



## **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

**2019-2024**

Copies of this, and other Council documents, are available to the community upon request in alternative formats where possible

## **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 Department of Communities, the Shire of Cuballing will continually develop, implement, review and evaluate the plan.

### **Planning for Better Access**

The Disability Services Act (1993) requires 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
7. Opportunities to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Cuballing

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.

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 including:

- 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
- Tactile pavers placed at bus stop in town sites of Cuballing and Popanyinning
- 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
- Ramp access has been constructed at the front of Cuballing Recreation Building
- Equestrian Clubrooms built with access by ramp
- Accessible Toilet built at Popanyinning Tennis Court with ramp access
- Toilet within Cuballing Hall modified to provide accessibility
- Ramp access and security lighting to Popanyinning Hall
- Construction of an accessible Men's Shed in Cuballing

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

### **Community Consultation Process**

In 2019, the Shire began the review of its DAIP, consulting with key stakeholders and then 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:

- Advertising the commencement of the review process and the opportunity to be involved;
- Advertising of the Draft DAIP and the opportunity to comment on that draft DAIP;
- Public review at two meetings of Council.

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.

In February 2019 the community was informed through the regional newspaper, the Shire website, the local newsletter and the Shire of Cuballing's social media, 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 April and May 2019, community comment on the draft DAIP was invited utilising the Shire website, the local newsletter and the Shire of Cuballing's social media that a draft DAIP.

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

Council advised, through local and social media, that copies of the DAIP was available to the community upon request, and in alternative formats if required, including Council's website, hard copy, electronic format and by email.

The draft DAIP was provided to all those who contributed to the planning process, including Council officers, people with disability, their families, carers and relevant community groups for feedback.

As the DAIP is 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 Department of Communities in 2019. 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 Department of Communities annually.

## **Reporting on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

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 Department of Communities by 30 June each year, outlining:

- Progress towards the desired outcomes of the DAIP;
- Progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the desired outcomes; and
- 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.

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

**Objective**      To adapt services wherever possible to meet the needs of people with disability

**Strategy**      Council will

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
2. Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services
3. Utilise the universal design checklist that has been provided by the Department of Communities

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

**Objective**      To ensure that all Shire owned, leased or supported facilities are accessible to people with diverse needs

**Strategy**      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

<b>Outcome 4</b>	<b>People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Cuballing as other people receive</b>
<b>Objective</b>	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
<b>Strategy</b>	<p>Council will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>2. Where required seek advice from other local governments and community professionals on how to better meet the needs of people with disability</li> <li>3. Ensure key staff are registered for email updates from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Department of Communities to keep abreast of contemporary practices in creating universal facilities</li> <li>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</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome 5</b>	<b>People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Cuballing</b>
<b>Objective</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
<b>Strategy</b>	<p>Council will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are easily accessible for people with disability</li> <li>2. Improve staff awareness and knowledge so that the receipt of complaints from people with disability can be facilitated</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome 6</b>	<b>People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Cuballing</b>
<b>Objective</b>	To ensure that people with disability can participate fully in decision making and consultation processes managed by the Shire
<b>Strategy</b>	<p>Council will</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure community consultation processes are inclusive of people with disability</li> <li>2. Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes</li> </ol>
<b>Outcome 7</b>	<b>People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Cuballing</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Ensure that disability is not seen as a barrier to a staff appointment
<b>Strategy</b>	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 Department of Communities. 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>
1.1 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	1.1.1 Ensure relevant legislation, policies and procedures on access and inclusion are current and incorporated into Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan	Ongoing	CEO
1.2 Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	1.2.1 Continue with feedback requests in monthly newsletter	Ongoing	CEO
1.3 Utilise the universal design checklist that has been provided by the Department of Communities	1.3.1 Use the checklist to grade accessibility at all Council events	Ongoing	Building Officer Administration Officer

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

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
2.1 Advocate to local businesses the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues	2.1.1 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 Officer & CEO
2.2 Apply the Building Code of Australia and associated standards on access when new or existing work begins on buildings and facilities	2.2.1 Ensure that legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities	Ongoing	Building Officer & CEO
2.3 Undertake to identify and incorporate the priorities regarding access that have been identified during the review process.	2.3.1 Develop a program of upgrades to remove identified access barriers to Shire of Cuballing buildings and facilities by utilising the Access Resource Kit checklist.	June 2019	Building Officer & CEO
	2.3.2 Annually review the program of upgrades to Shire of Cuballing buildings and facilities	April	CEO, Council

**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>
3.1 Improve community awareness that all documents may be available in alternative formats	3.1.1 Use the regular feedback request notices in the monthly newsletter to identify which alternative formats are required	Ongoing	Administration Officer
3.2 Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information using other formats	3.2.1 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>
4.1 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	4.1.1 Improve staff awareness through disability awareness training	Ongoing as staff turnovers occur	CEO
4.2 Seek advice from other Councils and community professionals in the disability field on how to better meet the needs of people with disability	4.2.1 Liaise with community members regarding access issues and implement as necessary	Ongoing	Administration Officer
4.3 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	4.3.1 Provide awareness training to Councillors and staff	Ongoing	CEO
4.4 Ensure key staff are registered for email updates from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Department of Communities to keep abreast of contemporary practices in creating universal facilities	4.3.1 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>
5.1 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	5.1.1 Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any required changes	Ongoing	Administration Officer & CEO
5.2 Improve staff awareness and knowledge so that the receipt of complaints from people with disability can be facilitated	5.2.1 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>
6.1 Ensure community consultation processes are inclusive of people with disability	6.1.1 All public meetings to be held in accessible venues and consultation material to be in alternative formats (when possible) upon request	Ongoing	CEO
6.2 Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes	6.2.1 Ensure that the Shire of Cuballing Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is continually reviewed	April	CEO, Council

**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
7.1 Council or Staff responsible for recruitment will ensure that the right person is selected for the position regardless of disability	7.1.1 Councillors and Staff to be aware that disability is not a barrier to employment with some positions with the Shire of Cuballing <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 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 disability</li> <li>• Ensure that persons are referred to as a “Person with 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 disability through joint funded positions or “Count Me In Grants”.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Council and Staff responsible for recruitment