



SHIRE OF MOORA
DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION
PLAN
2007 – 2011

Adopted by Council on 22 August 2007

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille.

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BACKGROUND

The Shire of Moora

The Shire of Moora covers an area of 3788 square kilometres and includes the townships of Bindi Bindi, Watheroo, Miling, Coomberdale and Moora, and the localities of Koojan and Round Hill. The Shire is primarily a pastoral and farming district.

The town of Moora was gazetted on 12 April 1895. Moora became a separate Road Board on 11 December 1908 and later became the Shire of Moora on 1 July 1961. The town of Moora is situated 180 kilometres from Perth on the banks of the Moore river and is the largest inland service centre between Perth and Geraldton providing services to a population catchment of 6000 residents within a 100 kilometre radius.

Functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) provided by the Shire of Moora

The Shire of Moora 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, footpaths and cycle facilities; land drainage and development; waste collection and disposal; litter control and street cleaning; planting and caring for street trees; numbering of buildings and lots, street lighting; and bush fire control.

Services to the community: provision and maintenance of playing areas, parks, gardens, reserves and facilities for sporting and community groups; management of recreation centre and pool; library and information services; immunisation and health education; citizenship ceremonies; youth services and community events; support of dental and medical services and provision of a caravan park.

Regulatory services: planning of road systems, sub-divisions and town planning schemes; building approvals for construction, additions or alterations to buildings; environmental health services and ranger services including dog control and the development, maintenance and control of parking, bush fire control and emergency management

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General administration: the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates 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 disabilities in the Shire of Moora

The residential population of the Shire of Moora is currently estimated to be around 2780. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6% of Australians or more than one in five people, identify themselves as having some form of disability. Reports from the ABS estimate that there are around 482 people with disabilities living within the Shire of Moora¹. In addition, the population is growing against the general declining trend in most rural areas.

Planning for better access

It is a requirement of the WA Disability Services Act that all local government authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the WA 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 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 since 1996

The Shire of Moora is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. Towards this goal the Shire adopted its first DSP in 1996 to address the barriers within the community for people with disabilities. The DSP addressed both its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993) and its obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Shire has made significant progress towards better access. Examples of achievements include:

- Installation of ramps at the Moora Recreation Centre and Miling Pavilion.
- Provision of accessible toilets at Centenary Park and the Moora Caravan Park.

¹ For more detail see the profile of disability for the Shire of Moora at www.disability.wa.gov.au

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- Redevelopment and refurbishment, including access improvements, of the Moora Town Hall (Performing Arts Centre).
- Access improvements including an accessible toilet at the Moora swimming pool.
- An access audit of Shire buildings and facilities through a WA Local Government Association grant.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

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

The Shire of Moora 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 Moora recognises that people with disabilities are valued members of the community who make a variety of contributions 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 of its members makes for a richer community life.

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

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

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

The Shire of Moora 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 Shire of Moora is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIP

Responsibility for the planning process

Disability consultants (E-QUAL) were contracted to oversee the development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Community consultation process

In 2007, the Shire undertook to review its DSP, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the Shire's existing DAIP to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- consultation with Shire staff; and
- consultation with the community.

The Disability Services Regulations 2004 set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. Local government authorities must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a newspaper circulating in the local district of the local government under the Local Government Act 1995 or on any website maintained by or on behalf of the local government authority. Other mechanisms may also be used.

In July 2007 the community was informed through the local newspaper (Central Midlands and Coastal Advocate), on noticeboards, through community organisations and on the council's website, that the Shire was developing a disability access and inclusion plan to address the barriers that people with disabilities, their families and carers experience in accessing council functions, facilities and services.

The community was advised that they could provide input into the development of the plan by taking part in a community consultation.

The various consultation methods offered included:

- A community survey form. This was available electronically or in hard copy at the council offices. Survey forms could be posted, emailed or faxed to the consultants. Seven responses were received.
- Phone interviews with community members.
- Interviews with key staff. One interview conducted.
- A survey of council staff by e-mail and in hard copy. Eleven responses received.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that most of the initial objectives in the first DSP had been achieved and that a new plan was required, to ensure currency and relevance. The new plan should not only address current access barriers but also reflect contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and meeting more than the minimum compliance with access standards. The plan must also keep abreast of legislative and regulatory changes.

Access Barriers

While the review and consultation noted a great deal of achievement in improving access it also identified a range of barriers that still require action. Comments and suggestions from the consultation about existing access barriers include:

- No pedestrian railway crossover in the centre of town. People crossing railway line near post office and near telecentre to get to public toilets;
- Need crossings with warning signs at strategic locations on roads;
- Footpaths are not accessible for people using wheelchairs. Need better maintenance, better kerb ramps, better transition between footpaths and roads;
- Not enough ramp access and footpaths in general;
- Footpaths (concrete) should be on both sides of the road;
- Street lighting is not adequate;
- Accessible parking is limited;
- A park home for tourists who have disabilities is recommended;
- Buildings requiring access improvements include the doctors surgeries, shire offices, Tafe campus, telecentre, hockey pavilion, post office, butcher, bakery, Country Choice, Drivers Inn;
- Crosswalk between liquor store and swimming pool required;
- Heavy doors at some facilities, self opening better;
- Park generally not accessible and no suitable play equipment for people with disabilities;
- Public documentation not available in large print or audio;
- No disability awareness training arranged. Staff need more awareness due to ageing population;
- Need more information on accessibility to funding and resources for children's respite care for carers;
- More community facilities and services required e.g. gym, library, hairdresser, grocery store and fuel station;
- Encourage business community to improve access to parking and movement within shopping areas;
- Promote employment of people with disability – they can make very good workers.

The findings of the review and consultation informed the development of strategies in the DAIP.

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 the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of council. Some actions in the Action Plan will apply to all areas of 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 disabilities

- In August 2007 the plan was finalised and adopted by council.
- Council has advised, through the local media – newspaper and radio, that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the council 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 mechanisms

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act. The DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and monitoring

- The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the implementation of the plan. Stakeholders involved in implementing particular strategies identified in the plan will report progress quarterly to the Chief Executive Officer for consideration at Management Executive Team meetings.
- The review of the Shire's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2011-2015 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2011. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2007-2011.

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- The Chief Executive Officer will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to council for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

- Council will endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process annually.
- Once a year prior to 31 July council will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of strategies. This will inform the further implementation of the plan.
- A notice about the consultation process will be placed in the local newspaper, posted on the Shire's website, and announced on the local radio station.
- In seeking feedback the Shire will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- The Shire will use some of the consultation processes used during the initial consultations including questionnaires and telephone interviews.
- Elected members of council and council officers will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- The DAIP will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended Plan will be available to the community in alternative formats once endorsed by council.

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 Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

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

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

As a result of the review and consultation process the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the DAIP Implementation Plan, that the Shire of Moora will undertake from 2007-2011 to improve access to its services, buildings and information. The six desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities in the Shire of Moora.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.

	Strategy	Timeline
1.1	Ensure that all of the Shire's policies and management practices are consistent with the DAIP and support equitable access to services by people with disabilities.	June 2008
1.2	Develop links between the DAIP and other council plans and strategies, and implement the DAIP consistently across the organisation.	June 2008
1.3	Ensure all Shire events are planned using the Accessible Events Checklist (In the State Government Access Guidelines). Make the checklist available on the intranet and promote this to staff.	June 2008
1.4	Design all briefs and selection processes for contractors to ensure they meet legislative requirements.	June 2008
1.5	Continue to implement the Shire's footpath program. Respond as a matter of priority when a person with disability reports difficulties regarding lack of or condition of footpath.	Ongoing
1.6	Review the Shire's sport and recreation services, facilities and programs regarding access and inclusion for people with disabilities.	June 2009
1.7	Make the library technology as accessible as possible.	December 2008
1.8	Encourage the business community to consider the needs of people with a disability when providing facilities and services.	December 2008

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

	Strategy	Timeline
2.1	Schedule and implement remedial works to meet recommendations from the 2007 Access Audit of the Shire of Moora buildings and facilities and address issues raised in the DAIP consultation.	June 2009
2.2	Ensure that the advice of a Disability Access Consultant is sought when planning and designing any new council buildings or undertaking major refurbishments.	As required
2.3	Ensure that accessible playground guidelines are considered when purchasing any new playground equipment.	As required
2.4	Ensure that key regulatory staff maintain an awareness of the developments regarding a Premises Standard under the DDA.	June 2008
2.5	Develop all briefs, tenders and contracts to ensure the Shire's agents and contractors provide services that are consistent with the Shire's DAIP and access and inclusion principles.	June 2008

Outcome 3: People with disabilities 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
3.1	Ensure that all public information is made in clear and concise language and is available in alternative formats on request.	Ongoing
3.2	Promote the availability of council information in alternative formats upon request.	June 2008
3.3	Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	June 2008
3.4	Review and where necessary amend the Shire's Style Guide to ensure compliance with the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities.	June 2008
3.5	Ensure all public information is compliant with the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities.	June 2008
3.6	Ensure that local radio is included on the distribution list for media releases and other public information such as brochures.	December 2007
3.7	Provide Auslan interpreters as required (if available).	As required
3.8	Utilise the National Relay Service to communicate by phone to people who are deaf and who use a TTY phone.	As required
3.9	Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice.	June 2009

Outcome 4: People with disabilities 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
4.1	Make resources, such as the Creating Accessible Events checklist, Accessible Information Guidelines and State Government Guidelines on Access, readily available to staff on the Intranet and promote this availability.	June 2008
4.2	Assess training needs and conduct tailored disability awareness training for staff across all areas.	December 2008
4.3	Include disability access awareness information in the Shire's induction material provided to new staff and new elected members.	December 2008

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.

	Strategy	Timeline
5.1	Review the Shire's complaints policy & procedures to ensure they meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities.	June 2008
5.2	Ensure staff are aware of the accessible complaints mechanisms and know how to support people to use them.	December 2008
5.3	Promote the Shire's accessible complaints mechanisms to the community.	December 2008

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

	Strategy	Timeline
6.1	Review the Shire's community participation processes to ensure equal opportunities for participation by people with disabilities.	June 2009
6.2	Ensure consultation documents are available on the website in an accessible format and in alternative formats on request.	June 2008
6.3	Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative process of council.	June 2008
6.4	Ensure meetings and forums held as part of community consultations comply with accessible events guidelines.	June 2008
6.5	Ensure all aspects of council meetings are accessible.	June 2008