

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Resource Manual for Local Government



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



making a difference

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Introduction

Public authorities in Western Australia have been required by the Western Australia Disability Services Act (1993) to have a Disability Service Plan since 1995. An amendment to the Act in 2004 brought about a number of changes to this requirement, including a change of name to Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

This resource manual has been prepared to provide practical assistance to Local Governments developing a DAIP as required by legislation.

The manual has been developed through widespread consultation with Local Government and the disability field.

All Local Governments and key disability organisations have had opportunities to contribute to the contents of the resource manual and their contributions have been extremely valuable.

The manual incorporates information from, and replaces, the 'Disability Service Plan Resource Manual' (1995).

Disclaimer

While care has been taken by the Disability Services Commission in preparing this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Resource Manual, the Commission does not accept responsibility or liability for the results of specific action taken on the basis of this information or for any errors or omissions.

How to use this manual

The contents of this manual have been organised into sections. Each of these may be useful as you go through the planning, implementation and review processes.

1. Disability Access and Inclusion Plans for Local Government

Background information on disability; the role of Local Government in disability service provision; the legislation; the purpose, content and key outcomes of DAIPs.

2. Steps to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A step-by-step guide to developing a DAIP.

3. Model Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Two model plans for different sized Local Governments: these illustrate suggested format and content of a DAIP. It is important to note that these are presented as suggestions only, and are provided to assist, not limit, the development and implementation of DAIPs.

4. Additional information

Additional information related to disability, the development of DAIPs and useful resources.

The manual has been designed in a loose leaf format to allow updating and the insertion of other relevant resource materials.

Copies of this document are also available on the Commission's website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

They are in alternative formats on request to the Community Access and Information Branch of the Disability Services Commission:

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Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

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1

People with disabilities in the community

How many people in Western Australia have a disability?

Disability affects one third of the Western Australian population.

An Australian Bureau of Statistics survey in 2003 found that an estimated 405,500 Western Australians reported having a disability (20.6 per cent of the total population).

An estimated 246,800 Western Australians are carers for people with disabilities (12.6 per cent of the total population).

One in every 17 Western Australians aged 15 and over (91,600 people) has a disability and is also a carer of a person with disabilities.

Of the 405,500 Western Australians with disabilities, 115,800 people have profound or severe core activity limitation. Profound limitation refers to when a person is unable to do, or always needs help or supervision to carry out the functions of normal daily living. Severe limitation refers to when a person sometimes needs help or supervision with daily living routines or has difficulty understanding or being understood by family or friends.

Most people with disabilities experience some form of limitation or restriction due to their disability.

What is disability?

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities.

Disabilities can affect a person's capacity to communicate, interact with others, learn and get about independently. Disability is usually permanent but may be episodic.

Disabilities can be:

Sensory: affecting vision and/or hearing.

Neurological: affecting a person's ability to control their movements, for example, cerebral palsy.

Physical: affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their upper or lower body.

Intellectual: affecting a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate.

Cognitive: affecting a person's thought processes, personality and memory resulting, for example, from an injury to the brain.

Psychiatric: affecting a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and manic depression.

Some disabilities, such as epilepsy, are hidden, while others, such as cerebral palsy, may be visible. A physical disability is the most common (73 per cent), followed by intellectual/psychiatric (17 per cent) and sensory (10 per cent). Many people with disabilities have multiple disabilities.

- Physical disabilities generally relate to disorders of the musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory and nervous systems.
- Sensory disabilities involve impairments in hearing and vision.
- Intellectual/psychiatric disorders relate to difficulties with thought processes, learning, communicating, remembering information and using it appropriately, making judgements and problem solving. They also include anxiety disorders, phobias or depression.

People may have more than one disability and may experience additional disadvantages due to factors such as being from a non-English speaking background or because they live in remote areas.

Trends in disability

The number of Western Australians with disabilities is increasing. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts regular surveys on disabilities to report the extent of disability in Australia, the need for support and the adequacy of support, and the contribution of informal care.

The 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers figures for prevalence of disability show an increase since 1998 of 50,000 in the number of Western Australians with a disability, due to population increase and population ageing.

Between 2006 and 2026 the number of people with disabilities in Western Australia is expected to increase by more than 210,000, due mainly to our ageing population. People may have a disability at any age, but the likelihood increases as people get older. According to ABS data, 51 per cent of Western Australians over 60 years of age have a disability. The number of older Western Australians with disabilities will increase substantially as the 'baby boomers' move into age groups in which disability is more prevalent. In fact, there is expected to be an overall increase of 115.7 per cent over 20 years.

The impact of disability

While the degree and type of disability varies with individual circumstances, people with disabilities frequently report that they experience difficulty being independently mobile, or being able to see, hear, or communicate.

As a consequence, people with disabilities face barriers with everyday activities such as hearing or understanding what is said, seeing small print, climbing stairs or understanding signage.

Often people with disabilities are unable to do things most of us take for granted, such as:

- visit the local library or senior citizens' centre;
- read and understand public notices or newsletters;
- participate at the municipal swimming pool or recreation centre;
- play on the play equipment at the park;
- hear what is said at a public meeting;
- shop at the local shops;
- use public transport; and
- use public telephones or automatic teller machines.

The exact impact of a disability on the life of an individual varies according to a number of factors including:

- the specific nature and severity of the disability;
- the person's strength, stamina, size, weight and age;
- the person's ability to cope; and
- the physical, social and economic environment within which the person is living.

Creating a community which is accessible and inclusive will minimise the effect of disability.

Other factors that need to be considered when planning services for people with disabilities include:

- the impact not only on the person with the disability, but also on their family and carers;
- the additional disadvantages facing people with disabilities, their families and carers in rural or remote communities;
- additional specific opportunities and supports needed by people from a non-English speaking background;
- the increased likelihood of disability as people get older; and
- the continuing rise in the number of people with disabilities as the Western Australian population ages.

Role of Local Government

Local Governments play a vital role in the lives of people with disabilities because of their broad mandate. Unlike most State Government authorities, Local Governments are multi-functional, with extensive responsibilities and activities across property, community and human service areas and, in addition, have the capacity to make policy choices at the local level.

All of these Local Government functions and capabilities directly or indirectly have an impact upon the quality of life of the people with disabilities who live, work and socialise in their local communities.

Local Governments in Western Australia have over the years responded to the needs of people with disabilities in a variety of ways. Early initiatives included establishing advisory and access committees, ensuring physical access to council facilities and amenities, and developing disability specific services to assist in overcoming some of the barriers to community participation for people with disabilities.

The development and implementation of Disability Service Plans between 1995 and 2005 enabled Local Governments to build on these past achievements by planning systematically to make their services and facilities as accessible as possible to people with disabilities.

A key responsibility of Local Government is that of ensuring that developers meet the mandatory access requirements of the Building Code of Australia.

In addition Local Governments can play a crucial role in improving access for people with disabilities in their communities by liaising with developers to increase their awareness of access needs.

The amendments to the Disability Services Act in 2004 contain new requirements which will build upon the changes and achievements of the past decade. Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) provide the framework through which Local Governments can move into the next phase of creating accessible and inclusive communities.

The impact of the Local Government Act (1995) on provision of access and inclusion

Part 3 of the Local Government Act (1995) describes the general, legislative and executive functions of Local Government. Section 3.1 (1) states: 'The general function of a local government is to provide for the good government of persons in its district'.

A broad, inclusive approach is taken to the general function of Local Government. The 1995 Act is based on the principle of general competencies - that is Local Governments can do anything they believe is good for the people in the district provided that this is not specifically prohibited by the Act or other laws. This is in contrast to the Local Government Act 1960, which was based on the principle of *ultra vires* in that councils could only do what was stated in the Act. This is a significant shift, with legislation changing from a regulatory to an enabling role and providing the capacity for Local Governments to respond and react to the needs of their local communities.

Further information on the functions of Local Government in Western Australia is provided in Part 4 of this manual, Additional Information.

2

Why have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?

As members of the community, people with disabilities, their families and carers have the same rights as other people to access Local Government services. These rights are enshrined in both State and Commonwealth legislation which make it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability. The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act (1984) are described in Part 4 of this manual (Additional Information). The Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) is the legislation for Disability Access and Inclusion Plans. This legislation is discussed in some detail below. The State Law Publisher's website (www.slp.wa.gov.au) provides up-to-date copies of these Acts.

The legislation for Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993

The Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993, (as amended in 2004) requires Local and State Government authorities to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that will further both the principles and the objectives of the Act. These are included in Part 4 of this manual. For the purposes of developing a plan this will mean ensuring that people with disabilities can access services provided by Local Governments in Western Australia and that these services facilitate increased independence, opportunities and inclusion for people with disabilities in the community.

To comply with the amended Act, a Local Government is required to:

- lodge its current plan (which can be its DSP) by 31 July 2006;
- develop a DAIP which:
 - furthers the principles and objectives of the Act; and
 - meets the six Standards in Schedule 2 of the Disability Services Regulations 2004;
- lodge the finalised plan with the Disability Services Commission by 31 July 2007;
- take all practicable measures to ensure that the plan is implemented by the Local Government, its officers, employees, and relevant agents and contractors;
- review its plan at least every five years;
- undertake public consultation, as specified in the regulations, when preparing, reviewing or amending its plan;
- lodge review reports, amended plans or new plans with the Disability Services Commission;

- report to the Commission by 31 July each year about:
 - progress made by the Local Government in achieving the desired outcomes in Schedule 3 of the regulations;
 - progress made by any agents and contractors of the Local Government in achieving the desired outcomes in Schedule 3 of the regulations; and
 - the strategies used by the Local Government to inform its agents and contractors about its plan; and
- report in its Annual Report about the implementation of its plan.

Purpose of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

The purpose of DAIPS is to ensure that people with disabilities can access all information, services and facilities provided by Local Governments in Western Australia, and be included in the community like other community members.

Because of their wide sphere of operations Local Governments are in a unique position to improve opportunities for people with disabilities within their local communities.

Many Local Governments have long recognised the specific needs of some of their community members by providing specialist services. In addition, since the introduction of Disability Service Plans in 1995, most Local Governments have introduced many initiatives to improve the accessibility of their mainstream services.

While specialist services are necessary and important, the focus of DAIPs is on ensuring that the full range of mainstream information, services and facilities are available to all community members - including those who have a disability.

To achieve this, Local Governments need to consider the accessibility of all their existing information, services and facilities. Frequently, people interpret the word 'access' as only referring to physical access, however it is just one aspect of improving access to all the information, services and facilities.

In this way, Local Governments will facilitate the inclusion of people with disability into the community. The focus of the DAIPs is compatible with the Principles of Universal Design, which are described on the Disability Services Commission's website (www.dsc.wa.gov.au).

What does access and inclusion mean?

Access and inclusion mean different things to different people. Processes and outcomes for access and inclusion cannot be prescriptive, and must take into account the diverse needs of individuals and the nature, strengths, priorities and resources of a community. The common elements of access and inclusion are the removal or reduction of barriers to participation in the activities and functions of a community, by ensuring that information, services and facilities are accessible to people with various disabilities.

Just one example of how access and inclusion matters...

To appreciate the diverse facets of access and inclusion, imagine that you are a person who uses a wheelchair and you wish to visit your local community centre. You drive your own car and therefore do not have to try to use public transport.

When visiting your community centre:

- You ring to check the accessibility of the venue and are assured that it is accessible. You arrive and park in an accessible parking bay, however you cannot get to the footpath as there is no ramped kerb from the parking bay to the footpath.
- You make a long detour through the parking area and when you get to the front door find it is too heavy for you to open. You wave and someone opens the door for you.
- You get to the reception counter and, although it is high, you can partially see the receptionist and get your query answered.
- You are directed to the enrolment desk for community courses. Your chair cannot fit under the desk. You go back and wait in line until the receptionist is available to help you fill in your form.
- You prepare to pay your enrolment fee. The cashier's desk, however, is upstairs and, as there is no lift you have to wait while the receptionist arranges for the cashier to come to you with a receipt book.
- You wait in the foyer for the cashier and look at the noticeboard. You see a flyer and pamphlets promoting a community consultation about proposed changes to zoning in your district. As a resident you are interested, however, you cannot reach the pamphlet dispenser. You also notice the venue for the consultation, and know that it is not wheelchair accessible.
- You bump into a friend and decide to have a coffee. However you skip the idea when you see that the entrance to the coffee shop is up three steps.
- You decide to visit the toilet prior to going home and are pleased to find it is accessible.

The previous example demonstrates that there are many different factors involved in providing access and promoting inclusion. By ensuring that information, services and facilities are accessible to people with various disabilities, opportunities for inclusion are increased substantially.

For the person using a wheelchair, the barriers are as follows:

- **Barriers to physical access.** Kerbs and footpaths, weight of doors, access to desks, counters, the cashier and the steps to the coffee shop.
- **Barriers to accessible information.** The reception desk in the foyer was too high for a person in a wheelchair to be able to communicate comfortably. It was good that there was a notice board in the community centre foyer, however, it was unfortunate that the information was out of reach for a person in a wheelchair.
- **Barriers due to lack of staff awareness and skills in delivering services to people with disabilities.** The receptionist remained behind the desk. She was unaware that it would have been preferable for her to come from behind the counter and sit at eye level with the person in the wheelchair when answering queries.
- **Barriers to opportunities to participate in public consultations and decision-making processes.** In this instance the person with a disability might not have the same opportunity as other residents to participate in the community consultation. The information was not accessible and neither was the consultation venue.
- **Barriers to opportunities to socialise.** The lack of physical access at the coffee shop resulted in the loss of an opportunity to socialise with a friend, and so limited opportunities for inclusion in social activities.

Removal of barriers to access and inclusion benefits the whole community.

If a person with a hearing or vision impairment were to visit the same local community centre, they would face similar barriers.

Identifying creative solutions to eliminating access and inclusion barriers requires careful thought and informed planning. Many solutions to access and inclusion barriers as outlined above need not involve major expenditure.

3

The six desired outcomes of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

When developing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), public authorities must aim to achieve six desired outcomes. These outcome areas provide a framework for translating the principles and objectives of the Disability Services Act into tangible and achievable results. Schedule 3 of the Disability Services Regulations, 2004 states the six desired outcomes of a DAIP:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.
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.
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.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.

In addition some public authorities may decide to include a further outcome area. For example, they may choose to develop an outcome related to employment of people with disabilities by the authority. It is important to note that any additional outcomes are outside the scope of the DAIP requirements and may be subject to complementary legislation. This is the case with employment, which is covered under the Equal Opportunity Act (1984).

This part of the manual contains a section on each of the six desired outcomes.

Each outcome area contains:

- an explanation of the ways people with disabilities may be unintentionally excluded;
- the role of Local Governments in ensuring access and inclusion for people with disabilities;
- examples of good practice; and
- links to useful information and resources.

Additional information to assist Local Governments to develop their DAIPs is provided in Part 4 of this manual.

Outcome 1

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

People with disabilities frequently report difficulty in gaining access to a range of mainstream services provided by State and Local Government due to physical barriers or lack of accessible information. Often however, even if a service is physically accessible, people with disabilities may be unintentionally excluded because of the way the serviced is delivered. They may also be excluded by unclear policies or procedures.

It is important that Local Governments have policies that ensure the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the planning and provision of all their services.

When implementing such policies Local Governments will need to consider the accessibility of all of their existing functions including:

Services to property: including the construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths and cycle facilities; street cleaning; waste disposal.

Services to the community: including recreation and cultural activities; management of facilities; library and information services; senior citizen centres; child care centres; community consultations.

Regulatory services: including planning; building; environmental health services; dog control; parking.

General administration: including the provision of general information to the public; the lodging of complaints and payment of rates.

Processes of government: including ordinary and special Council and committee meetings; electors meetings and election of Council Members.

It is important to consider services that are contracted out as well as those that are provided directly by the Local Government. Local Governments are required to take all practicable measures to ensure that the plan is implemented by the Local Government, its officers and employees, and its agents and contractors. Local Governments are also required to report annually on the progress made by their agents and contractors towards the desired outcomes of their DAIPs. Further information on the requirements regarding agents and contractors is contained in Part 2 of this manual.

By evaluating and adapting their services Local Governments can greatly enhance opportunities for people with disabilities to participate fully in the everyday life of their local community.

Local Governments can also act as a valuable catalyst within the community by working in partnership with local businesses, clubs and organisations to encourage better access in the wider community.

Ways that services have been successfully adapted by Local Governments to enhance access and inclusion for people with disabilities include:

- providing rubbish bin service placement service for people who are unable to place their bins on the verge;
- providing free entry to carers to enhance access and inclusion to recreational venues and special events;
- including children with disabilities in school holiday activity programs;
- providing additional parking time to cars displaying ACROD stickers;
- encouraging the wider community to improve access and meet the needs of people with disabilities through local access awards and grants schemes; and
- ensuring that events are accessible by using the Accessible Events Guide.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that services and events are accessible.

Disability Services Commission resources

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the desired outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists.

Assistive Listening Devices - an installation guide for assistive listening devices in auditoriums, theatres and cinemas. There is also a Signage Guide for Assistive Listening Devices.

Creating Accessible Events – provides assistance to design, plan and conduct accessible events.

State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community.

The above resources can be accessed on the Commission's website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Other resources

Expanding Your Sport and Recreation Markets. Universal Access to Your Facilities and Programs (A joint project between the Western Australian Municipal Association, Department of Sport and Recreation and the Disability Services Commission) – provides assistance in planning, design, management, staffing and programming to provide accessible recreational and leisure programs.

This resource is available on the Commission's website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Outcome 2

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

The provision of appropriate access not only benefits people with disabilities but also seniors, people with temporary disabilities and parents with young children in prams. If access requirements are considered early in the planning stage of any new development, they can frequently be incorporated for no or very little additional cost.

The vicinity around a facility needs to facilitate access. People with disabilities often experience difficulties due to the location of facilities, buildings or services. Signs that indicate where services or amenities are to be found are often absent or difficult to identify due to bad lighting, obscure placement or unclear lettering on directory boards. Clear symbols and directions can assist people to find their way. You can find information about ways to ensure that clear information is provided for access to and within buildings and facilities by referring to the Disability Services Commission's Access Resource Kit, which can be downloaded from the Commission's website on www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

The increasing community recognition of the importance of providing access to public buildings and facilities is reflected in a variety of legislation, standards and codes that relate to the provision of access.

Legislation and the built environment

The Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) each require that services and facilities provided for the general public also provide an equivalent access for people with disabilities. Local Governments need to ensure that their internal building space and the environment around their facilities comply with public access requirements.

The rights of people with disabilities, including access to premises, is recognised by State and Commonwealth legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is of particular relevance. Prior to the introduction of the DDA all legislative access requirements were contained in the Building Codes Australia (BCA), which sets out the minimum requirements of building design and construction throughout Australia. A development that complies with the BCA may not now meet the access requirements of the DDA. Currently (2006) the BCA is being reviewed so that its access requirements can be upgraded to be consistent with those of the DDA. It is envisaged that in the future the BCA will be included as part of a DDA Standard on Access to Premises.

The Disability Discrimination Commissioner has released *Advisory Notes on Access to Premises* (see resources list at the end of this section). While these advisory notes are not legally binding, they have been prepared by the Commissioner to assist people to understand their existing responsibilities and rights under the DDA. It is recommended that these advisory notes are followed until there is a DDA Standard on Access to Premises. There are a number of Australian Standards on access referenced in both the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Advisory Notes on Access to*

Premises (see resources list at the end of this section) and the BCA. These Standards have been developed through a wide consultation process involving key stakeholders.

Local Government access requirements for buildings and facilities

To achieve access in the built environment Local Governments should ensure that:

- the provision of appropriate access for people with disabilities is an integral part of any services provided, funded or contracted out; and
- the design and construction of public buildings and facilities comply with the BCA and the requirements of the DDA as detailed in the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Advisory Notes on Access to Premises*.

It is essential that the design brief for buildings and facilities specifically addresses access provision requirements.

It is recommended that access consultants are engaged as part of the design team throughout the planning and construction phases of major projects to ensure that access is appropriately addressed. Information about access consultants can be obtained from the Association of Consultants in Access, Australia Inc (see resources list at the end of this section).

More information about access provision, and a building and facilities checklist is available in the Disability Service Commission's resource *Buildings - A Guide to Access Requirements* (see resources list at the end of this section).

It is important to note that even when the Premises Standard has been adopted, these will be minimum standards only and will not necessarily cater for all the access needs of people with disabilities.

Much progress has already been made by Local Governments to improve access for people with disabilities. There is a great deal more that can be achieved by Local Governments to improve access for people with disabilities, firstly by ensuring a standard of excellence in their own facilities and secondly by doing what they can to increase access awareness amongst private developers about access needs. Information about designing for access could be provided to private developers by the provision of the Disability Services Commission's brochure *Buildings – A Guide to Access Requirements* with all new building applications. This information can be obtained from the Commission's website on www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Ways that Local Governments have improved access to their buildings and facilities for people with disabilities include:

- auditing of all facilities and subsequent programmed upgrading;
- providing improved access to public swimming facilities by means of graduated access points, chair lifts, hoists, submersible wheelchairs, hydrotherapy pools and staff support;
- improving access to parks and reserves including paths, accessible picnic tables, barbecues and drinking fountains, and accessible boardwalks and viewing platforms over wetland areas;

- improving access to existing playgrounds and the development of universal playgrounds;
- improving safety and independent access for people who are blind by installing tactile paving at strategic locations;
- creating access to swimming beaches through the use of beach matting and beach wheelchairs;
- enabling access and inclusion in fishing through the provision of accessible fishing platforms and jetties; and
- enhancing independent access, inclusion and safety by incorporating universal design principles in streetscape design and upgrades.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that buildings and facilities are accessible.

Disability Services Commission resources

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists. Available on the commission’s website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Buildings – A Guide to Access Requirements 2001 – provides information on planning, designing, developing and managing buildings and facilities to ensure they are accessible. Includes information about access codes, standards and relevant legislation. Available on the commission’s website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Buildings – A Guide to Access Requirements brochure 2001 – gives an overview of the legislative and other requirements for access to buildings and facilities and information on *Buildings – A Guide to Access Requirements*. Can be ordered by contacting the Community Access and Information Branch on 9426 9384.

Easy Street – an introductory video on pedestrian access for people involved in developing road infrastructure. Can be ordered by contacting the Commission’s Community Access and Information Branch on 9426 9384.

State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community. Available on the Commission’s website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Other resources

Access to Heritage Buildings for People with Disabilities 1998 – produced by Cox Architects and Planners, sets out guidelines and practical solutions for making heritage properties accessible while conserving their heritage character and value. Can be found on the Australian Heritage Council’s website at www.ahc.gov.au.

Advisory Notes on Access to Premises – can be found on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s website at www.hreoc.gov.au.

Australian Standards on Access – details of current Australian Standards covering access are provided in the Commission’s Access Resource Kit, and from the Standards Australia website at www.standards.com.au.

Welcome, Design Ideas for Accessible Homes – provides guidelines for accessible home design. This book may be purchased from: Rellim Booksellers, Hay Street, Perth; Boffins Bookshop, Hay Street, Perth; The Independent Living Centre, Aberdare Road, Nedlands, or ordered online from the Victorian Building Commission at www.buildingcommission.com.au.

The Accessible Parking Program in Western Australia – provides information on accessible parking in Western Australia. Available at www.acrod.org.au.

Outcome 3

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

Giving and receiving information is a critical aspect of our daily lives. People with disabilities frequently report frustration at the difficulties they experience in gaining access to all types of public information.

Communication difficulties are frequently associated with many disabilities, including:

- hearing loss or deafness;
- low vision or blindness; and
- disabilities that affect an individual's ability to learn or think, such as an intellectual disability or psychiatric illness.

Local Governments produce a variety of written material such as community handbooks, directories, notices and newsletters as well as information relating to the Council meetings.

Many communication difficulties can be overcome by providing information in simple, clearly written English and in a print size that is easy to read.

Technology is providing many new communication opportunities for people with disabilities and it is important to keep up to date with these advances. Providing information by email or having it available in an accessible format on the Local Government's website is a particularly valuable tool for the provision of information: people who have difficulties with mobility, vision, hearing and communication may use a well designed website to obtain all kinds of information. The W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines assists web designers create websites that are accessible to a wide audience, including people with disabilities. This information is available through www.w3.org, and through links from the Disability Services Commission's website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au. Further information resources for accessible website design are listed over.

For people who have low vision or are blind, it is also important to have information freely available on request in alternative formats such as audio cassette or CD, large print, computer disk and Braille.

There are a variety of communication techniques that can be used to assist people who have a hearing impairment or who are deaf. Individuals need to have a range of options available so they can use the communication method that best meets their specific needs.

Better hearing signs on public counters are valuable for informing visitors that staff know how to speak to someone who experiences difficulty hearing. The provision of audio loops at public meetings will enable people who use hearing aids to participate. For people who are deaf, Auslan sign language interpreters should be arranged if requested.

People with disabilities often experience access difficulties due to inadequate signage. Clear, well-lit directional signs also benefit the whole community.

Inside buildings, signs that indicate where services or amenities are to be found are often absent or difficult to identify due to bad lighting, obscure placement or unclear lettering on directory boards. Clear symbols and directions can assist people to find their way.

For people with physical disabilities unclear signs may increase the effort required to reach their destination. People with an intellectual disability require signs that have clear symbols and words, and people with a vision impairment are assisted greatly by signs with good contrast of colours and texture.

Ways that Local Governments have improved access to their information for people with disabilities include:

- developing accessible information policies;
- providing accessible information training for all staff who develop public information;
- re-designing websites to meet the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines;
- making all public documents available on the website in accessible formats;
- promoting the availability of information available in alternative format to the community;
- installing audio loops in Council Chambers;
- increasing the accessibility of library collections through talking books and use of technology such as CCTVs;
- providing deafness awareness training for all staff who are involved in delivery of information to the public; and
- providing Auslan interpreters on request.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that information is accessible.

Disability Services Commission resources

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the desired outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists.

Disability Services Commission Fact Sheet 11 - Putting People First – a guide to respectful terminology when referring to people with disabilities.

Western Australian Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community.

The above resources are available through the Commission's website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Other resources

Accessible Information: Policy and Guidelines for Local Government – developed to assist Local Governments to make their information accessible. Available on the Disability Services Commission’s website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Designing for People with Partial Sight and Colour Blindness – an article by Aries Arditi in Lighthouse International at www.lighthouse.org.

Guidelines for the State Government Website – to assist agencies to meet the principles of inclusive web design. Available on the Disability Services Commission’s website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – assists web designers create websites that are accessible to a wide audience, including people with disabilities. This information is available through www.w3.org, and through links from the Disability Services Commission’s website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes – assists web designers with making websites accessible to all Internet users. Available through links from the Commission’s website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Outcome 4

People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.

People with disabilities have a right to be treated like any other member of the community. Too often though, people interacting or serving people with disabilities do not know how to communicate appropriately with a person with a disability. They may be embarrassed when approached or may wish to avoid any contact with the person who has a disability.

Sometimes this lack of understanding and awareness can lead to talking to an adult person with a disability as if he/she were a child, or speaking to the carer of a person with a disability as if the person with a disability were not there.

It can also result in staff tending to shout at people who have a hearing impairment or who are deaf, when it would be more helpful to face the person and speak clearly and slowly in a normal voice or, if the person prefers, write instead.

Disability awareness training has been shown to improve the confidence of staff and competence in subsequent dealings with people with disabilities. This training should include information about the nature of the most common types of disability combined with practical hints on how to communicate most effectively.

Ways that Local Governments have improved staff awareness and skills in assisting people with disabilities include:

- providing disability awareness training for all staff and Elected Members;
- providing training specifically tailored for staff in different areas, such as communication for front counter staff, regulatory information for planning and building staff, accessible information for web designers, and way finding for outside staff;
- promoting achievements and good news stories on access in staff newsletters;
- providing deafness awareness training for all staff; and
- providing interpreters on request.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that staff have the appropriate training so that people with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service as others in the community.

Disability Services Commission resources

Getting There — Access Awareness Video, 1994 - identifies some of the common barriers facing people with disabilities and provides practical examples of ways to improve access to information, services and facilities. This can be ordered from the Commission's Community Access and Information Branch on 9426 9384.

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the desired outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists. Available at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community. Available at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

You Can Make a Difference to Customer Relations for People with Disabilities in Local Government and State Government Agencies, 2000 - is a training package consisting of five modules, to assist State Government agencies and Local Governments to improve customer service for people with disabilities. This can be ordered from the Commission's Community Access and Information Branch on 9426 9384.

Outcome 5

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.

As Local Governments provide services to the public it is vital that people with disabilities have opportunities to raise concerns or make complaints about any aspect of their services.

It can be difficult for people with disabilities to make complaints. Information about how to make a complaint may be in a format that is inaccessible, and the processes themselves may create barriers, for example requiring all complaints to be in writing.

Ways that Local Governments have made complaints processes more accessible for people with disabilities include:

- producing a plain English pamphlet explaining the complaints procedure; and
- having complaints processes accessible online.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that opportunities for complaints are accessible for people with disabilities.

Disability Services Commission resources

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the desired outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists.

State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community.

This information is available on the Disability Services Commission's website, at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Outcome 6

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

As Local Governments provide services to the public it is vital that people with disabilities have opportunities to participate in their decision-making processes. This is in accordance with the planning processes outlined in the Local Government Act.

Many Local Governments have, over the years, successfully involved people with disabilities particularly when planning their services to ensure access.

More recent is the development of overall disability policies that ensure the voices of people with disabilities are considered within the total framework of Local Governments' strategic planning, policies and operational service plans. A systematic approach to ensuring the needs of people with disabilities is most effective. It ensures that people with disabilities and their advocates have opportunities to fully participate in all of the Local Government's activities such as attendance at meetings, public consultations or participating in Council elections.

Ways that Local Governments have made consultation processes more accessible for people with disabilities include:

- appointing disability Access Advisory Committees to advise on issues regarding disability and access;
- ensuring that consultation meetings are planned and conducted using the Accessible Events checklist;
- providing Auslan interpreters at public meetings;
- providing a range of ways in which people can provide input, including online; and
- conducting a review of all community consultation processes.

You can use the Resource Information listed below to help you to ensure that consultation processes are accessible for people with disabilities.

Disability Services Commission resources

The Access Resource Kit – provides information about the outcome areas and other information relevant to DAIPs, including access checklists.

State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities – a guide to assist government, business and community groups to create Western Australia as an accessible and inclusive community.

These resources are available on the Disability Services Commission's website at www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

Other resources

Consulting Citizens: A resource guide – available on www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au.

Consulting with the Community – Facts and Tips – this information can be found in Part 4 of this manual.

Inclusive Consultation: A practical guide to involving people with disabilities - www.facs.gov.au.

4

Disability Access Inclusion Plans and Local Government

Ideally, a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) should be part of an overall planning process. Good planning by Local Government will lead to high quality outcomes for the whole community, including people with disabilities, their families and carers.

The Disability Discrimination Act - A Guide to Best Practice in Local Government describes the following principles as the basis for improving the quality of government at the local level:

- “a focus on integration, rather than division, of people, departments, programs and activities, councils and agencies and the three spheres of government,
- a systematic approach to improving the well-being of communities while acknowledging the diversity within and between those communities, and
- a development of a shared understanding of the key issues amongst all those concerned with the aim of building a shared vision for future directions (p. 33).”

Good planning involves responding to local needs and issues in a planned and integrated fashion. Access and inclusion for people with disabilities needs to be recognised as the responsibility of all areas of a Local Government. To achieve this every department and section of Local Government needs to look at ways of improving access.

Integration of plans

Many Local Governments currently develop their corporate or business plans around an analysis of the needs of their residents. Extending this process to include people with disabilities will ensure that DAIPs are integrated within the existing planning cycle. It is particularly important to consider disability and access when planning for sustainability and an ageing population. This helps to establish a framework that enhances the best aspects of the Local Government system and acts as an impetus to address the many challenges facing Local Government and their communities in the future.

By creating a sustainable basis that will service our current and future communities effectively, Local Government will be able to create a universal, solid foundation for its workings and services.

DAIPs complement the general planning processes required by the Local Government Act. These include strategic and forward plans and annual reports as well as other plans developed by authorities in areas such as Town Planning, Environmental Health, Sustainability, Community Services, Seniors and so on. As the accountability of Local Government is directed away from the State Government and towards the community, DAIPs provide an effective framework for meeting the needs of the many people in the community who have a disability.

Content of a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A DAIP should be a clearly written document that outlines how Local Governments can ensure that people with disabilities and their representatives have access to Local Government information, services and facilities.

Plans will vary according to the services and amenities provided by local Councils and the needs of the particular communities those Councils serve.

Two model plans are provided in Part 3, as good practice examples of the format for DAIPs and the types of strategies that a Local Government could seek to implement through its DAIP.

Each model DAIP is accompanied by an example of a DAIP Implementation Plan, which is their own working plan, itemising tasks and timelines for action to be undertaken. Implementation plans are not required to be lodged to the Commission. Rather, they inform Local Government and the community of the progress of their DAIP.

5

Support for developing and implementing Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Disability Services Commission support for Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Officers from the Community Access and Information Branch of the Commission are available to provide support to Local Governments in the development and implementation of their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). This support can be provided through:

- individual contact with agencies, on request, for review of their DAIPs and provision of feedback and ideas;
- opportunities for Local Governments to share their ideas for actions and solutions through forums and meetings;
- information support through the Access Resource Kit; and
- information support through the Commission website.

Access officers from the Community Access and Information Branch can be contacted at the Disability Services Commission on:

Telephone: 9426 9384
Country: 1800 998 214
Fax: 9481 5223
TTY: 9426 9315
Email: access@dsc.wa.gov.au

Fact Sheet

Comparison of Disability Service Plans and Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Disability Service Plans (DSPs) were a major leap forward in making public authority services, information and facilities more accessible for people with disabilities. Amendments to the Disability Services Act build on this success and Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) are now required as the mechanism to identify access barriers and develop strategies to overcome those barriers.

When comparing the requirements of each plan it is obvious that much of what is already being done through DSPs has been formalised in the requirements for DAIPs. For example, many public authorities were already reviewing, consulting and publishing their DSPs in accessible formats on request, and the new requirements for DAIPs formalises this demonstrated good practice.

The table below compares the requirements of each type of plan:

PLANNING ELEMENT	DSP	DAIP
Name:	Disability Service Plan	Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
Plan required to meet:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five key outcomes; and • Principles of the Disability Services Act (1993). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six desired outcomes (previous Outcome 5 split into two outcomes so that access to grievance mechanisms and access to consultation and decision-making processes are addressed separately); and • Principles and Objectives of the Disability Services Act (amended 2004).
DAIP submission requirements:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current plan (which can be their DSP) by 31 July 2006; • the finalised DAIP by 31 July 2007; and • any subsequent amendments made to the DAIP by 31 July in the relevant year.

PLANNING ELEMENT	DSP	DAIP
Review requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommended, but not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> must be reviewed at least every five years; and a review report must be lodged with the Commission by 31 July, no later than five years after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the DAIP was submitted to the Commission; or the previous review report was submitted to the Commission.
Reporting requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in public authority's annual report; and progress of the public authority in achieving the key outcomes to the Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in addition to general annual reporting requirements, a progress report to be submitted to the Commission by 31 July each year, using a brief reporting template provided; the reporting template will allow authorities to report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress made by the authority and any agents and contractors in relation to achieving the six desired DAIP outcomes; and strategies implemented by the authority to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.
Communicating availability of plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ways of communicating the plan were recommended, but not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on request in alternative formats (including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format); on request by email; and on the authority's website; to be promoted in newspapers (statewide for State Government authorities or local newspaper for Local Governments).

PLANNING ELEMENT	DSP	DAIP
Public consultation requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recommended, but not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> notice of consultation to be placed in newspaper (statewide for State Government authorities or local newspaper for Local Governments); and notice on website.
Annual reporting by Commission:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Commission provided some information about the percentage of authorities providing DSP information in their annual report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> following submission of public authority progress reports to the Commission by 31 July each year, the Commission provides a report to the Minister for Disability Services on the effectiveness of DAIPs and the extent of compliance. The report will reflect the six desired DAIP outcomes; and the Minister will present the report to Parliament within 14 sitting days of receiving the report from the Commission.

Fact Sheet

Key elements of a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) should be a clearly written document that outlines how a public authority is ensuring that people with disabilities have access to its functions, facilities and services.

Plans will vary according to the functions and services provided by each authority and the needs of the consumers of the services. However, each plan should contain some basic elements.

A DAIP should include:

- a policy statement that incorporates a commitment to furthering the principles and objectives applicable to people with disabilities, their families and carers by achieving the desired outcomes;
- a policy and procedures regarding the Act's requirements around agents and contractors;
- an outline of the authority's functions, facilities and services, (including in-house and contracted services);
- a description of the consultation process with people with disabilities and staff used to assist in the preparation of the plan;
- identification of barriers experienced by people with disabilities in accessing services;
- strategies designed to progress towards achieving the six desired outcomes for people with disabilities;
- dates for achievement of the proposed strategies;
- a strategy to communicate the plan to staff and people with disabilities;
- a mechanism by which people with disabilities can provide feedback; and
- a method to monitor, measure and review results so that the effectiveness of the plan can be evaluated.

Steps to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan for Local Government



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Introduction to the planning steps

Each Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be unique, to reflect the size, scope and activities of each Local Government. The range of services and facilities and the size of the population of people with disabilities served by Local Governments will be contributing factors in shaping the plans.

Disability access and inclusion planning is a developmental process. Access barriers should be addressed systematically over time, with plans amended to reflect changing priorities and new access and inclusion barriers as they are identified.

There are 11 basic steps that all Local Governments should follow in preparing plans, though there will be some differences within each step depending on whether or not they already have a Disability Service Plan. Local Governments will need to include Council endorsement of the DAIP process prior to commencement and also Council endorsement of the final DAIP.

1. Decide who will be responsible for overseeing the planning process.
2. List functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted).
3. Gather background information.
4. Determine and implement the consultation strategy to be used.
5. Develop an access and inclusion policy for people with disabilities, their families and carers.
6. Develop a policy and procedures regarding the legislative requirements around agents and contractors.
7. Identify objectives and strategies to overcome barriers.
8. Prepare the monitoring, reviewing and reporting mechanisms.
9. Develop and finalise the DAIP.
10. Lodge the DAIP with the Disability Services Commission.
11. Promote the plan to staff and the community.

A flow chart of these steps is provided at the end of this section of the manual.

1

Decide who will be responsible for overseeing the planning process

Responsibility for overseeing the planning process should preferably be assigned to a committee of Council. Ideally those responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, review and evaluation of a DAIP should have:

- a good understanding of the Local Government's information, services and facilities; and
- an understanding of the range of access and inclusion issues for people with various disabilities, their families and carers.

Options available to Councils will vary depending on the size of the Local Government, and resources available. Options that could be considered include:

- a disability access or advisory committee of staff officers; or
- a committee comprising staff officers, Elected Members of Council, and people with personal or professional knowledge of disability issues.

Disability access or advisory committees of Local Government, if requested to oversee the planning process, may wish to consider whether the membership of the committee needs to be expanded to ensure that the access needs of people with various disabilities are considered.

Members of the community who may be able to contribute valuable input to the planning process include:

- people with disabilities and or their family or carers;
- people who work with people with disabilities in the community (such as health, education or justice workers); and
- people who offer commercial, business, leisure and recreation services and facilities in the community.

2

List Local Government information, services and facilities

Identifying the barriers to access and inclusion for people with disabilities needs to be considered in relation to what Local Governments do. It is important to prepare a list of all the information, services and facilities of the Local Government (both in-house and contracted).

Local Governments that already have a Disability Service Plan should review the existing list to ensure it accurately reflects their current information, services and facilities. This information will assist:

Local Government

Preparing a list of Local Government information, services and facilities assists Local Governments, their Elected Members and staff, to ensure they have carefully examined all areas of their work to identify barriers or potential barriers to information, services and facilities which are both existing and planned, in-house or contracted.

People with disabilities

Providing information to people with disabilities, their families and carers and disability organisations assists them to identify access and inclusion barriers and the strategies to overcome them.

Disability Services Commission

The Disability Services Commission, which will be working with Local Governments and monitoring the planning process, will need a good understanding of each Local Government. It is important that the full range of Council activities are taken into account when considering plans and the yearly reports that are submitted to the Commission.

In providing information on activities, Local Governments may wish to consider listing as follows:

Services to property: including construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths and cycle ways, street cleaning, waste disposal.

Services to the community: including recreation and cultural activities, management of facilities, library and information services, senior citizen centres, childcare centres.

Regulatory services: including planning, building, dog control, parking, environmental health services.

General administration: including the provision of general information to the public, the lodging of complaints and payment of rates.

Processes of government: including ordinary and special administrative and committee meetings, electors meetings and election of Council members.

Contracting out services

In preparing the list of your Local Government's information, services and facilities, it is important to include in-house and contracted services.

Where contracted services involve the public, Local Governments need to ensure that they provide access for people with disabilities. Local Governments are required to include information in their yearly report to the Commission on how they informed agents and contractors about their DAIP, and about the progress their agents and contractors have made towards the desired outcomes of the DAIP.

Note:

This is a new requirement of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.

The reporting process for the DAIP activities of agents and contractors will be determined following discussions with the Department of Treasury and Finance and the State Supply Commission, and in partnership with the Western Australian Local Government Association.

It is expected that this process will be introduced incrementally: that is, Local Governments are not expected to introduce DAIP processes for their agents and contractors, including reporting requirements, in the first year of DAIP implementation.

The processes are geared towards encouraging and informing agents and contractors about how to provide an accessible service to people with disabilities. Further information will be forwarded to Local Governments by the Disability Services Commission.

Further information about the reporting requirements and agents and contractors is provided in a Fact Sheet at the end of this section.

Local Governments are encouraged to contact their Principal Officer in the Commission's Community Access and Information Branch (9426 9384) with any questions about this.

3

Gather background information

To assist Local Governments to plan consultations and to facilitate the planning process it is suggested that they obtain information on:

- people with disabilities in Western Australia;
- disability organisations and other relevant community groups;
- access issues identified by staff and Elected Members of Council; and
- completed and proposed access initiatives.

Through consultation with staff and Elected Members, Local Governments that already have a Disability Service Plan should ensure that their existing information on people with disabilities, disability organisations and other relevant community groups is current. They should also review their existing plan, to identify progress and achievements, remaining barriers and proposed initiatives. The review could be done through:

- consultation with staff;
- consultation with access committee or working group; and / or
- consultation with service users, including people with disabilities.

Information on effective use of consultation and survey techniques is included as fact sheets in Part 4 of this manual.

In gathering and reviewing this information Local Governments increase the likelihood that they will:

- ensure that relevant people, organisations and groups are given the opportunity to be part of the consultation process; and
- ensure that there is broad coverage of barriers and strategies based on a range of information sources.

People with disabilities in the Local Government area

It is important to remember that people with disabilities using a Local Government's information, services and facilities are not necessarily residents in that Local Government area. People with disabilities, like other people, move around in the community to go to work, access services, visit friends and family and take part in recreation and leisure activities.

Having information about the estimated number of people with disabilities in the Local Government area may assist in planning their consultations and provide a context for the planning process. Fact sheets provided in Part 4 of this manual

contain information on disability in WA. More detailed statistical information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers may be found at www.abs.gov.au.

This information will specifically assist Local Governments to consider:

- the range of disabilities that people in the community have;
- some of the potential barriers people with disabilities may experience in accessing Local Government information, services and facilities; and
- some of the disability organisations that may need to be consulted.

Disability organisations and relevant community groups

Identifying relevant disability organisations and groups to be consulted is important, as they can provide information on:

- the nature of the disabilities experienced by people in your community;
- the potential barriers people with disabilities experience in accessing functions, facilities and services; and/or
- some of the possible strategies that could be implemented to overcome barriers.

Disability organisations located in your Local Government area are likely to have specific knowledge of the barriers that people with disabilities face accessing information, services and facilities.

Organisations outside your area may not be familiar with specific barriers but may be able to identify common barriers and the strategies to overcome these for the people with disabilities they support or represent.

Information about some disability organisations is contained in Part 4 of this manual.

Access issues identified by employees and Elected Members of Council

Local Government employees and Elected Members of Council can be an important source of information about the barriers that people with disabilities experience in accessing Local Government information, services and facilities. They should be consulted prior to your discussions with the community.

Throughout the planning process it will be important that all employees and Elected Members are kept informed and involved. Their support is necessary for the development, implementation and evaluation of effective plans.

Local Government access initiatives

Since the introduction of disability service plans, many Local Governments have undertaken a wide range of initiatives which have improved access and opportunities for people with disabilities to Local Government information, services, and facilities.

It may be useful, if Local Governments have not already done so, to prepare a summary of Council achievements and policies to date in this area. Remember to discuss these initiatives during the consultations with the community to obtain feedback on how well they are working for people with disabilities.

Include only planned access initiatives in the action plan of your DAIP. Information on past initiatives and achievements could be included in an introduction to your Disability Service Plan or as a list of progress achieved (as presented in Appendix 1 of the Model DAIP, which is provided in Part 3 of this manual).

4

Determine and implement consultation strategy

One of the integral requirements of the DAIP is community consultation. Consultation will ensure your plan is relevant and responsive to the needs of your customers. The amendments to the Disability Services Act (1993, amended 2004) now make community consultation mandatory. The **minimum** requirements are that public authorities must call for submissions regarding DAIPs “either generally or specifically in:

- the newspaper, either statewide or local depending upon whether a State or Local authority; or
- on the authority’s website.”

Planning for participation

Consulting with members of the community, including people with disabilities, takes time. Sending out documents with only short periods before feedback is due puts unnecessary pressure on potential respondents and reduces the likelihood that they will participate effectively if at all. Good planning to maximise participation includes:

- clarifying the purpose of the consultation, eg to comment on a draft policy or plan, to provide feedback about access barriers and possible strategies to reduce these, to provide feedback on a specific issue;
- identifying key stakeholders and ensuring that possible barriers to their participation are eliminated;
- allowing adequate time for feedback or notice about meetings;
- minimising or reimbursing the costs of participation through actions such as providing reply-paid envelopes, reimbursing travel expenses to meetings, and paying sitting fees for committee members; and
- reporting back to participants about the results of their feedback and any further actions planned.

Deciding who to invite

Consultation should include both internal and external customers. External customers could include:

- current or potential customers with disabilities and their families and carers;
- members of the Local Government’s disability access or advisory committee;
- disability service providers;
- local community organisations and groups;
- advocacy services and disability peak bodies; and
- agents and contractors.

Internal customers include the managers of each area of Local Government and those staff with responsibilities that impact on the public such as customer service staff, building and planning staff, staff who develop or provide information to the public, ranger services and HR personnel.

Deciding on consultation methods and maximising access to these

Each Local Government needs to decide which consultation methods are most appropriate for them depending on:

- their size, location, and nature of services;
- available resources;
- customer base; and
- purpose of the consultation, eg one-off feedback to develop the DAIP or a longer term advisory role.

Where possible the community consultations methods already implemented by the organisation will consider the DAIP, eg customer satisfaction surveys.

Disability services in your area or with whom you have a relationship may be able to provide specific advice on consulting their consumers and may be prepared to assist in promoting the consultation or facilitating links between your organisation and their consumers.

Consultation methods may include:

- face-to-face interviews;
- telephone interviews;
- focus groups/small group meetings;
- public meetings;
- videoconferences;
- surveys (distributed in hard copy via newspapers, newsletters or by mail, or electronic surveys by email or web-based);
- written submissions; and
- Access and Inclusion Advisory committees/reference groups.

It may be necessary to use alternative formats and/or languages for surveys or questionnaires (for example large print, Braille, translation offered) or to use alternative consultation methods to get feedback from people with disabilities.

Part 4 of this manual (Additional Information) includes a table which describes some of the advantages and disadvantages of different consultation methods and strategies. Information on the effective use of surveys is also included in this section.

5

Develop an access and inclusion policy for people with disabilities, their families and carers

Strategies to improve access and inclusion for people with disabilities require coordination and cooperation between all areas of Local Government. It is important for a Local Government to make clear its overall commitment to particular principles and practices by the adoption of a relevant policy and to include this in their plan.

Local Governments that already have a disability access policy should consider whether their existing policy reflects the requirements of the amended legislation and contemporary values.

Local Governments may wish to consider including the following in a disability access and inclusion policy:

- the overall aim or purpose of the DAIP;
- a definition of disability;
- a statement of Local Government's commitment to enhancing inclusion by providing access for people with disabilities to its information, services and facilities;
- the values that underpin the relationship between people with disabilities and Local Government, eg people with disabilities are valued members of the community, have a contribution to make and have a right to be included in the community; and
- linkages with other key Local Government policy statements.

As a minimum, Local Governments should state in their DAIP that they are committed to furthering the principles and objectives of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) and meeting the six Standards in the Disability Services regulations 2004.

As indicated above, Local Governments may wish to link their access policy to other key policies. These may include statements about Local Government's relationship to the community it serves, or policies on services to people with disabilities that address issues of participation and integration.

6

Develop policy and procedures regarding agents and contractors

Contracting out services

Where contracted services involve the public, Local Governments need to ensure that these services provide access for people with disabilities. Examples of activities for the public that may be undertaken by agents or contractors of Local Government include aquatic and leisure centre facilities, holiday program centres, rubbish collection services and day activity programs.

Local Governments are required to inform their agents and contractors of their DAIP, and agents and contractors are required to conduct their business in a manner consistent with this.

Local Governments are required to include information in their yearly report to the Commission on:

- how they informed agents and contractors about their DAIP; and
- the progress their agents and contractors have made towards the desired outcomes in the DAIP.

Note:

This is a new requirement of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.

The reporting process for the DAIP activities of agents and contractors will be determined following discussions with the Department of Treasury and Finance and the State Supply Commission, and in partnership with the Western Australian Local Government Association.

It is expected that this process will be introduced incrementally: that is, Local Governments are not expected to introduce DAIP processes for their agents and contractors, including reporting requirements, in the first year of DAIP implementation.

The processes are geared towards encouraging and informing agents and contractors about how to provide an accessible service to people with disabilities. Further information will be forwarded to Local Governments by the Disability Services Commission.

Local Governments are encouraged to contact their Principal Officer in the Commission's Community Access and Information Branch (9426 9384) with any questions about this.

7

Identify objectives and strategies to overcome barriers

Once the consultation process is completed, Local Governments need to document the barriers and the means by which they will be addressed.

The following information should appear in your plan:

- information, services and facilities (both in-house and contracted);
- barriers to accessing these;
- strategies that will address the barriers; and
- timelines for the completion of each strategy.

When identifying barriers it is important to be aware of applicable government legislation, including codes and standards. Particularly relevant are both the mandatory and recommended Australian Standards on Access. These standards, which are regularly updated, have been developed after extensive consultation with peak disability organisations across Australia and address the access requirements of people with all types of disability.

Remember that compliance with access standards does not in itself guarantee that anti-discrimination laws are satisfied.

It will be important to prioritise the barriers that have been identified and to accurately assess the resources, both human and financial, required to overcome them. Funds for implementing the plan will need to be found from within existing Local Government resources. Creating better access can be about doing things differently and about careful planning in the initial stages of projects or developments. Those strategies requiring significant resourcing need to be incorporated into Council's overall planning and budgeting cycle.

The model DAIPs in Part 3 of this manual provide an example of a DAIP for a large Local Government and one for a smaller Local Government. Each of these plans contains a section (Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion) on objectives and strategies to overcome barriers, with a suggested format and examples of the kinds of barriers and strategies that may be considered.

Also included in the model plans are examples of the broad strategies (and timeframes for their completion) to overcome access barriers, and a proposed Implementation Plan, an internal document to assist Local Governments to implement progress of their DAIP on an annual basis.

8

Prepare monitoring, reviewing and reporting mechanisms

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) requires Local Governments to review their DAIPs at least every five years, but they may review them at any other time. Local Governments must undertake community consultation, in accordance with the regulations, whenever reviewing a DAIP. Local Governments should ensure that the legislative requirements for reviewing, consulting and reporting are met, and also that reports are formally endorsed by Council.

Details of the requirements of the Act can be obtained from the State Law Publisher's website, www.slp.wa.gov.au, and are outlined in Part 4 of this manual.

Monitoring

Each plan must outline how the Local Government intends to monitor and measure the extent to which access and inclusion has been increased and enhanced for people with disabilities.

Monitoring processes should focus on whether strategies are being implemented effectively and on time.

Local Governments may wish to consider incorporating updates on the progress of the DAIP through their publications, website and the local media.

The monitoring processes need to occur within each year, to measure the progress so that it can be reported on annually, in the Local Government's Annual Report and in the Progress Report to the Commission.

Reviewing

Reviewing is about assessing how well the strategies are overcoming barriers and achieving the six outcomes.

Once strategies have been implemented it will be important to seek feedback to determine the degree to which they are overcoming barriers for people with disabilities. How Local Governments intend to review their plan to date needs to be built into DAIPs.

The processes used to review their DAIP will depend on a Local Government's size and resources. Ideally both informal and formal methods will be used to gather information on how well strategies are overcoming barriers. Performance indicator data could be set as a mechanism for a detailed quantitative analysis of the success of the DAIP, for example the percentage of publications that identify they are available in alternative formats, or the percentage of staff who have attended disability awareness training.

Feedback from service users and other community members could provide some qualitative analysis. For example, disability advisory or access committees can provide important feedback based on their links with the community on how well strategies are working for people with disabilities. Depending on the size of the Local Government, people known to be affected by the strategies and known to the Local Government could be contacted directly by staff or Councillors to determine how well the strategies have worked.

Local Government employees and Elected Members should also be consulted, either informally or formally, regarding the degree to which they believe strategies are making a difference in overcoming barriers for people with disabilities.

It is important to remember that in the course of obtaining feedback on strategies new barriers may be identified. Plans need to be adaptable to meet the changing needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers.

The Act requires that DAIPs are reviewed at least every five years.

Reporting

Local Government Annual Report

Local Governments are required, under the Act, to include in their Annual Report a report of the actions that they have undertaken to implement their DAIP.

Progress report to the Disability Services Commission

There is also a requirement for Local Governments to report on an annual basis to the Disability Services Commission to provide information on progress made by the Local Government and its agents and contractors in achieving the desired outcomes of the DAIP, and how agents and contractors have been informed about the DAIP. A Reporting Template is provided at the end of this section, to facilitate this reporting process.

Whenever a DAIP is prepared, reviewed or amended, a report must be lodged with the Disability Services Commission. Note, Local Governments may choose to amend their Implementation Plan at any time. Amendments to the Implementation Plan do not have to be lodged with the Commission

A guiding timeline of milestones for lodging and reporting on the DAIP is provided at the end of this section.

9

Develop and finalise the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Examples of DAIPs are provided in Part 3 of this manual. Local Governments may choose to use these as a guide, with scope to add and adapt to meet their own needs.

When the DAIP has been finalised, and approved by Council, it is to be lodged with the Disability Services Commission. This can be done by forwarding it to the Community Access and Information Branch of the Disability Services Commission (PO Box 441, West Perth, WA 6872).

10

Lodge the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan with the Disability Services Commission

There is a legislative requirement for public authorities to submit their current plan, even if it is a DSP and out of date, by 31 July 2006. The Commission will send a reminder letter about this requirement. Plans can be submitted by forwarding them to the Community Access and Information Branch of the Disability Services Commission (PO Box 441, West Perth, WA 6872).

Following this, the DAIP must be lodged with the Disability Services Commission by 31 July 2007. A reminder letter about the lodgement process will be sent from the Commission early in 2007.

DAIPs lodged with the Commission will be examined to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Disability Services Act.

A guide of timeline of milestones for lodging and reporting on the DAIP is provided at the end of this section.

To ensure that your DAIP meets the requirements of the Act, the Commission can provide feedback about your DAIP. Please note that the Commission's access officers are available to provide advice about your DAIP. They can be contacted in the Community Access and Information Branch on 9426 9384.

It is advised that you seek feedback about your DAIP by March 2007 at the latest, to allow the access officers sufficient time to examine your DAIP in detail.

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) requires Local Governments to ensure that their DAIP is “made available to people with disabilities and the public generally, by publication in the prescribed manner”. The Disability Services Regulations (2004) prescribe the minimum requirements, which are that:

Public authorities must ensure that their DAIP is made available:

- (a) on request, at the offices of the authority –
 - i. in an electronic format;
 - ii. in hard copy format in both standard and large print; and
 - iii. in an audio format on cassette or compact disk;
- (b) on request, by email; and
- (c) on any website maintained by or on behalf of the authority.

The W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines assists web designers to create websites that are accessible to a wide audience, including people with disabilities. This information is available through www.w3.org, and through links from the Disability Services Commission’s website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au.

The regulations also require that notice be given regarding the availability of the DAIP, in a newspaper circulating throughout the district of that Local Government (as determined under the Local Government Act 1995).

Local Governments may also wish to promote their DAIPs in other ways, such as via their newsletter, through information bulletins to those people, organisations and groups who took part in the consultations, through direct communication to disability organisations and on local radio. It is important to promote the availability of the plan in alternative formats upon request.

Local Governments must state in their DAIP how they will communicate the plan to employees and customers.

A DAIP should be clearly written in plain and concise English. It is important that people with disabilities, their families and carers and others who are part of the consultative process have an opportunity to provide feedback about the plan. In addition, it is important to inform Local Government employees about their role in implementing and monitoring the plan to ensure its success.

The quality of the planning process will be in part related to the involvement of a wide range of people both from within and outside Local Government. Keeping people well informed will ensure that their interest in the process will be sustained and increase the likelihood that they will work with and alongside Local Government to ensure the success of the plans.

Fact Sheet

Steps to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan



Fact Sheet

Lodging and reporting milestones for your Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

When a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) has been developed public authorities are required to submit it to the Disability Services Commission. They are also required to provide progress reports, on an annual basis, about the implementation of the DAIP.

Reporting about DAIPs occurs through the general annual reporting mechanisms of each public authority (whether State or Local Government), however the Commission also requires a progress report from each public authority by 31 July. A straightforward reporting template, for the required progress report, is provided by the Commission. The Commission will use the information provided in the reports to provide the Minister for Disability Services with a statewide perspective of DAIP outcome progress and compliance, and the Minister will table this report in Parliament.

The milestones for developing and implementing a DAIP are:

Date	Documentation to be submitted to the Disability Services Commission
31 July 2006:	Your current plan (which can be your DSP).
31 July 2007:	Your finalised DAIP.
31 July 2012:	A review report of your DAIP (or within five years of your previous DAIP review report).
31 July each year	Progress report to the Commission, using the template provided.

If the public authority reports under Section 62 or Section 66 of the Finance Administration and Auditing Act (FAAA) or under Section 553 of the Local Government Act (LGA), then it must include in that report to the Minister a report on the implementation of their DAIP.

Public authorities that do not provide reports under the FAAA or LGA, to whom the above reporting process does not apply, must provide a report about the implementation of their DAIP to the Commission by 31 August each year.

Fact Sheet

Progress report to the Disability Services Commission

Under the Disability Services Act public authorities are required to provide the Disability Services Commission with a report by 31 July each year to demonstrate:

- progress made by the public authority in achieving the six desired outcomes;
- progress made by the public authority's agents and contractors in achieving the six desired outcomes; and
- the strategies implemented by the public authority to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

The progress report to the Commission covers each individual year of your DAIP's implementation. Public authorities have until July 2007 to lodge their finalised DAIP. If you lodge it at that point then you will have to complete your first DAIP progress report to the Commission by July 2008. If you lodge your finalised DAIP by July 2006 then you will have to complete your first DAIP progress report to the Commission by July 2007.

Reports submitted to the Commission will be aggregated and analysed to provide a statewide report for the Minister for Disability Services. Once received, the Minister for Disability Services will submit the report to Parliament within 14 days. The report will demonstrate the progress that is being made in relation to access by public authorities. It is not intended to identify or compare individual public authorities.

Updates will be sent to public authorities when the reporting processes for 'agents and contractors' are finalised. Until notified, questions 2 and 3 of the reporting template do not apply.

Please complete the DAIP progress reporting template overleaf and provide it to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year.

Please note that public authorities are also required to describe activities undertaken through their DAIP in their Annual Report.

DAIP Progress Reporting Template

Please complete this progress reporting template about the previous financial year's DAIP implementation and forward it to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July.

1. Please indicate for each of the Outcome areas in your DAIP:

- the number of strategies that were completed, partially completed or not commenced; and
- the number of current contracts that are working towards DAIP outcomes.

	Total number of planned strategies	Number of strategies completed	Number of strategies partially completed	Number of strategies not commenced	Number of contractors undertaking DAIP activity
Outcome 1					
Outcome 2					
Outcome 3					
Outcome 4					
Outcome 5					
Outcome 6					

2. Please indicate the number of your agents and contractors undertaking DAIP activities and the total number of your agents and contractors providing a service to the public:

Number of contractors providing a service to the public consistent with the DAIP	
Total number of contractors providing a service to the public	

Model Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

for Local Government



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION



making a difference

Introduction to model plans

The following model plans are for a metropolitan Local Government and country Local Government, but the models could also apply as examples for large or small Local Governments in any location.

The content of the two model plans is not prescriptive. It suggests what could be included in your DAIP.

It is recommended that each plan include the following elements:

- A policy statement that incorporates a commitment to furthering the principles and objectives applicable to people with disabilities, their families and carers by achieving the desired outcomes.
- An outline of the Local Government's information, services and facilities (including in-house and contracted services).
- A brief report of progress under the previous plan.
- A description of the consultation process with people with disabilities and Local Government employees used to assist in the preparation of the plan.
- Identification of barriers experienced by people with disabilities in accessing services.
- Strategies designed to progress towards achieving the six desired outcomes for people with disabilities.
- Timeline for achievement of the proposed strategies.
- A strategy to communicate the plan to staff and people with disabilities.
- A mechanism by which people with disabilities can provide feedback.
- A method to monitor, measure and review results so that the effectiveness of the plan can be evaluated.
- A policy and procedures regarding the Act's requirements around agents and contractors (note the Disability Services Commission will provide advice on this element of a DAIP).
- A clear statement that the plan is available, on request, in alternative formats.
- A clear statement that the plan is available on the authority's website.

Local Governments may also include other elements in their DAIP. For example, a Local Government may wish to highlight its achievements to date in improving access under its Disability Service Plan (DSP), or may wish to add budget details, priorities or performance indicators to its DAIP Implementation Plan.

Model Plan for a metropolitan Local Government

City of Ascot

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2006 - 2010

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

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In particular, thanks are given to Ascot HACC Services Inc, City employees and individual community members.

Background

The City of Ascot

The City of Ascot, at 850 square kilometres is a large Local Government area in metropolitan Perth.

The City centre contains a mix of major offices, retail and commercial centres, entertainment, recreation, government and community facilities. As a long established area, the City centre contains a number of historical buildings.

The City is undergoing extensive residential growth and change, including several large areas of land being developed for new housing, as well as an urban renewal program in older suburbs. This is bringing many more young families to the area.

A focus for the City during these redevelopments has been to preserve and safeguard its wetland areas which are home to many species of birdlife and several rare types of flora.

The City is bounded on its western side by a short stretch of ocean coastline, with a swimming beach popular with locals and tourists.

The City of Ascot is located on a major transport corridor and there is an extensive network of road, rail and bus routes.

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

The City of Ascot is responsible for a range of functions, facilities and services including:

Services to property: construction and maintenance of Local Government-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; public library and information services; senior citizen centre and meals on wheels service; immunisation and health education; home support and respite services; citizenship ceremonies; youth services and community events.

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.

General administration: the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates and dog licences.

Processes of government: ordinary and special Local Government and committee meetings; Council meetings and election of Council Members; ward meetings and community consultations.

People with disabilities in the City of Ascot

Situated in one of the fastest growing urban corridors, the City's current residential population of 71,000 is predicted to double within 20 years. 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. Based on the population estimate and these findings, it is estimated that there are around 14,626 people with disabilities living within the City's boundaries.

Planning for better access

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act (1993) that all Local Governments develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which they will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the Western Australia 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's requirements for Action Plans.

Progress since 1995

The City of Ascot is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. Towards this goal the City adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the barriers within the community for people with disabilities. The DSP addressed its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993). The DSP has undergone three internal reviews since 1995.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the City has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access. Some of these are highlighted in Appendix 1 under the relevant key outcome headings of the 1995 DSP.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The City of Ascot interprets an accessible and inclusive community as one in which people with a disability can access and are welcomed to participate in all Local Government functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) in the same manner and with the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community.

The City of Ascot recognises that people with disabilities are valued and contributing members of the community who make a variety of contributions to local social, economic and cultural life. The City 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 City of Ascot believes that people with disabilities, their families and carers should be supported to remain in the community of their choice.

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

The City of Ascot is committed to working in partnership with local community groups and businesses to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities through improved access to information, services and facilities in the community.

The City of Ascot is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP. These are:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disabilities receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.

5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

A Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee of Local Government was established in February 2006 comprising two Elected Members of Council, two City employees and two people with personal and/or professional knowledge of disability issues to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Community consultation process

In 2006, the City 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 initial DSP and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- examination of other City documents and strategies;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- consultation with key staff; and
- consultation with the community.

The Disability Services Act Regulations (2004) set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. Local Governments 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. Other mechanisms may also be used.

In March 2006 the community was informed through the local newspaper, radio and the City's website that the City was developing a DAIP to address the barriers that people with disabilities and their families experience in accessing information, services and facilities.

The community was advised through the local newspapers, radio and the City's website to provide input into the development of the plan by:

- **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire was made available at the City's Administration Centre, community centres, libraries, infant health centres and leisure centre and on the City's website in March 2006. Residents were asked to identify any problems they had using services, accessing information, contributing to decision-making processes, making complaints, physically accessing Council facilities, and generally getting around and being included in the community. 25 completed questionnaires were received.

- **Phone-In:** The community was invited to contact City employees in March 2006 to discuss some of the difficulties they were experiencing in accessing services or in just getting around the community. 20 calls were received.
- **Meeting with Elected Members of Council and City employees:** In April 2006 a meeting was held with Elected Members of Council and City employees to discuss the barriers that people with disabilities experienced in accessing information, services and facilities of the City, and the strategies that could address these.
- **Meeting with people with disabilities, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups:** A meeting was held in April 2006 with 35 people including people with disabilities, their families and representatives of disability organisations and relevant community groups. Barriers to obtaining information, services and facilities in the City were identified. In addition, participants identified a number of strategies that would assist in overcoming barriers and enhancing inclusion in the community.
- **Personal Contacts:** Individual Councillors and City employees made contact with a number of people with disabilities whom they knew through their work in the community to discuss the barriers they experience in accessing services and activities. A total of 17 people were contacted.

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. It must also keep abreast of legislative and regulatory changes.

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

Access barriers

While the review and consultation noted a great deal of achievement in improving access it also identified a range of barriers that require redress. These access barriers include:

- City policy to guide and inform access and inclusion activities may not reflect contemporary values and practice.
- Processes of the City may not be as accessible as possible.
- Events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disabilities.
- Suitable parking for people with disabilities may not be meeting the needs of this growing demographic.

- Elements of the City's website may require improvement to best meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to adequately provide the same level of service to people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities may not be aware of consultation opportunities with the City.

The identification of these barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been prioritised in order of importance, which assists setting timeframes for the completion of strategies to overcome those access barriers.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that a public authority 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 the City. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the City while others will apply to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

In August 2006 copies of the draft DAIP were sent to all those who contributed to the planning process including City employees, people with disabilities, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups for feedback. In October 2006 the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by Council.

The community has been 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 City's website.

As plans are amended City employees 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 City'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.

Monitoring and reviewing

- The Disability Access and Inclusion Planning working party will meet every quarter in the first year, and as required thereafter, to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP. The minutes of these meetings will be presented to Council for noting.
- The review of the City'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 City's DAIP 2006-2010.
- The working party will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to Council for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

- Reports on the DAIP implementation process will be presented to Council for endorsement.
- Once a year, prior to 31 July, the City 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 *Ascot Community* newspaper and in the City's newsletter, posted on the City's website, announced on Information Radio and circulated to disability service providers.
- In seeking feedback the working party will also seek to identify additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- The working party will use some of the consultation processes used during the initial consultations including: questionnaires, meetings with people with disabilities and disability organisation phone-ins.
- Elected Members of Council and City employees will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by Council, will be available to the community in alternative formats.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

The City will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress report template 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 its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

As a result of the consultation process the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the City of Ascot will undertake from 2006-2010 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 City of Ascot.

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
Establish a Disability Access Committee to guide the implementation of DAIP activities.	February 2006
Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	June 2007
Monitor the City's Access and Inclusion policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities throughout the various functions of the City.	March 2007
Make the library technology as accessible as possible.	January 2008
Develop the links between the DAIP and other City plans and strategies.	June 2008
Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	June 2007
Ensure that City staff and agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the Disability Services Act.	June 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
Ensure that all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.	June 2010
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	June 2007
Ensure that all premises and other infrastructure related to transport facilities are accessible.	June 2007
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.	July 2008
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues, by attaching the Disability Services Commission's Access Information checklists.	December 2006
Ensure that parks and reserves are accessible, including access to wetland viewing areas.	June 2008
Improve access to the beach and sea for people using wheelchairs.	May 2007
Increase the number of accessible playgrounds.	June 2008
Ensure that public toilets meet the associated accessibility standards.	June 2007

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
Improve community awareness that City information is available in alternative formats upon request.	January 2007
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	June 2007
Investigate and facilitate the use of interpreters to improve the availability of Council meetings to people with a hearing impairment.	June 2008
Ensure that the City's website meets contemporary good practice.	June 2007
Provide documentation regarding services, facilities and customer feedback in an appropriate format using clear and concise language.	December 2007

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
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disabilities.	June 2008
Improve the awareness of new employees and new Councillors about disability and access issues.	June 2008
Further generate and sustain staff awareness of disability and access issues.	June 2008

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities.	June 2007
Improve staff knowledge so they can receive complaints from people with a disability.	June 2008
Ensure that grievance mechanism processes and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	August 2008

Outcome 6: People with disabilities 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.	June 2007
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	December 2006
Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative processes of the City.	March 2008
Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.	March 2008

Appendix 1

Progress since 1995 under the Disability Service Plan

1. Existing functions, facilities and services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- The City's library collections have been expanded to include a range of alternative format resources such as talking books, captioned videos and DVDs as well as adult literacy collections. A range of assistive technology is also now available including CCTV and specialised keyboards on public access computers. Signage inside the libraries has been improved.
- The development of partnerships with non-government disability recreation organisations has facilitated the adaptation of existing sport and recreation programs to include people with disabilities.
- The City's Children's Services staff produced information on how children with disabilities can participate.
- The City's Recreation Services staff developed an Access Strategy in collaboration with local disability organisations.

2. Access to buildings and facilities has been improved.

- Improved access to the Administration building, including a ramp, accessible toilets, improved signage, defining of front steps, improved lighting, lower front counter and relocation of easy access parking bays.
- A ramp was installed to enable wheelchair access to Council Chambers.
- Automatic doors were fitted to library entrances.
- Many public toilets within the City are now accessible to wheelchair users.
- An audit of footpaths was conducted and a program of upgrades to footpaths throughout the City is under way. Consultation with people with disabilities has enabled prioritisation and scheduling of key routes and areas.
- An accessible playground has been built at Planetree Park.
- Facilities at the Leisure Centre have been upgraded to provide improved access, with accessible change rooms, a hoist for entry into the pool and improved signage.

3. Information about functions, facilities and services is provided in formats which meet the communication needs of people with disabilities.

- Information was made available in alternative formats on request.
- A TTY has been installed in the Customer Services area.
- Staff received training in the use of the Australian Communication Exchange National Relay Services.

4. Staff awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and skills in delivering services is improved.

- City employees received disability related training specific to their area.
- Better Hearing kits were positioned at all public counters.

5. Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision making processes.

- Information about planning processes, electoral processes, Council meetings, and complaints processes was provided in clear and precise language and made available in alternative formats upon request.
- Municipal election voting was held in accessible buildings and some voting booths were modified to suit people using wheelchairs.

City of Ascot

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Implementation Plan 2006 - 2007

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan itemises what the City of Ascot will do in 2006-2007 to improve access to its services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Implementation Plan is presented using a table to outline:

- individual tasks being undertaken;
- a timeline for completion of the individual tasks;
- the officer position or section of the City with responsibility for completing the individual tasks; and
- the broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting.

As outlined in the City of Ascot's DAIP, many of the broad strategies will not be completed in 2006-2007, however individual tasks to support the achievement of those strategies may well be undertaken in part or whole in 2006-2007 through the Implementation Plan.

Broad strategies that will not be achieved in 2006-2007 will be supported by tasks outlined in future Implementation Plans.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Make library technology as accessible as possible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve accessibility of technology and collection. • Ensure that planning for the new library includes state of the art technology to enable access by all users. 	<p>January 2008</p>	<p>Manager Library Services</p>
<p>Develop links between the DAIP and other City plans and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate strategic business planning documents, budget processes and all other relevant plans and strategies requiring alignment with the DAIP. • Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into City's strategic business planning, budgeting processes and all other relevant plans and strategies (for completion by June 2008). 	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>All managers</p>
<p>Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist. • Make the Accessible Events checklist available to staff on the City's Intranet. 	<p>June 2007</p>	<p>Events Coordinator</p>
<p>Ensure that City staff and agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the Disability Services Act.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the City's policy and procedures regarding the Disability Services Act's requirements around agents and contractors through the newsletter and the induction process for new employees. 	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>Disability Services Coordinator and all managers</p>

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Ensure that all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit and identify access barriers to buildings and facilities using the Access Resource Kit checklists and Disability Access Consultants. • Identify access complaints to support audit results. • Investigate ways of improving access to heritage buildings while maintaining their integrity. • Prioritise and make submission to Council to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>April 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement procedures to enable the Disability Services Coordinator to review proposals for redevelopment and new work projects. Apply the Building Code of Australia, Australian Standards on Access (mandatory and recommended) and the Advisory Notes on Access to Premises prepared by the Human Rights and Equal Rights Commission when new work to buildings and facilities is undertaken. Ensure key employees maintain an awareness of the development of the DDA Premises Standard through means such as HREOC email updates. Include appropriate specifications in tender documents. 	<p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>
<p>Ensure that accessible parking bays meet the requirements of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit of accessible parking bays and implement a program to rectify any non-compliance. Consider the need for additional bays at some locations. 	<p>January 2007 June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that all City owned premises and other infrastructure related to transport facilities are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit all transport infrastructure against the DDA Transport Standard. • Liaise with the relevant State Government authority to ensure co-ordinated planning of remedial works. • Prioritise and make submission to Council to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate means of providing advice and assistance to improve access. • Promote to business the economic benefits of being accessible. • Develop information for businesses on access/universal design. • Make access information available on the City's website. 	<p>December 2006</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>
Ensure that parks and reserves are accessible, including wetland viewing areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct audit of parks and reserves. • Investigate ways of providing access, such as boardwalks and accessible viewing platforms. • Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrading. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Increase the number of accessible playgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a policy on playground access to include the construction of accessible and inclusive playgrounds. Develop a program of access upgrades to take place on existing playgrounds in 2008. Keep abreast of contemporary practice in creating universal playgrounds. 	June 2007 June 2007	Manager, Community Development in conjunction with Manager, Parks and Gardens and Manager, Engineering Services.
Improve access to the beach and the sea for people using wheelchairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate methods of providing access. Implement a strategy to provide access. 	March 2007 May 2007	Manager, Engineering Services
Ensure that public toilets meet the associated accessibility standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct audit of all public toilets and add to Remedial Works program. Implement a program of upgrading to ensure there is a unisex accessible facility at each location. 	April 2007 June 2007	Manager, Engineering Services

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the City of Ascot in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Improve community awareness that City information can be made available in alternative formats upon request.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all documents carry a notation regarding availability in alternative formats. • Advise the community via the local newspaper, Information Radio, and disability group newsletters that other formats are available. 	<p>September 2006 June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Media and Marketing</p>
<p>Improve employee awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Accessible Information policy. • Make the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities available on the intranet. • Conduct Accessible Information training and include as part of the induction of new employees. 	<p>June 2007 June 2007 June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services Manager, Corporate Services Manager, Human Resources</p>
<p>Ensure that the City's website meets contemporary good practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop website according to the W3C Web Content Accessibility guidelines as outlined in the State Government Access Guidelines. • Ensure that forms and applications are available electronically. 	<p>June 2007 September 2006</p>	<p>Manager, IT Services</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Provide documentation regarding services, facilities and customer feedback in an appropriate format using clear and concise language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise employees of the minimum requirements. • Develop an audit plan (to guide an audit to be undertaken in December 2007), to identify resident and business related information for people with disabilities who live and/or work in the City. • Adopt State Government Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities, and incorporate into general practice. 	November 2006 February 2007 June 2007	Disability Access Committee

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the City of Ascot as other people receive from the employees of the City.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Improve employee awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a survey of all employees to determine training needs (training to be undertaken by June 2008). • Provide training on Deafness Awareness and the use of Auslan Interpreters. 	<p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Human Resources</p>
<p>Improve the awareness of new employees and new Councillors about disability and access issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare information and plan the establishment of training in the induction of new employees and new Councillors (for rollout by June 2008). 	<p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Human Resources</p>
<p>Further generate and sustain employee awareness of disability and access issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular information on access and inclusion in the employee newsletter. • Develop and implement a employee recognition program for good practice in access and inclusion (for rollout by June 2008). 	<p>September 2006 June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the City of Ascot.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current mechanisms for access. Consult with people with disabilities and other expert advice. Develop other methods of making complaints such as web-based forms. Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services</p>
Ensure that grievance mechanism process and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide grievance mechanism process and outcome satisfaction survey forms in alternative formats upon request. Undertake research to identify alternative means of providing grievance feedback (for full implementation by August 2008). 	<p>June 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services</p>
Improve employee knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate good practice in handling complaints from people with disabilities into induction and disability awareness training. 	<p>June 2008</p>	<p>Manager, Human Resources</p>

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Improve community awareness about consultation processes in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the existence, role and activities of the City's Disability Access Committee to the community. Disability Access Committee to meet regularly (as per proposal to Council in Outcome One) to provide strategic advice to the City, with support from City employees. Conduct a review of the City's community consultation processes (including methods of communicating for Town Planning Schemes) regarding issues of disability, access and inclusion. Ensure that media releases go to both print and electronic media, including Information Radio and key disability groups and are promoted on the website. 	<p>December 2006 & ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAIP Committee to regularly monitor the progress of the plan and be involved in all reviews of the plan. • Consult people with disabilities in a range of different consultation mediums, eg focus group, interviews, surveys. • Develop a register of experienced persons to provide comment on access and inclusion issues on request, who may not be members of the Disability Access Committee. 	<p>November 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p> <p>December 2006</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>
<p>Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative process of the City.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are published on the City's website. • Investigate options for presenting questions at Council meetings in alternative formats. • Research feasibility of installing an audio loop in Council Chambers (by March 2008). • Provide an AUSLAN interpreter on request and promote this facility. 	<p>December 2006</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>December 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services</p>
<p>Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include appropriate questions about access and inclusion in general surveys and consultation events. • Disability Access Committee to actively pursue the views of people with disabilities on a wide range of issues. 	<p>December 2006</p> <p>December 2006</p>	<p>All managers</p> <p>Disability Access Committee</p>

Model Plan for a country Local Government

Shire of Bridgebrook

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2006 - 2010

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

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In particular, thanks are given to Bridgebrook Care Inc, the Bridgebrook District Support Association, Shire staff and individual community members.

Background

The Shire of Bridgebrook

The Shire of Bridgebrook is located in the Central Wheatbelt and covers an area of 3,600 square kilometres. Approximately one quarter of the Shire is comprised of national park, including the Brook River National Park.

Major industries are agriculture, including wheat, sheep and some beef cattle, with seasonal tourism during the wild flower season.

The major town, Bridgebrook, is located on the Great Eastern Highway with a population of approximately 1,000. This increases considerably during the wild flower season. Bridgebrook is experiencing growth due to the movement of retirees and other mature-aged people to the area. The town was established in the late 19th century and has retained some heritage-listed public buildings from this period.

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

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

Services to property: construction and maintenance of Shire-owned buildings 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; public library and information services; senior citizen centre and meals on wheels service; youth services and community events.

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.

General administration: the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates and dog licences.

Processes of government: ordinary and special Council and committee meetings; electors' meetings and election of Council Members; ward meetings and community consultations.

People with disabilities in the Shire of Bridgebrook

It is estimated that there are around 500 people with disabilities living within the Shire, 20.6% of the permanent population of 2,500 (the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003) estimate that 20.6% of Australians identify themselves as having some form of disability). The influx of retirees will increase this number as according to the ABS survey, 50% of people aged over 60 identified themselves as having a disability. The seasonal influx of tourists, including tourists with a disability, must also be considered.

Planning for better access

The Western Australia Disability Services Act requires all Local Governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the Western Australia Equal Opportunity Act (1984) and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), both of which make discrimination on the basis of a person's disability unlawful.

Progress since 1995

The Shire of Bridgebrook is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information facilities and services. Towards this goal the Shire adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the access barriers within the community.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Shire has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access. Some of these are highlighted in Appendix 1 under the relevant key outcome headings of the 1995 DSP.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The Shire of Bridgebrook 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 as other people in the community.

The Shire of Bridgebrook:

- recognises that people with disabilities are valued members of the community who make a variety of contributions to local social, economic and cultural life;
- 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;
- believes that people with disabilities, their families and carers should be supported to remain in the community;
- is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and disability organisations in addressing barriers to access and inclusion;
- will ensure its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the DAIP;
- is committed to supporting local community groups and businesses to provide access and inclusion of people with disabilities; and
- is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP. These are:
 1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
 2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
 3. People with disabilities receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
 4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
 5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
 6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Community Development Officer has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan. The final plan is endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Community consultation process

In 2006, the Shire undertook to review its Disability Service Plan (DSP) consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DSP and subsequent progress reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- consultation with key staff; and
- consultation with the community.

The Disability Services Act Regulations (2004) set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). Local Governments must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a newspaper circulating in the Local Government area or on any website maintained by or on behalf of the Local Government. Other mechanisms may also be used. The following consultation methods were used:

- In March 2006 the community was informed through the local newspaper, radio and Shire's website that the Shire was developing a DAIP to address barriers to access for people with disabilities and their families. They were invited to provide input either in writing, by telephone or in person. Four calls were received.
- A questionnaire was made available at the bank, post office, library, infant health centre and recreation centre and on the Shire's website in March 2006. This invited people to identify any barriers under each of the six desired outcomes for a DAIP. Three completed questionnaires were received.
- A meeting was held in April 2006 with Elected Members of Council and Shire employees to gain feedback on barriers and strategies to address them.
- A public meeting was held in April 2006 with 20 people, including people with disabilities, their families and representatives of disability organisations, to discuss barriers to access and potential solutions to overcoming barriers and enhancing inclusion in the community.
- Individual Councillors and Shire employees made contact with five people to discuss the barriers to services and facilities.

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 address access barriers. It should also reflect legislative and regulatory changes such as striving for inclusion and access beyond the minimum compliance of the standards.

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

Access Barriers

The access barriers identified in the consultation process were:

- Shire policy to guide and inform access and inclusion activities may not reflect contemporary values and practice.
- Processes of the Shire may not be as accessible as possible.
- Events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disabilities.
- Suitable parking for people with disabilities may not be meeting the needs of this growing demographic.
- Elements of the Shire's website require improvement to best meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- Staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to adequately provide the same level of service to people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities may not be aware of consultation opportunities with the Shire.

These barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been prioritised in order of importance, which assists in setting timeframes for the completion of strategies to overcome those access barriers.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Shire. The Disability Services Act (1993) requires all public authorities to take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

- In August 2006 copies of the draft DAIP were sent to all those who contributed to the planning process. In October 2006 the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by Council.
- The community was informed through the local media (newspaper and radio) that copies of the plan were available 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 Shire's website.

- As plans are amended Shire staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the above methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act requires that DAIPs be reviewed at least every five years. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan must be lodged with the Disability Services Commission. The Implementation Plan can be updated more frequently if desired.

Monitoring and Reviewing

The employee with responsibility for the DAIP will analyse progress in implementing the DAIP and provide a report to management and Council on progress and recommended changes to the implementation plan annually.

- The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed and submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2011. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2006 -2010.

Evaluation

- An evaluation will occur as part of the five-yearly review of the DAIP.
- The community, staff and Elected Members will be consulted as per the endorsed consultation strategies, as part of any evaluation.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Disability Services Act requires the Shire to report on the implementation of its DAIP in its annual report 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.

The Shire is also required to report on progress in the prescribed format to the Disability Services Commission by July 31 each year.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The following overarching strategies have been developed to address each of the six desired outcome areas of the Disability Services Act from feedback gained in the consultation process. These will form the basis of the Implementation Plan.

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
Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services.	June 2007
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	ongoing
Improve access to the information in the library.	January 2008
Develop the links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies.	June 2008
Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities.	June 2007

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
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	June 2010
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	June 2007
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.	July 2008
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues.	December 2006
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	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
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request.	June 2007
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats.	June 2007
Budget for and provide interpreters to significant events on request.	June 2008
Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice.	June 2007

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the employees of a public authority as other people receive from the employees of that public authority.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all employees, existing and new, and Elected Members are aware of disability and access issues and have the skills to provide appropriate services.	June 2008
Improve community awareness about disability and access issues.	June 2008

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.	June 2007

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.	December 2006
Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.	March 2008

Appendix 1

Progress since 1995 under the Disability Service Plan

1. Existing functions, facilities and services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- An integration strategy including awareness training for recreation officers was developed and implemented.
- Talking books were relocated to one specific, clearly signed location in the library.
- A priority bin service was developed to assist people who are unable to move their bin to and from the kerbside.

2. Access to buildings and facilities has been improved.

- Improved access was provided to the Administration building, including a ramp, contrast edging on steps and relocation of easy access parking bays.
- Door to Council Chambers was widened.
- Automatic doors were fitted to library entrance.
- Unisex accessible public toilets were built in town centre and at swimming pool.
- Footpaths in the main street were upgraded and kerb ramps installed.

3. Information about functions, facilities and services is provided in formats which meet the communication needs of people with disabilities.

- An Accessible Information policy was developed.
- Information was made available in alternative formats on request.
- The availability of alternative format information was promoted via local newspaper, radio and disability groups.

4. Employee awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and skills in delivering services is improved.

- Key Shire employees received disability awareness training.

6. Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

- Information on consultations was simplified and made available in alternative formats upon request.
- Municipal election voting was held in accessible buildings and some voting booths were modified to suit people using wheelchairs.

Shire of Bridgebrook

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Implementation Plan 2006 - 2007

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each broad strategy to be implemented in 2006-2007 to progress the strategies of the DAIP.

It is intended that the Implementation Plan will be updated annually to progress the achievement of all the strategies over the duration of the five year plan.

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disabilities are consulted on their need for services and the accessibility of current services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a feedback mechanism for use by all services, provided or funded. Develop consultation guidelines for all future reviews of services. 	February 2007	Manager, Community Development, Contract Manager.
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct systematic reviews of the accessibility of services. Rectify identified barriers and provide feedback to consumers. 	March 2007 March 2007	Disability Access Committee
Develop links between the DAIP and other Shire plans and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate the objectives and strategies of the DAIP into the Shire's existing planning processes, particularly the Strategic Plan. 	June 2007	All managers
Ensure that events, whether provided or funded, are accessible to people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist. 	June 2007	All managers
Improve access to the information in the library.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide large print books for relevant community members. 	January 2008	Manager Library Services

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that all buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities. Prioritise and make a submission to Council to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>April 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disabilities, where practicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities. Ensure that no development application is signed off without a declaration that it meets the legal requirements. Ensure that key staff are trained and kept up to date with the legal requirements. 	<p>June 2007</p> <p>December 2006</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an audit of ACROD bays and implement a program to rectify any non-compliance. Consider the need for additional bays at some locations. 	<p>January 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Engineering Services</p>

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for, and benefits flowing from, the provision of accessible venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (available on the DSC website), on the needs of people with disabilities and of legal requirements and best practice. • Promote access to business. • Make access information available on the Shire's website. 	December 2006	Manager, Community Development
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct audit of Shire pool, Community Hall and playground. • Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrade. 	March 2007 June 2007	Manager, Community Development

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Bridgebrook in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all documents carry a notation that it is available in alternative formats. • Publicise the availability of other formats in the local newspaper. 	September 2006 June 2007	All managers
Improve employee awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities guidelines available on the Shire employee intranet site. • Train employees in providing accessible information. 	June 2007 June 2007	Manager Corporate Services Manager, Human Resources
Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelop website to ensure it complies with the W3C web content guidelines. 	June 2007	Manager, IT Services
Budget for and provide interpreters to significant events on request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make budget provision for interpreters and advertise the availability of the service. 	June 2007	Manager Corporate Services

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the employees of the Shire of Bridgebrook as other people receive.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that Elected Members and employees are aware of access needs and can provide appropriate services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine training needs of employees and conduct training as required. 	June 2007	Manager, Human Resources
Improve community awareness of disability and access issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for inclusion in the 2008 Implementation Plan. 	June 2007	Manager, Human Resources

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Bridgebrook.

Barrier	Action	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities and are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any recommendations. • Develop other methods of making complaints, such as web-based forms. • Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	<p>March 2007</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>	Manager, Corporate Services

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Ensure that people with disabilities are actively consulted about the DAIP and any other significant planning processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult people with disabilities in a range of different consultation mediums, eg focus group, interviews, surveys. Develop a register of people to provide comment on access and inclusion issues. 	<p>November 2006</p> <p>November 2006</p>	<p>Manager, Community Development</p>
<p>Ensure that people with disabilities are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are published on the Shire's website. Install an audio loop in Council Chambers in next refurbishment. 	<p>December 2006</p> <p>December 2007</p>	<p>Manager, Corporate Services</p>