

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN (DAIP) 2017-2021

SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP



The Shire of Gnowangerup DAIP is available in alternative formats on request: in electronic format, hard copy format in both standard and large print, audio format, by email and on the Shire's website.



SHIRE OF GNOWANGERUP

Contents

Outline of organisation	1
Policy statement.....	1
Review Report	2
Consultation methods	3
Findings of the consultation	4
Results.....	5
Access barriers	6
Barriers – Consultations Process.....	7
Lack of Shire Resources	7
Disparity between the three towns	7
Low numbers of Seniors and People with disabilities.....	7
Over consultation	8
Disability Access and Inclusion Strategies and Outcomes 2017 - 2021.....	9
Outcome 1	9
Outcome 2	10
Outcome 3	10
Outcome 4	11
Outcome 5	11
Outcome 6	12
Outcome 7	12
Conclusion	13



Outline of organisation

The Shire of Gnowangerup is situated in the Great Southern region of Western Australia, approximately 354 kilometers from Perth and 140 kilometers from Albany via Chester Pass Road.

It covers an area of approximately 5,000 square kilometers and is a prosperous grain growing and sheep producing area. The area is noted Australia wide for its merino sheep and attracts large crowds to the annual Stud Field Days.

There are three towns in the Shire of Gnowangerup (Gnowangerup, Ongerup and Borden) which service the local community and a growing tourism node at the edge of the Stirling Range National Park.

The Shire of Gnowangerup provides the community with a range of services including infrastructure such as roads, public buildings, drainage infrastructure and a sealed airstrip. The Shire also provides community services such as 3 sport and recreation centers and a public swimming pool, library services, parks and economic and community development services.

Policy statement

The Shire of Gnowangerup is committed to furthering the principles and objectives featured in this report. These principles and objectives are an

important step in improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers by achieving the desired outcomes that will allow equity for all community members.

Review Report

The Shire of Gnowangerup Disability Access and Inclusion Report 2011 – 2016 identified a number of areas that the Shire could develop to improve Disability Access and Inclusion across the district. In summary, the Shire was able to deliver the following outcomes:

- The new Gnowangerup Community Swimming Pool was designed to include features that complied with Disability Access building codes and improved user experiences. This development was the most significant infrastructure project undertaking between 2011 and 2016. The new pool boasts a range of features including a beach entry, disabled shower and toilet, disability friendly access to overflow parking areas and a disabled car parking bay located in the main pool car park.
- Staff undertook training in areas such as Department of Transport Licensing and Pool Operations as development activities to assist them in their roles and were encouraged to provide additional assistance to people with disability.
- Additional support was provided to two staff members with minor disability. One of the staff members in question has been supported to gain new skills through additional training and has since been promoted from his original position to one of a higher level.
- Employment of a new staff member who identifies as having a moderate intellectual disability.
- Upgrades to existing buildings to improve accessibility – rail and temporary ramp for the Gnowangerup Town Hall.
- Mobile phone optimisation for the Shire website to improve accessibility for people with disability wishing to access digital information via a computer, tablet or mobile phone.
- Improved procedures for providing complaints – staff were able to assist people with disability to submit complaints by writing down verbal complaints on their behalf where applicable.
- Improved consultation methods – targeting people with disability at community events to enable setting-based consultation to occur.
- Catering for special dietary and access needs at Council functions – supply of gluten-free food for patrons who are gluten-intolerant.
- General community satisfaction with the Shire's complaints and feedback process and their ability to provide feedback effectively.

Consultation methods

The Disability Services Commission requires that Local Government Authorities develop a new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan every five years. In late 2016 and early 2017, The Shire began consultation with the community in order to develop the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016-2021. This plan was aimed at improving existing services, identifying new opportunities for improvement and encouraging greater communication between the Shire and people with disability living in the area.

The process included:

- examination of the DAIP and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion
- consultation with key staff
- consultation with the community.

The Shire of Gnowangerup consults the community on a range of programs. In order to engage as many community members as possible the Shire undertook a consultation program between December 2016 and January 2017. A variety of consultation methods were used throughout the process.

The following strategies were used in the consultation:

- In December 2016, the Shire hosted a Seniors Morning Tea that was attended by 40 people. There were a number of people attending the event who either had disability, or were carers of someone with disability. Attendees were informed about the DAIP process and encouraged to provide written and verbal feedback.
- The wider community was informed that the Shire was developing a new DAIP to address the barriers that people with disability and their families experience in accessing the Shire's functions, facilities and services. The wider community was notified through notices in the three local newsletters, on the Shire Facebook page and on the Shire website.
- Community members were encouraged to access a survey to assist the Shire to gather information about how Shire services could be improved to suit the needs of people with disability living in the region. This information and anecdotal feedback received from the community was then used to formulate the plan.

- The community was advised through the local newsletters, Shire Facebook page and Shire website that they could provide input into the development of the plan by:
 - Completing a '*DAIP Community Feedback Survey*'.
 - Contacting the Shire via phone or email or in person.

'*The DAIP Community Feedback Survey*' (the Survey) was developed to allow community members, staff and visitors to provide feedback on their experiences and views on the accessibility of services provided by the Shire.

The Survey asked participants to give feedback on each of the standards set out in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. Participants were also encouraged to give general feedback and provide more detailed explanations to questions where applicable.

The Survey and DAIP promotional material were made available in hard copy at the following locations:

1. The Shire Office
2. The Gnowangerup Community Swimming Pool
3. The Gnowangerup Library
4. The Ongerup Library
5. The Gnowangerup Pharmacy
6. The Gnowangerup Community Resource Centre
7. The Ongerup Community Resource Centre
8. Somewhere in Borden?

All survey participants were entered into a prize draw.

The Shire of Gnowangerup also encouraged staff to provide feedback to inform the plan. Staff focus groups were held to gather information and develop strategies that would be applicable and achievable. The following focus groups took place during the consultation period:

- Executive Staff DAIP Focus Group
- Depot Staff DAIP Focus Group
- Library Staff and other Admin Staff
- Pool Staff

The Shire received 19 completed questionnaires.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that most of the objectives in the previous DAIP 2012 - 2016 had been achieved and that a new plan was required, to ensure currency and relevance. Based on the feedback

received, the new plan will address current access barriers and also reflect contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and meeting more than the minimum compliance with access standards.

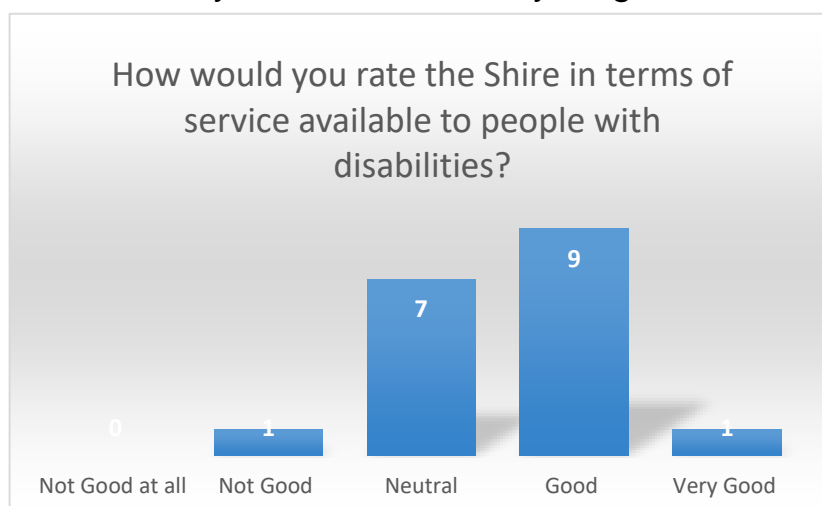
Results

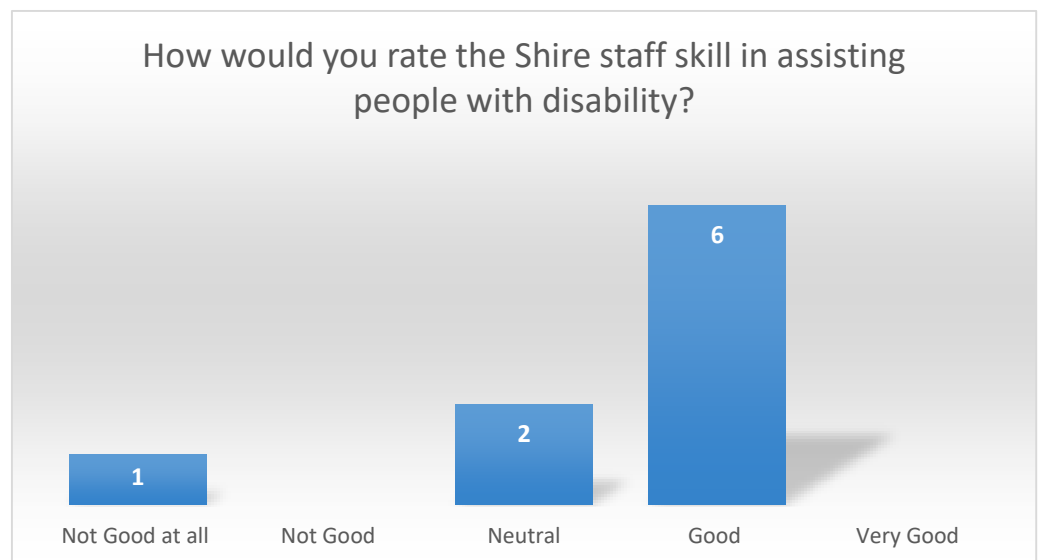
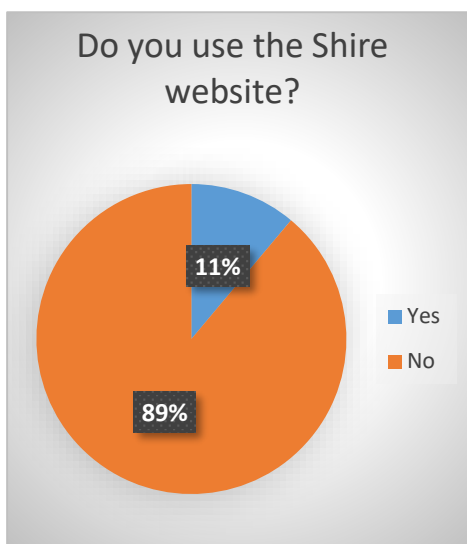
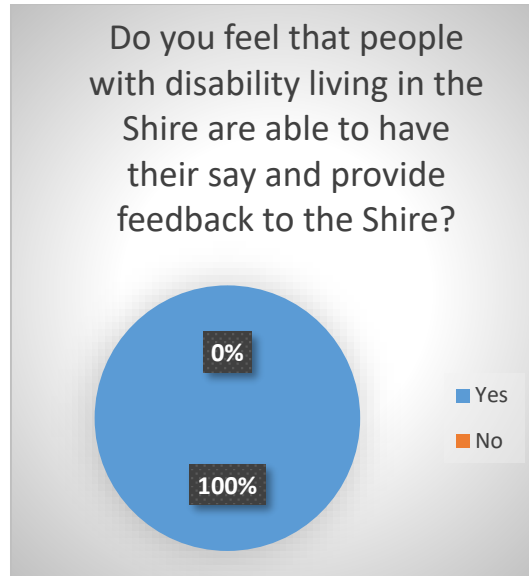
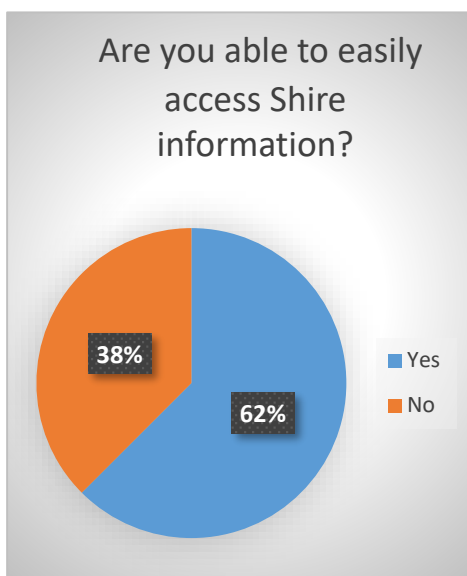
There is limited data available about the number of people living in the Shire that identify as having a disability. According to ABS records of (year), 14.6% of West Australians have disability. At this rate it is estimated that 186 people living in Gnowangerup identified as having disability. In total 13 responses were received by the Shire from people with disability as part of the Disability Access and Inclusion consultation process. This equates to approximately 6.9% of the disabled population.

In total the Shire received 19 responses (including from people with a disability) from the wider community.

Survey Highlights

- 68.4% of Survey respondents indicated that they had disability.
- Although overall the availability of accessible services for people with disability in the Shire rated as acceptable, it was identified that there was room for improvement. Further research is required to identify which services could be targeted for continuous improvement.
- Responses to both questions regarding ways to access Shire information, both from the website and more generally, indicated that community members were not using, not able to access or were not aware of the various ways to access Shire information.
- Although respondents indicated that they were able to easily lodge complaints and provide feedback to the Shire, respondents also indicated that they had mixed experiences when interacting with Shire staff. On the whole most interactions were positive but additional action could be taken to improve customer service interactions.





Access barriers

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

- People who identify as having a disability do not use the website.
- Lower than expected rating from members of the public on the quality of customer service.
- Low rating on communications to engage people with disabilities prior to, and during Shire events.
- Low rating on engagement of people with disability in Shire activities and consultation.
- People with disability may not be aware of consultation opportunities.

- People with disability may be unintentionally excluded from applying for positions.
- Older physical infrastructure may not be meeting the needs of people with disability.
- The Shire has no policy to guide and inform access and inclusion activities.
- Disability Access is not included in the Shire's Communication Plan.

Barriers – Consultation Process

Lack of Shire Resources

The Shire of Gnowangerup has limited resources and a small population. Development of the DAIP requires a significant amount of resources and time to achieve and can be affected by a variety of factors including lack of financial resources, lack of staff time and existing heavy workloads and higher cost of implementations due to geographical locations of the Shire's populations.

Disparity between the three towns

Similarly, the Shire consists of three separate and unique towns. These towns are separated by considerable distances and have different community needs. The consultation process has been designed to overcome the barrier of distance by providing settings-based access to DAIP surveys and promotion using local service providers and community champions. Despite this, very low numbers of surveys were completed by residents living outside of the Gnowangerup town site.

Low numbers of Seniors and People with disabilities

Due to the limited availability of allied health and acute care services in the region and the Shire's proximity to Albany and Perth, many Seniors and people with disability choose to relocate to metropolitan areas and other parts of WA. This means that the population of Seniors and people with disability is quite low compared with some of the surrounding towns in the region. This low number of people with higher needs, means that Shire resources are often allocated to other areas of need in the community.



Over consultation

Finally, due to the small population size and the large number of legislative requirements placed on Local Government Authorities where community consultation is required, it is possible that community members can suffer from over-consultation. The Shire aims to address this matter by including Disability Access and Inclusion components in general consultation activities such as the upcoming community consultation required to develop the Shire's new '*Strategic Community Plan 2017 – 2021*'.



Disability Access and Inclusion Strategies and Outcomes 2017 - 2021

Outcome 1

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	Ongoing
Develop an Access and Inclusion policy to ensure the Shire supports equitable access to services by people with disability throughout the various functions of the Shire.	December 2017
Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into the Shire's Strategic Community Plan, Corporate Business Plan, Asset Management Plan, budgeting processes and other relevant plans and strategies.	Ongoing
Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disability.	Ongoing
Promote Shire-run community services to people with disability.	Ongoing
Ensure that the Shire's staff and agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the Disability Services Act.	Ongoing
Include a requirement to fulfil Disability Access and Inclusion as part of projects funded by the Shire through the Community Financial Assistance Grants process.	June 2017

Outcome 2

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disability by completing a buildings audit.	December 2018
Ensure that all premises leased by the Shire in the future are accessible.	Ongoing
Ensure that all new premises and other infrastructure are accessible.	Ongoing
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location.	Ongoing

Outcome 3

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

Strategy	Timeline
Improve community awareness that Shire's information is available in alternative formats upon request.	December 2018
Improve current staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	Ongoing
Increase awareness about the Shire's website and Facebook page to improve communications and methods of accessing Shire information for people with a disability.	December 2018
Provide documentation regarding services, facilities and customer feedback in an appropriate format and using clear and concise language.	Ongoing

Outcome 4

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

Strategy	Timeline
Continue to improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disability.	Ongoing
Improve the awareness of new staff about disability and access issues by holding training sessions which close with a provided lunch.	December 2019
Source funding and partner with local organisations / service providers to deliver Disability Access and Inclusion training to Shire and other service providers' staff.	December 2019

Outcome 5

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

Strategy	Timeline
Evaluate current grievance mechanisms to make sure they are accessible for people with disability.	Ongoing
Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with disability (part of training).	Ongoing
Ensure that grievance mechanism processes and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disability.	Ongoing

Outcome 6

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

Strategy	Timeline
Improve community awareness about consultation processes in place.	Ongoing
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	Ongoing
Improve access for people with disability to the established consultative processes of the Shire i.e. Strategic Community Plan, Infrastructure projects, etc.	Ongoing
Ensure a broad range of views on disability and access issues are collected from the community.	Ongoing

Outcome 7

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

Strategy	Timeline
Commit to using inclusive recruitment practices when advertising new positions.	Ongoing
Engage with key disability employment support providers.	ASAP
Provide support and training for management staff.	Ongoing
Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.	Ongoing

Conclusion

As required by the Disability Services Act, the Shire will advertise the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017- 2021 to the public prior to it being endorsed by Council to allow for public comment on the draft plan.

Once the feedback period has elapsed and the plan has been endorsed by Council, the plan will be made available to the public in a variety of formats on the Shire website, at the Gnowangerup and Ongerup Libraries and at the Shire Office. Once published, details about locations and ways to access the plan will be published in local newsletters and on the Shire Facebook page.

Agents and contractors used by the Shire of Gnowangerup will be informed about the DAIP. This will occur by inserting the DAIP into the tender documents, by email, or by providing a link to the DAIP. Where possible agents and contractors will be able to report back to the Shire about measures that have been undertaken to incorporate DAIP principles into their activities through meetings, email or by written report.

The Shire of Gnowangerup will also report on the implementation of the DAIP in its annual report as per the requirements of Part 5 of the Financial Management Act 2006.

The Shire of Gnowangerup endeavours to uphold the principles outlined in this plan. In light of the fact that the Shire is a small local government authority these principles will be incorporated into existing services, activities and initiatives. The Shire will ensure all practicable measures are taken to ensure that the '*Shire of Gnowangerup Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021*' is implemented throughout the Shire by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.