



Shire of Kulin

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2020-2025

Copies of the DAIP are available in alternative formats upon request and in electronic format in both large and standard print and on the Shire's website (www.kulin.wa.gov.au)

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Background

The Shire of Kulin is located in the Upper Great Southern Wheatbelt and covers an area of 4,790 square kilometres. The Shire of Kulin encompasses the towns of Kulin, Pingaring, Dudinin, Jitarning and Holt Rock. The Kulin economy is based on agriculture and was settled by pastoralists in 1905.

The purpose of the Shire of Kulin is to sustain, improve and develop the Kulin region through the provision and facilitation of infrastructure, services and opportunities for businesses and quality of life for residents.

Our vision is to be a professional and progressive organisation where people enjoy working together to serve the community.

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

The Shire of Kulin is a local government body established under the Local Government Act to deliver services and infrastructure to its communities. The roles and responsibilities of Local Government differ across the state, but the Shire of Kulin actively services its community in a variety of ways namely:

- Infrastructure and associated services, including local roads, footpaths, drainage, waste collection and management
- Provision of recreation facilities, such as parks and gardens, sports fields, golf courses, swimming pools, Recreation Centres, Town Halls and caravan parks
- Care of the environment
- Health services such as water and food inspection, toilet facilities, noise control and animal control
- Community services, such as child care, aged care and accommodation, community care, community transport, emergency services and welfare services
- Building services, including inspections, licensing, certification and enforcement
- Carrying out government and private sector works,
- Tourism promotion and development
- Access to land, planning and development approvals,
- Administration of facilities, such as airstrips, cemeteries and street parking; cultural facilities and services, such as libraries,
- Lobbying and working with State and Federal Government, regional organisations and agencies,
- Advocating for local needs whilst operating in a regional context,
- Corporate Governance to ensure it delivers good decision making, leadership and professional management

Planning for Better Access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia (2018)*, 17.7% of Australians identify themselves as having some form of disability. 2.1% of people living in the Shire of Kulin are persons who have need for assistance with core activities.

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities and the *Disability Services Act, 1993* defines disability as a condition that:

- Is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; and
- Which is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- Which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and
- Which results in
 - A substantially reduced capacity for the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
 - A need for continuing support services

Under the *Disability Services Act 1993* it is a requirement that the Shire of Kulin develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which it will ensure that people with disability have the same opportunities to access the Shire of Kulin's services, information and facilities.

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

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The Shire of Kulin 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 disability, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as other people in the community.

The Shire of Kulin:

- recognises that people with disability 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 its members makes for a richer community life;
- believes that people with disability, their families and carers who live in country areas should be supported to remain in the community of their choice;
- is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access are addressed appropriately;
- 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 disability; and

The Shire of Kulin is also committed to achieving the seven desired outcomes of its DAIP. These are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any event by, a public authority
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority
3. People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the Planning Process

The development of the Shire of Kulin Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was undertaken by staff from across the organisation, taking into consideration changes in structure, technology and expectations.

The final version of the DAIP will be endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

Community Consultation Process

In July 2019, the Shire of Kulin undertook to review its Disability Access Plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- Examination of the current Disability Access Plan to see what had been implemented, and to decide which areas required ongoing attention;
- Consultation with key staff;
- Consultation with members of 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. Local Governments must call for submissions, either general or specific, by notice in a newsletter/paper circulating in the Local Government area and on any web site maintained by or on behalf of the Local Government.

The following consultation methods were used:

- In July 2019 the community was informed through the Kulin Update that the Shire of Kulin was required to review their DAIP to address barriers to access and inclusion for people with disability and their families. They are invited to provide input either in writing, by telephone or in person. Copies of the current DAIP were available from the Shire Office or via email
- Elected Members and relevant staff members of Shire of Kulin discussed issues raised through community consultation regarding access and inclusion in the community for people with disability.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that a number of objectives listed in the current Disability Access and Inclusion Plan had been achieved and that changes be made to address remaining access barriers and issues regarding inclusion as required by legislation.

Access Barriers

- Footpaths and access to buildings need upgrading in some areas of town
- Medical centre disability parking close to entrance
- Website to be upgraded to be easier to read and access
- Recognise Companion Cards at Shire facilities

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.

Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Shire 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 disability

- The community was informed through local media (Kulin Update) that copies of the plan are available. A printed copy of the plan can be supplied if requested, and copies in other formats supplied on request to meet client needs. The plan will also be available on the Shire of Kulin website or by email.
- As implementation plans are amended Shire staff and the community will be advised of the updated version using the above methods

Review and Evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act requires DAIPs to 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.

Monitoring and Review

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.

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
- 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 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 seven desired outcomes; and
- The strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP. All agents and contractors to Shire of Kulin are provided with a copy of the DAIP as part of contract negotiations. A copy of the DAIP is available on the Shire of Kulin website.

The Shire is also required to report on progress in the prescribed format to the Disability Services Commission by July 4 each year.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The following overarching strategies will guide the individual tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the Shire of Kulin will undertake from 2020 – 2025 to improve access to its services, buildings and information. The seven outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability.

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any event by, a public authority

Strategy
Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current Services
Ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operations of council facilities, functions and services are consistent with council’s policy on access
Review service delivery to people with disability in view of identified barriers and develop strategies to overcome these barriers
Ensure that Council events are accessible to people with disability and encourage access and inclusion for community/commercial events

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

Strategy
Ensure all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability (where practicable)
Ensure that all contracts with service providers take the special needs of people with disability into consideration. This may be in the form of a clause in relation to provision of access for people with disability when tendering for services, or through a process of negotiating the provision of services
Incorporate the priorities in regards to access for people with disability, identified during consultations, into its submission for capital works improvements program. Modifications to commence as fund are made available

Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it

Strategy
Provide all information on council facilities, functions and services using clear and concise language
Council to advise the community that, upon request and where possible, information about council functions, facilities and services can be made available in alternative formats, such as large print and audio cassette
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide the information in other formats

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

Strategy
Ensure staff are aware of the key access needs of residents with disability and people with disability who visit the local government area in relation to the provision of all services
Council will seek expert advice from the disability field, where required, on how to meet the access needs of people with disability

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

Strategy
Ensure that information about the Shire of Kulin's complaint procedures, and mechanisms for making complaints, are accessible for people with disability

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

Strategy
Ensure that information is available in clear and concise language on how residents can participate in decision making processes, public consultations and grievance mechanisms
Advise the community that information can be made available, where possible, in alternative formats on request
Support people with disability to attend meetings of council

Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Strategy
Shire of Kulin to foster a culture of inclusion in our workplace
Encourage volunteering within sectors of the Shire of Kulin (Kulin Resource Centre, Freebairn Recreation Centre, Camp Kulin, Shire of Kulin)

Progress between 2004 and 2019 under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

- 1. Existing functions, facilities and services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disability**
 - Community Library has large range of talking books and books with large print. Located at Kulin Post Office
 - Access to buildings (ramps, handrails) are upgraded where necessary
 - Funding and assistance to provide medical services such as Community Health Centre and HACC (Home and Community Care) to the Kulin Region and surrounding towns (Kondinin and Hyden)
 - Facilities and assistance at Kulin CRC to assist access information and services through Centrelink and Government Access Points

- 2. Access to buildings and facilities is improved**
 - Footpaths in town have been upgraded and kerb ramps installed. Planning for continued upgrades of shared paths
 - Disabled parking bays at Kulin Resource Centre and Freebairn Recreation Centre
 - Access to buildings (ramps, handrails) has been upgraded in existing buildings
 - Accessible public toilets, including disabled toilets/shower, with appropriate access ramps, tactile paving and handrails have been incorporated into the public amenities/gazebo area in main street
 - Access to visitor amenities incorporates ramps and kerbs
 - Seating has been installed around town at businesses and town hall
 - Kulin Medical centre upgrade - automatic doors, wider hallway and desk access have been improved
 - Collocation of Shire of Kulin and Kulin CRC – enclosed verandah, automatic doors, disabled toilets, accessible desk and computer/government access point
 - Kulin Swimming Pool – accessible ramps, walk in pool and disabled toilet/change rooms
 - Improved access to caravan park amenities. Camp kitchen and paths installed for visitors

- 3. Information about functions, facilities, and services is provided in formats which meet the communication requirements of people with disability**
 - Council information is produced in clear and concise language
 - Council Minutes, Financial Reports, Annual Report and Strategic Plan available on website

- 4. Staff awareness of the needs of people with disability and skills in delivering advice and services are improved**
 - Relevant staff are aware of the needs of people with disability for accessing Shire functions and buildings
 - Collocation of Shire and CRC services provides good access to resources and staff in one location

- 5. Opportunities for people with disability to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision making processes are provided**
 - All shire meetings and functions are held in accessible venues (including State and Federal elections)