility
- Successful uploading of the Shires DAIP onto the website
- Positive relationships developed between other Shires through NEWROC grouping allowing a central exchange point of ideas and developments

#### **Outcome 2: Access at Council Buildings and Facilities Improved**

- A public toilet block has been constructed at the Shire caravan park, Volunteer Park, Swimming Pool and tourist sites at Shire reserves that are suitable for people with disability.
- Footpaths along the main street have been replaced with smooth concrete surface to assist mobility.
- Access ramps from footpaths to road surface have been provided in certain areas
- Auto door has been installed at the main entrance to the Shire offices
- Pram ramps to allow minimal trip hazard from road to footpath
- Disabled toilet signage is to appropriate standard
- Front counter at the Shire incorporates a low section to assist with serving customers in mobile chairs (Gophers and the like)

**Outcome 3: Information about Functions, Facilities and Services is provided in Formats which meet the Communication Needs of People with Disability**

- The Shire advertised through the local Council newsletter that Council information is available in alternative formats upon request.
- Staff are aware of how to reformat information to assist people to access Shire information

**Outcome 4: Staff Awareness of the Needs of People with Disability and Skills in Delivering Advice and Services are Improved**

- Council staff continue to assist persons to help arrange travel to essential service, access books and audio for their enjoyment and to assist in information understanding.

**Outcome 5: Opportunities are provided for People with Disability to Participate in Public Consultation, Grievance Mechanisms and Decision Making Processes**

- The Shire provides information through public documents regarding all Council agreed new works
- On election days the Shire ensures that buildings are accessible and that modified polling booths are in place.
- The Shire staff have proven themselves to be most understanding and very giving in assistance towards people with disability.

**Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by Council.**

- Shire staff and officers have assisted people with disability to access and be included in all Council discussions and functions on request
- Staff provide and explain the purpose of the Council function or meetings in a professional manner

**Shire of Wickepin**  
**Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**2022 – 2027**

## **Implementation Plan 2022 - 2027**

The Implementation Plan itemizes what the Shire of Wickepin will be undertaking in 2022-2027 to improve access and inclusion to Shire services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Implementation Plan is presented using a table to outline the:

- individual tasks being undertaken;
- timeline for completion of the individual tasks;
- officer position or part of the public authority with responsibility for completing the individual tasks; and
- the broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting.

As outlined in the Shire of Wickepin's DAIP, many of the broad strategies will not be completed in 2022-2027; however, individual tasks to support the achievement of those strategies may well be undertaken in part or whole in 2022 -2027 through the Implementation Plan.

In the event some of the broad strategies will not be achieved in 2022 - 2027 they will be supported by tasks outlined in future Implementation Plans.

**Outcome One:**

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organized or sponsored by Council.**

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Consult people with disability on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shire staff to document all concerns and requests and report to the appropriate shire officer where disability access and inclusion is not being fully met or can be improved</li> <li>• Bring up the topic of access and inclusion at all meetings attended by staff and councillors.</li> </ul>	2022 - 2027	Administration Staff, CEO, DCEO and PEHO/BS
Monitor the Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff to be encouraged to speak about access and inclusion issues in all services performed by the Shire</li> <li>• Staff to be invited to bring up identified concerns about access and inclusion</li> </ul>	Continuing	Administration Staff, CEO, DCEO, Works Manager and PEHO/BS
Promote the inclusion of the DAIP values and goals into other Shire plans and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate and review DAIP values and intent in the Shires Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Monitor new and reviewed Shire plans where DAIP values can be incorporated</li> </ul>	Continuing	CEO, DCEO and PEHO/BS

**Outcome One:  
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organized or sponsored by Council.**

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
That events provided and/or funded are accessible and inclusive to people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That public events within the Shire are planned incorporating the 'Creating Accessible Events Checklist'</li> <li>• That privately run events are introduced to the 'Creating Accessible Events Checklist' and encouraged to implement</li> </ul>	Continuing for each event	Administration Staff, CEO, DCEO, Works Manager and PEHO/BS
Advertise in the local 'Watershed' newspaper to assist with implementing and broadcasting the Shires access and inclusion for people with disability and to promote this to businesses and groups within the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the website to better advertise the shires DAIP</li> </ul>	2021-2026	CEO, DCEO and PEHO/BS



**Outcome Two:**

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by the Shire of Wickepin.**

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Public building inspections to also consider standards for access and requested additional needs for access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection of public building to include review of access for persons with mobility disabilities.</li> <li>• Incorporate into inspection reports submissions for funding to implement access upgrades.</li> <li>• Discuss with people using buildings at time of inspection about any access issues.</li> </ul>	Continuing	PEHO, DCEO and Handyman
Redevelopment building works to have where practical mobility disability access and disability access where required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Shires building officer is involved at the early building design stage to ensure compliance with the disability requirements in buildings.</li> <li>• Whilst new building projects are being work-shopped that consultation is done to invite comment on access and inclusion matters.</li> </ul>	Continuing	PEHO, DCEO and CEO
New building works have mobility disability access and disability access where required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the Shires building officer is involved at the early building design stage to ensure compliance with the disability requirements in buildings.</li> <li>• Whilst new building projects are being work-shopped that consultation is done to invite comment on access and inclusion matters.</li> </ul>	Continuing	PEHO, DCEO and CEO

**Outcome Three:**

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Make available Council and Shire information on request in suitable electronic form to assist visually and hearing impaired persons to easily understand information published</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff with access to information that assist with digital document reformatting</li> <li>• Provide staff with access to alternative avenues of communications such as computer enhanced speaking documents</li> <li>• Liaise with the telecentre staff to highlight available technology for the needs of people with hearing and visual disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>DCEO and Administration staff</p>
<p>When information is available in physical form that it is easily accessible and also available in another format on request to assist persons to easily understand information published</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That paper copies of public accessible documents are provided on request in an agreeable format such but not limited to CDROM to permit formatting of text and/or speaking document ability via a PC.</li> <li>• All public documents to be made available at the Shire front counter.</li> </ul>	<p>Continuing</p>	<p>DCEO and Administration staff</p>

**Outcome Four:**

**People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from Council staff as other people receive from the staff of Council.**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
That shire staff are confident and professional when interacting with persons with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the existing confidence and professionalism of Shire staff in dealings with customers and warrant this for future employees. Education resources available through DSC, WALGA and other suitable education assets will be used.</li></ul>	Continuing	DCEO and Administration staff
Staff to be encouraged to identify any areas where the quality of service to people with disability can be initiated and/or improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage staff at the appropriate staff meetings to raise access and inclusion issues that could need investigation.</li></ul>	Continuing	CEO, DCEO, Administration staff and 'outside' staff

**Outcome Five:****People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Council.**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Maintain the existing and future staff confidence and professionalism to interact with persons with disabilities when complaints are being lodged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the existing confidence and professionalism of Shire staff in dealings with customers and warrant this for future employees. Education resources available through DSC, WALGA and other suitable education assets will be used.</li></ul>	Continuing development, training and mentoring of new staff	CEO, DCEO & senior admin staff
Make available on request mediums suitable for persons with disability to lodge complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the existing and new staff capabilities to assist people where appropriate with methods for making complaints that suit individual needs.</li></ul>	Continuing development, training and mentoring of new staff	CEO, DCEO & senior admin staff

**Outcome Six:**

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

Strategies	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
Public consultation is facilitated in suitable buildings to permit inclusion of persons with mobility disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in notifications of public consultation the option to request a building suitable for particular access.</li> <li>• Plan meetings in buildings best suited to achieve maximum inclusion of all persons with consideration of maximum number allowed.</li> </ul>	Continuing as needed	CEO & Admin staff  CEO, PEHO/BS & Admin staff
On request that suitable technology is made available to assist persons with disability participate in public consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in notifications of public consultation the option to request technology/devices that will assist people to participate</li> <li>• Prepare counter staff to receive requests for technology/devices and that this request is expedited to the responsible officer to arrange.</li> </ul>	Continuing as needed	CEO & Admin staff  CEO, EHO/BS & Admin staff

**Outcome Seven:**

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

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Use inclusive recruitment practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan job interviews in an accessible venue as required after consulting with the job applicant.</li><li>• Provide a statement in the job advertisement highlighting that the Shire is an equal opportunity employer.</li></ul>	Continuing as needed	CEO  CEO
Work with local disability employment support provider to employ a person with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enquire with local Disability Employment Service provider based in Narrogin to investigate employment opportunities of persons with disability.</li></ul>	Continuing as needed	CEO

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Revised By the Shire of Wickepin 2021