



Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

Disability Access

and

Inclusion Plan

July 2012 – June 2017

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- Deb Whitecross of Deb Whitecross Enterprises
- Community members who attended the workshops as part of the review
- *Disability Services Commission Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2011-2016*, Disability Services Commission (June 2011) available from www.disability.wa.gov.au
- *Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup Disability Access & Inclusion Plan Review 2012 - Community Consultation Findings and Recommendations*, Deb Whitecross Enterprises (May 2012)

Definitions

Access: refers to the physical ability to get to, into, and around facilities. This access is created by removing structural barriers and including mechanisms to enable structural access

Facilities: any infrastructure that is owned or managed by the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, such as Town halls, public toilets, accessible parking, footpaths, Recreation Centres

Council / Shire: Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup

DAIP: Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Inclusion: refers to the ability to participate as fully as possible in programs and services provided by organisations in an integrated and holistic manner that does not ostracise, embarrass or humiliate

Information: any information provided by the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, regardless of format, such as written (print, electronic) and verbal (face-to face, telephone)

Services: any services provided by the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, such as administrative, community development, recreation

1. Introduction

It is recognised in the community that improving access and inclusion for all people is a common goal. Through having accessible and inclusive services and facilities, people are enabled to lead lives of greater independence and participate in community life.

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup has made good progress towards improving access and inclusion of its services, facilities and information through the ongoing development and implementation of its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). It is a requirement that DAIPs are reviewed a minimum of every five years, with the purpose of the review to assess how well strategies of identified outcome areas are achieving access and inclusion of people with disability.

The Shire adopted their first DAIP in 1996 and have been systematically reviewing and updating it. The 2012-2017 Shire DAIP integrates results from the review of the previous DAIP (being 2007-2012), along with significant new initiatives towards achieving identified outcomes. It also focuses on a new direction in terms of progressing the DAIP to reflect the current aspirations of both the Council and local community.

The 2012-2017 DAIP comprises the following elements:

- Guiding legislation referred to when formulating the DAIP;
- Information on the Shire's vision for the future and role in providing facilities and services to the community;
- Details of past DAIP accomplishments;
- Development of the new DAIP including details of the review and consultation process and its findings and recommendations;
- The outcome areas and strategies of the DAIP;
- How the DAIP will be implemented, including the accompanying DAIP Implementation Plan which details specific tasks, timelines and responsibilities;
- Information on how the DAIP is communicated; and
- A strategy for review and reporting.

2. Legislation

The Australian Commonwealth, State and Territory governments have developed the National Disability Strategy in partnership under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments. The Australian Local Government Association has also assisted in the development of the Strategy and there is a strong role for local governments in its implementation. The shared vision is for **an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.**

The relevant roles and responsibilities on disability access and inclusion are governed by several statutes. These include:

- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993*;
- *Disability Services Act 1993* (amended 2004);
- *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984*;
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities, including local governments, develop and implement a DAIP so that people with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access services, facilities and information in the community.

3. Shire Vision

“The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is a thriving community, living in harmony with its unique rural environment whilst cherishing its diversity of heritage and culture”.

The Shire believes that people with diverse needs who live in regional and rural areas should be supported to remain in the community of their choice. To identify the support most appropriate to offer, the Shire has committed to continue to review barriers to access and inclusion within the towns and settlements of the district, with the objective being to systematically implement strategies to remove and minimise as many of them as possible. The Shire acknowledges that for each of the communities within the district there are different and varied access and inclusion challenges and are committed to continue to consult with the community to ensure that local needs are met.

4. Facilities and Services

Local government in Western Australia is empowered through the *Local Government Act 1995*. The primary role of local government is to provide good governance to constituents within its municipality. This broadness gives Councils the scope to perform a number of functions and to respond to local issues.

The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is responsible for a range of facilities and services in the district, including:

Facilities

- Construction and maintenance of Council owned buildings
 - Shire administration office and works depots
 - Donnybrook and Balingup recreation centres
 - Donnybrook and Balingup community libraries
 - Donnybrook Community Resource Centre
 - Donnybrook Visitor Centre

- Town halls
- Donnybrook Medical Centre
- Tuia Lodge Aged Care Facility
- Donnybrook Community Health Centre
- Parks, gardens and reserves
- Playgrounds including the Apple FunPark
- Public parking bays and footpaths
- Public toilets
- Donnybrook Waste Management Facility and Balingup Transfer Station
- Donnybrook and Balingup transit parks
- Cemeteries

Services

- Construction and maintenance of local roads, stormwater drainage
- Waste and recycling management
- Street cleaning
- Street trees
- Numbering of land
- Emergency management including bush fire control
- Community development
- Citizenship ceremonies and several community events
- Provision of general information to the public
- Payment of fees including rates, dog and cat registrations, permits for burning and motor vehicle licensing
- Library services

Regulatory Functions:

- Land rating
- Town Planning including development and implementation of the Town Planning Scheme and development approvals
- Building services including approvals for construction, additions and alterations
- Environmental health services including food monitoring and compliance, caravan parks and camping grounds inspections, noise pollution, effluent disposal, health hazards, water quality sampling
- Ranger services
- Events assessment

Processes of local government:

- Ordinary and special Council and committee meetings
- Electors meetings and election of Council members
- Management of the Shire budget
- Community consultation

5. Past DAIP Accomplishments

The previous Shire DAIPs identified a number of barriers to access and inclusion and outlined strategies that the Shire could implement to overcome them. Below are some examples of achievements:

- Portable pool hoist available at the Donnybrook Recreation Centre swimming pool
- Wheelchair accessible footbridge across the Preston River in the Donnybrook central business district
- Comprehensive Shire facilities audit undertaken
- Renovation of toilet facilities to meet access standards at the Donnybrook and Balingup Town Halls and Balingup Oval
- Installation of automated opening doors at the Donnybrook Community Library
- Audit and improvement of ACROD parking bays in the Shire
- Electronic readers available at the Donnybrook Library
- Accessible Events Checklist provided to organisers of all events in the Shire
- Installation of accessible drink fountain at the Apple FunPark
- Shire forms, applications, documents and lodging of complaints available in electronic format

6. Development of the DAIP 2012-2017

Review Process

In first half of 2012, the Shire undertook to review its DAIP 2007-2012 and draft a new five year DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The review process included the following:

- examination of the 2007-2012 DAIP and DAIP Implementation Plan by Shire staff and the Councils Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee
- analysis of the findings and recommendations from the community consultation undertaken as part of the review
- consideration of good practice in other local governments and the Disability Services Commission

Community Consultation

To ensure individuality of the DAIP outcomes for the Shire, consultation with community members, Shire staff and other stakeholders was an integral element of the review. The consultation aspect of the DAIP review included the seeking of feedback and

suggestions on areas where the Shire could improve access and inclusion. This involved:

- Consultant contracted to facilitate three community workshops; two with general public and one with Shire staff
- Electronic (online) and written surveys

The consultation was communicated by:

- A notice regarding the review and link to the online survey on the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup website
- Notices placed in the local commercial newspaper (Donnybrook-Bridgetown Mail)
- Notices placed on various community noticeboards in the Shire
- Email to local community groups and organisations
- Email / memo to employees of the Shire

Findings and Recommendations

The community consultation as part of the DAIP review did not raise any surprising outcomes in that the issues identified were similar to issues that are experienced by other local governments. Some of the key themes identified as part of the consultation included providing opportunities for youth and young adults to support their well-being and improve long term personal and public health outcomes.

The Shire's Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee also identified that there is a lack of local activities and social opportunities that accommodate an 'all abilities' approach to participation for young persons in the area. In addition it was identified that there is a lack of transportation available to activities and programs which are available in the wider South West region.

Based on the findings of the review, new strategies within the outcome areas of the DAIP have been identified where there is potential for the Shire to improve access and inclusion. It was also recommended that there needs to be a greater focus on collaborative community development initiatives in the DAIP, as the community appears keen to develop effective working relationships with the Shire to make the most of social capital opportunities on limited funds.

7. DAIP Outcome Areas

The Disability Services Commission of Western Australia has identified six key access and inclusion outcome areas that provide a framework for DAIPs. The Shire has structured its previous DAIPs around these outcomes. The 2012-2017 DAIP also encompasses these outcome areas, however the Shire has added two voluntary new outcome areas which have been identified to meet local needs.

The eight Outcome Areas of the 2012-2017 DAIP are as follows:

- 1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup;**
- 2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup;**
- 3. People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it;**
- 4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup as other people receive from the staff of the Shire;**
- 5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup;**
- 6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup;**
- 7. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access employment with the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup;**
- 8. The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup will encourage community engagement practices and effective advocacy by creating partnerships with external stakeholders.**

8. DAIP Strategies

The following strategies have been developed through research and consultation by the Shire with the local community and other stakeholders to achieve the specified eight outcome areas. It is acknowledged that they are subject to being incorporated in the Councils financial year budgets, however the DAIP is intended to provide a responsive and coordinated approach to planning, funding and implementing strategies. It also aims to proactively communicate what the Shire is accomplishing and what it intends to accomplish in the future.

It is important to note that the DAIP provides broad outcome areas and strategies. Specific tasks to achieve these strategies, along with timelines so that they are measureable, are detailed in the accompanying DAIP Implementation Plan.

OUTCOME 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	
Strategies	Timeline
Ensure that all Council staff, agents and contractors are aware of and comply with the Shire's Disability Access & Inclusion Plan	Ongoing
Incorporate an inclusive culture and 'all abilities' approach which supports equitable access to Shire services, programs and activities	Ongoing
Ensure that, where reasonably practicable, all public events, functions and meetings organised by the Shire are accessible to people with disability	Ongoing
Provide increased support to event organisers to ensure that, where reasonably practicable, all community events held the Shire are accessible to people with disability	Ongoing
Progress the accessibility of the library collection and technology	Ongoing

OUTCOME 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	
Strategies	Timeline
Continue to improve the accessibility of existing Shire buildings and facilities	Ongoing
Ensure that all new Shire buildings and facilities, including redevelopments, comply with accessibility standards	Ongoing
Ensure that there are adequate ACROD parking bays to meet demand in terms of quantity and location in the Shire	Ongoing
Ensure that, where reasonably practical, all people can easily access public toilets located in the Shire	Ongoing

OUTCOME 3 People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it	
Strategies	Timeline
Ensure Council staff in customer service roles are aware of accessible information needs and how to provide information in alternative formats	Ongoing
Ensure the provision of Shire information in an appropriate format using clear, concise language	Ongoing
Improve community awareness that Shire information is available in alternative formats, where reasonably practical, upon request	Ongoing
Improve the accessibility and ease of use of the Shire's website	Ongoing

OUTCOME 4 People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup as other people receive from the staff of the Shire	
Strategies	Timeline
Ensure all Shire staff have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for people with disability	Ongoing

OUTCOME 5 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	
Strategies	Timeline
Update the Shire's Complaints Handling Procedures Policy to ensure that the needs of people with diverse communication needs are met by providing flexible and accessible complaints formats	2013
Ensure Shire staff in customer service roles have the knowledge and skills to facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with disability, including providing assistance where appropriate	Ongoing

OUTCOME 6 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	
Strategies	Timeline
Update the Shire's Community Consultation Policy to ensure that the needs of people with diverse communication needs are met by consultation strategies	2014
Improve public awareness on the Shire's Community Consultation Policy and processes	Ongoing
Seek a broad range of views on disability access and inclusion issues from the community	Ongoing

OUTCOME 7: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access employment with the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	
Strategy	Timeline
Improve public awareness on the Shire's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy	Ongoing
Update the Shire's Volunteer Policy to include a 'reasonable adjustment' component to accommodate the needs of people with disability	2013

OUTCOME 8: The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup will encourage community engagement practices and effective advocacy by creating partnerships with external stakeholders	
Strategy	Timeline
Improve community awareness on the Shire's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and its achievements	Ongoing
Advocate to local businesses, organisations and community groups the requirements for, and benefits flowing from, the provision of accessible facilities and services	Ongoing
Collaborate with local community groups, businesses and external service providers to create recreational, social, employment and	Ongoing

Strategy	Timeline
volunteering opportunities for people with disability	
Advocate for the creation of a Local Agency Network for employment and volunteering opportunities for people with disability	Ongoing

9. Implementation Plan

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all Shire employees, Councillors, agents and contractors. It is only by itemising future requirements that the Shire can create realistic budgets and timeframes to complete the identified strategies and tasks to achieve outcomes.

The DAIP provides the broad outcome areas, strategies and background information that informs the Council of the reasons why change is required to a facility, service or information provided by the Shire. The accompanying DAIP Implementation Plan details the specific tasks to achieve the identified strategies and also includes the required timeline and whose area of responsibility it is for completion. In this sense, the DAIP Implementation Plan provides transparency and accountability to the Shire and community in regards to improving access and inclusion.

10. Communication

The Shire's 2012-2017 DAIP will be communicated via:

- Adopted formally through the Shire's Disability Access & Inclusion Planning Committee and Council
- Lodged with the Disability Services Commission
- Updates included in the Shire Annual Report
- Notice and link on Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup website home-page
- Notices placed in the local commercial newspaper (Donnybrook-Bridgetown Mail) and local community newspaper (Preston Press)
- Notices placed on various community noticeboards in the Shire
- Email to local community groups and organisations
- Email / memo to all existing employees of the Shire and included in the induction pack for new employees
- Provided to / referenced in relevant contracts, quote requests, tenders and specifications documents

Copies of the DAIP will be available in alternative formats on request.

11. Review and Reporting

Through the Shire's Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee, the Shire will monitor and review progress against the outcomes of the DAIP and undertake to develop a new DAIP every five years.

On an annual basis, the Shire will also undertake the following:

- Review progress in implementing the strategies and tasks of the DAIP Implementation Plan
- Include progress of the DAIP in the Shire's Annual Report
- Report to the Disability Services Commission by the 31 July on the progress of implementing the DAIP.