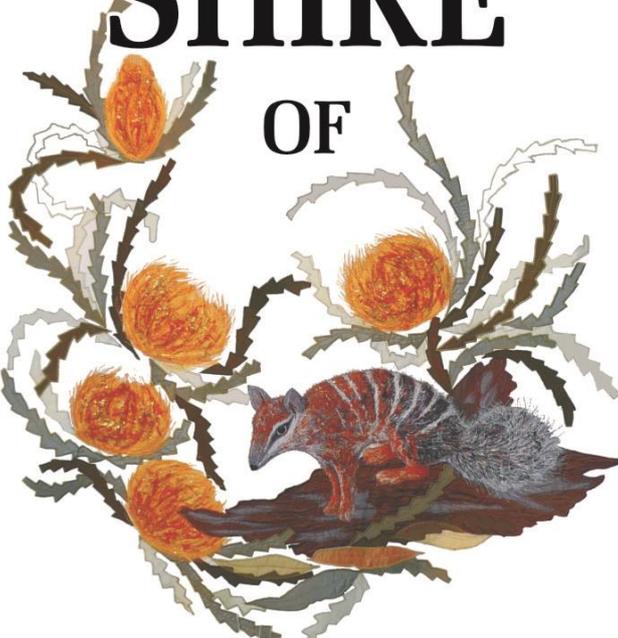


**SHIRE**  
**OF**

The coat of arms of the Shire of Cuballing features a central illustration of a squirrel and a possum. The squirrel is depicted in a reddish-brown hue, facing left, and is perched on a branch. The possum is shown in a greyish-brown color, facing right, and is also perched on a branch. The branches are adorned with several large, orange, spherical objects, likely representing the shire's agricultural products. The entire scene is set against a background of stylized, grey, leafy branches.

**CUBALLING**

**DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN**

**2015-2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Shire of Cuballing is a small rural local authority located in the Central South East region of Western Australia, approximately 190km south east of Perth and has an area of 1250 square kilometres.

There is a population of 894 residing in the Shire. Two populated town sites, Cuballing and Popanyinning exist within the region.

### **Functions, Facilities and Services Provided By the Shire Of Cuballing**

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

#### **Services to property and the Community:**

- Construction and maintenance of Public buildings, roads and footpaths
- Provision and maintenance of waste disposal facilities
- Bushfire control through voluntary Bushfire Brigades
- Provision and maintenance of recreation facilities
- Information Service and facilitation of monthly newsletter distribution
- Provision of funding to community groups

#### **Regulatory Services**

- Planning of road systems
- Subdivision oversight and provision of town planning schemes
- Building and Environmental Health Service
- Animal control
- Administering Noise Regulations

#### **General Administration**

- Provision of general information to the public
- Dealing with complaints and maintenance requests
- Payment of fees including rates, dog licenses, building licenses and private works

#### **Processes of Government**

- Ordinary and Special Council and Committee Meetings
- Electors' meetings and election of Councillors
- Community engagement and consultation
- Long Term community and strategic planning

## **PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY WITHIN THE SHIRE OF CUBALLING**

The residential population of Cuballing is estimated to be around 894. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and carers (2006) more than 20% of Australians or more than 1 in 5 people, identify themselves as having some form of

disability. Based on the population estimate and these findings, it is estimated that there are growing numbers of people with disability living within the Shire.

As the Shire of Cuballing becomes more attractive as a small country region with attractive land in close proximity to a larger regional area, the number of people with disability living within the shire is likely to increase in the future. The Shire of Cuballing believes it is important that everyone has the same opportunity and choices within the shire and recognises that disability are not necessarily visible. It is also recognised that Council's planning needs to take into account visitors to our shire.

The Shire of Cuballing is responsible for the planning process with a particular focus on a nurturing community where diversity, difference and a sense of identity is respected and valued. Seeking input from the local community, with personal and/or professional knowledge of disability requirements and issues, and the Disability Services Commission, the Shire of Cuballing will continually develop, implement, review and evaluate the plan.

### **Planning for Better Access**

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act (1993) that local governments develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines how that local government 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 visitors to the 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

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 requirements for action plans.

### **Progress 1995 – 2014**

The Shire of Cuballing is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. The first plan was adopted in 1995 to address the barriers for people with disability and addressed both its statutory requirements under the Disability Services Act (1993) and its obligations under the

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992). The plan has undergone several internal reviews since 1995.

During that time many initiatives have been implemented:

### **1995 – 2007**

- Accessible footpaths and cycle ways constructed in town
- Ramp Access to Cuballing Tennis Courts
- Accessible path around perimeter of change rooms at Cuballing Oval
- Accessible public toilets and change rooms constructed at Cuballing Oval
- Accessible (from the rear of the building) entrance facing oval at Cuballing Recreation Building
- Ramp access topside of Cuballing Hall
- Handrails to side and rear entrances at Cuballing Hall
- Ramp Access at Cuballing Community Park
- Tactile pavers placed at bus stop in town sites of Cuballing and Popanyinning
- Gazebo built with provision for wheelchair to be used at table in Cuballing Community Park
- Accessible toilets built at Cuballing Community Park
- Ramp access and accessible toilets built in Popanyinning townsite
- Ramp access has been built along with accessible toilets at Yornaning Dam
- McGarrigal Park (children's playground in Popanyinning) has an accessible entrance
- Information has been updated and is continually reviewed to reflect contemporary needs
- The availability of alternative format information or assistance with information has been promoted through the local newsletter

### **2007 -2014**

- Ramp access has been constructed at the front of Cuballing Recreation Building
- Information has been updated and is continually reviewed to reflect contemporary needs
- The availability of alternative format information or assistance with information has been promoted through the local newsletter
- Equestrian Clubrooms built with access by ramp
- Accessible Toilet built at Popanyinning Tennis Court with ramp access
- Handrails and ramp to rear entrance at Cuballing Administration Office and Council Chamber
- Creek crossing upgraded with suitable railing and widened to enable accessibility
- Toilet within Cuballing Hall modified to provide accessibility
- Ramp access and security lighting to Popanyinning Hall
- Improved signage at Yornaning Dam
- Construction of an accessible Men's Shed in Cuballing

## **Responsibility for the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

### **Community Consultation Process**

In 2007, the Shire began the review of its plan, consulted with key stakeholders and drafted a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. Wherever possible, representatives from a variety of sectors of the community were consulted.

The process included:

- Examination of the initial plan and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and items requiring completion
- Examination of other Council documents and strategies
- Investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion
- Consultation with key staff and the community via a survey
- Consultation with people with disability and other key stakeholders

The Disability Service Regulations 2004 set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to the DAIP. 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 authority. Other mechanisms may also be used.

- In August 2007 the community was informed through the local regional newspaper, that the Shire of Cuballing was reviewing its disability access and inclusion plan to address the barriers that people with disability and their families experience in accessing Council functions, facilities and services. The community was advised of the means by which they could provide input into the development of the plan.
- In October 2013, further community consultation was invited utilising the same means as in 2007, however there were no written submissions or comments and only a handful of verbal comments expressing satisfaction with Council's progress regarding disability access and inclusion.

The review and both consultation processes found that most of the initial objects in the first DSP had been achieved and that the DAIP required updating to ensure currency and relevance. The updated 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. It must also keep abreast of legislative and regulatory changes.

The initial 2007 consultation also identified a variety of remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

- Absence of a concise policy to guide and inform access and inclusion activities – all Council run community function advertisements now have information regarding access. A policy has not been formulated as this issue is seen to be required under the legislation and forms part of everyday practice.
- Events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disability – this point is taken into consideration when planning Council run community functions

- Suitable parking for people with disability may not be meeting the needs of this growing demographic – parking issues have been address at major Council owned facilities
- Facilities in and around the shire may not be as accessible – work is continuing on addressing this point (see progress lists)
- Staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to adequately provide the same level of service to people with disability – In house training has been provided to all administration staff.
- People with disability may not be aware of consultation opportunities with the Shire – As we are two very small communities within a small local government area, residents are able to (and do) consult with Councillors, Administration Staff and the Works Crew on a regular basis.

The identification of these barriers were included in the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been addressed (as shown in the bulleted list above) and it is believed that all residents including those with a disability are satisfied with the progress being made by the Shire of Cuballing.

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

In September 2007 copies of the Draft Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was sent to all those who contributed to the planning process, including Council officers, people with disability, their families, carers and relevant community groups for feedback. In September 2007, the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by Council.

Council has advised, through the local media, that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request, and in alternative formats if required, including Council's website, hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format and by email.

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

### **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 regularly 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 this amended plan which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2014. The achievements are noted within the amended plan.

Council will include a report on the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan within its Annual Report which will be formally endorsed by Council.

### **Evaluation**

Prior to 31 July annually, Council will seek feedback from the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented.

The following actions will then be taken:

- Endorsement of any progress reports on the implementation process which forms part of the DAIP
- Notices about the consultation process will be placed in the local newsletter
- Feedback will be sought in order to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation
- Identify additional strategies for consideration

The Shire of Cuballing is required to report on the progress in the prescribed format to the Disability Services Commission annually.

## **REPORTING ON THE DAIP**

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to the DAIP. 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 the DAIP
- Progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the desired outcomes
- Strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of the DAIP

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

As a result of the consultation process, the following strategies will guide tasks reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the Shire of Cuballing will continue to undertake to improve access to its services, buildings and information. The desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability within and visiting the Shire of Cuballing.

<b>Outcome 1</b>	<b>People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Shire of Cuballing</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To adapt services wherever possible to meet the needs of people with disability
<b>Strategy</b>	Council will <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of Council facilities, functions and services are consistent with Council's policy on access and legislation</li><li>2. Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services</li><li>3. Utilise the universal design checklist that has been provided by the Disability Services Commission</li></ol>
<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Cuballing</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To ensure that all Shire owned, leased or supported facilities are accessible to people with diverse needs
<b>Strategy</b>	Council will

1. Advocate to local businesses the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues
2. Apply the Building Code of Australia and associated Standards on access when new or existing work begins on buildings and facilities
3. Undertake to identify and incorporate the priorities regarding access that have been identified during the review process. Ongoing upgrades will continue.
4. Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities using the Access Resource Kit checklists

**Outcome 3**      **People with disability receive information pertaining to Council functions, facilities and services in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it**

**Objective**      To ensure that relevant information pertaining to Council functions, facilities and services is provided using clear and concise language and made available in accessible formats

**Strategy**      Council will:

1. Improve community awareness that all documents may be available in alternative formats upon request
2. Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information using other formats

**Outcome 4**      **People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Cuballing as other people receive**

**Objective**      Council staff working with the public be equipped with the information and skills to enable them to appropriately provide advice and service to people with diverse disability

**Strategy**      Council will

1. Provide information and training to staff and elected members to improve the awareness of access issues and further enhance their skills to provide an excellent service to people with disability
2. Where required seek advice from other local governments and community professionals on how to better meet the needs of people with disability
3. Ensure key staff are registered for email updates from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Disability Services Commission to keep abreast of contemporary practices in creating universal facilities
4. Ensure staff are aware that some people may require assistance with paperwork associated with various functions of local government and will readily assist if required

**Outcome 5**      **People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Cuballing**

**Objective**      Ensure that grievance mechanisms/procedures are accessible or that appropriate assistance is given to enable people with diverse needs to make grievances and complaints known to the Shire

**Strategy**      Council will

1. Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are easily accessible for people with disability
2. Improve staff awareness and knowledge so that the receipt of complaints from people with disability can be facilitated

**Outcome 6**      **People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Cuballing**

**Objective**      To ensure that people with disability can participate fully in decision making and consultation processes managed by the Shire

**Strategy**      Council will

1. Ensure community consultation processes are inclusive of people with disability
2. Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes

**Outcome 7**      **People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Cuballing**

**Objective**      Ensure that disability is not seen as a barrier to a staff appointment

**Strategy**      Council or Staff responsible for recruitment will ensure that the right person is selected for the position regardless of disability.

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The DAIP provides the background information that informs the Cuballing Shire Council of the reasons why change is required to a facility, service or event provided in their district with their support. The DAIP implementation plan lists the suggested changes, person responsible to ensure that change happens and the date by which the change should be completed.

By itemising future requirements, Council can approve realistic budget for the funds and human resources to complete the work required and comply with legislation.

A fair and equitable DAIP implementation plan therefore informs Council where budget funds should be allocated and can only occur following consultation from different sectors of the community, including:

- Community members with some form of disability
- Members of the community supporting residents and visitors to the district
- Community members with experience in the disability field
- Broad community consultation
- Relevant representatives from government departments

The Disability Access and Inclusion strategies and objectives developed for the Shire of Cuballing are grouped under the seven desired outcomes as recommended by the Disability Services Commission. These outcome areas provide a framework for translating the principles and objectives of the Disability Services Act into tangible and achievable results.

**Outcome 1 People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to access the services of, and any events organised in the Shire of Cuballing**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of Council facilities, functions and services are consistent with Council's policy on access and legislation	Ensure relevant legislation, policies and procedures on access and inclusion are current and incorporated into Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan	Ongoing	CEO
Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	Continue with feedback requests in monthly newsletter	Ongoing	CEO
Utilise the universal design checklist that has been provided by the Disability Services Commission	Use the checklist to grade accessibility at all Council events	Ongoing	Building Surveyor Administration Officer

**Outcome 2 People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Cuballing**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Advocate to local businesses the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues	Promote access to business by informing them of the needs of people with various disability and access information available online or through the Shire of Cuballing	Ongoing	Building Surveyor & CEO
Apply the Building Code of Australia and associated standards on access when new or existing work begins on buildings and facilities	Ensure that legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities	Ongoing	Building Surveyor & CEO
Undertake to identify and incorporate the priorities regarding access that have been identified during the review process.	Continue working on identified access barriers to buildings and facilities by utilising the Access Resource Kit checklist. Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrade	Ongoing	Building Surveyor & CEO

**Outcome 3 People with disability receive information pertaining to Council functions facilities and services in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Improve community awareness that all documents may be available in alternative formats	Use the regular feedback request notices in the monthly newsletter to identify which alternative formats are required	Ongoing	Administration Officer
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information using other formats	Provide awareness training to Councillors and Staff	Ongoing	CEO

**Outcome 4 People with disability will receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Cuballing as other people receive.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ensure staff are aware that some people may require assistance with paperwork associated with various functions of local government and will readily assist if required	Improve staff awareness through disability awareness training	Ongoing as staff turnovers occur	CEO
Seek advice from other Councils and community professionals in the disability field on how to better meet the needs of people with disability	Liaise with community members regarding access issues and implement as necessary	Ongoing	Administration Officer
Provide information and training to staff and elected members to improve the awareness of access issues and further enhance their skills to provide an excellent service to people with disability	Provide awareness training to Councillors and staff	Ongoing	CEO
Ensure key staff are registered for email updates from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Disability Services Commission to keep abreast of contemporary practices in creating universal facilities	Ensure staff are informed regarding contemporary access issues and up to date with legal requirements	Ongoing	CEO

**Outcome 5 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Cuballing**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ensure that grievance mechanisms/procedures are accessible or that appropriate assistance is given to enable people with diverse needs to make grievances and complaints known to the Shire	Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any required changes	Ongoing	Administration Officer & CEO
Improve staff awareness and knowledge so that the receipt of complaints from people with disability can be facilitated	Improve staff awareness through training	Ongoing	CEO

**Outcome 6 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Cuballing**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Ensure community consultation processes are inclusive of people with disability	All public meetings to be held in accessible venues and consultation material to be in alternative formats (when possible) upon request	Ongoing	CEO
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes	Ensure that the Shire of Cuballing Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is continually reviewed	Ongoing at least annually	CEO

**Outcome 7 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Cuballing**

Strategy	Task	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Council or Staff responsible for recruitment will ensure that the right person is selected for the position regardless of disability</p>	<p>Councillors and Staff to be aware that a disability is not a barrier to employment with some positions with the Shire of Cuballing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Job Applications and Descriptions include a breakdown of tasks in a tasks list/job description to allow prospective employees with a disability to determine if they are suitable or able to do an advertised job.</li> <li>• Ensure that job interviews are held in a place accessible to all.</li> <li>• Ensure that any prospective candidates are asked if they have any special access or other requirements to assist them at an interview if they have a disability</li> <li>• Ensure that persons are referred to as a “Person with a Disability”, not a “Person with Disabilities”.</li> <li>• Ensure that the workplace is accessible.</li> <li>• Encourage co-partnerships with local businesses and the shire to encourage employment of people with disabilities through joint funded positions or “Count Me In Grants”.</li> <li>• Ensure that any DAIP Drafts that include “Option 7” or general changes are advertised on the Shire Website.</li> <li>• Ensure that any DAIP Drafts that include “Option 7” or general changes are advertised in Local Printed media such as a Local Paper or Organisational/Shire Newsletter.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Council and Staff responsible for recruitment</p>