



SHIRE OF HALLS CREEK
DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION
PLAN
2008 - 2012

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

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Acknowledgements

The Shire of Halls Creek acknowledges the input received from individuals and groups in the community, which has been invaluable in the preparation of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

1.0. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Shire of Halls Creek

Halls Creek is a busy service town for surrounding pastoralists, Aboriginal communities and travellers exploring northern Western Australia. Halls Creek is also the fourth fastest growing shire within Western Australia.

Situated in the heart of the Kimberly, Halls Creek is the gateway to a range of world renowned natural attractions, including the World Heritage listed Bungle Bungle ranges of Purnululu National Park.

Located on the edges of the Great Sandy Desert and Tanami Desert, 362km south of Kununurra, 1288km south-west of Darwin and 2873km north-east of Perth, Halls Creek offers a genuine insight into the spectacular Australian outback.

Covering some 142,908 square kilometres of predominantly desert and pastoral country, Halls Creek has something for everyone, from wide open spaces and magnificent natural attractions, to rich Aboriginal and European history and culture.

1.2. Functions, Facilities and Services

The Shire of Halls Creek is responsible for a wide range of functions, facilities and services typical to local government authorities of such size and revenue.

The Shire of Halls Creek provides:

Services to property including: construction and maintenance of roads, footpaths; land drainage and development; waste collection and disposal; litter control and street cleaning; planting and caring for trees; street lighting; and bush fire control.

Services to the community including: provision and maintenance of playing areas and reserves; management of recreation centres; library and information services; environmental health services; building planning services; building services; health education.

Regulatory services including: planning; building and health services.

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

1.3. People with disabilities in the Shire of Halls Creek

The residential population of the Shire of Halls Creek is around 3,791. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6% of Australians or more than 1 in 5 people identify themselves as having some form of disability. Based on the population estimate and these findings, it could be estimated that there are around 438 people with disabilities in the Shire; however, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) the rate of disability in indigenous Australians is much higher than in the rest of the population. The lower average age of the population may balance this somewhat.

1.4 Planning for better access

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

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the WA Equal Opportunity Act and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). While Action Plans are not compulsory under the DDA, they can assist organisations become more accessible and inclusive, and can provide some clarity during disability discrimination proceedings. A DAIP may also satisfy the DDA's requirements for Action Plans and therefore lodgement of the DAIP with the Commonwealth's Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission reduces the Shire's exposure to disability discrimination risk.

1.5 Progress

The Shire adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in December 1995 to address the barriers within the community for people with disabilities and to address its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993). An updated DSP was developed in 2004 following consultation with the community.

The Shire has reported on its progress towards meeting the outcomes of its DSP in its Annual Report, in accordance with the revised requirements.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Shire has implemented a number of initiatives to improve access.

The following is a sample of the Shire's progress and achievements.

- The Shire's Disability Service Planning Group, comprising Council officers from Health, Building and Engineering departments, was established to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of its Disability Services Plan.
- The Shire's library has been responsive to the needs of people with disabilities through the development of large print and talking book collections.
- Kerb ramps have been provided to assist wheelchair access around town.
- The Shire has a program of ongoing footpath construction and improvement.
- Access improvements have been made to the Council Offices, with accessible parking bays and a ramp to the front entry.
- The Shire's Recreation Centre has been built to a high level of accessibility, including beach entry to a pool and the availability of a hoist for access to the main pool.
- Access to the Telecentre and most parts of the library is good.
- Building licenses include information and a disclaimer regarding accessibility requirements.
- Council Minutes and Agendas and policy documents are available in a choice of formats on the website.
- Public information can be provided in alternative formats on request.

2.0. ACCESS AND INCLUSION STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

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

The Shire of Halls Creek believes that people with disabilities, their families and carers should be supported to remain in and enjoy living in the community of their choice.

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

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

The Shire of Halls Creek is committed to consulting with property developers to ensure that barriers to access are addressed appropriately in all public and other buildings.

The Shire of Halls Creek is committed to achieving the six outcomes of its DAIP:

- 1 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Halls Creek.
- 2 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities of the Shire of Halls Creek.
- 3 People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Halls Creek 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 Shire of Halls Creek as other people receive.
- 5 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Halls Creek.
- 6 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Halls Creek.

3.0. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIP

3.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS

Responsibility for developing, monitoring, implementing, reviewing and amending the DAIP rests with the Disability Service Planning Group which is made up of relevant key staff and representation from the community. This includes responsibility for ensuring that the plan is rolled out throughout the organisation and that actions are integrated into the plans of relevant areas of Council.

3.2 Community Consultation Process

In 2008, the Shire undertook to review its DSP, consult with stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion and meet the requirements of the amended WA Disability Services Act.

The Shire contracted an independent disability consultancy firm, E-QUAL, to review existing documentation, conduct the consultation and draft a DAIP for the Shire.

The review and consultation process included:

- examination of the Shire's current DSP in the light of the new legislative requirements;
- examination of other council documents, strategies and website;
- an information access audit of the Shire Directory;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- consultation with Shire staff;
- consultation with the community; and
- preparation of a report on the review and consultation.

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

- In March 2008 the community was informed through the local newspaper that the Shire was developing a disability access and inclusion plan to address the barriers that people with disabilities, their families and carers experience in accessing council functions, facilities and services.
- The consultant promoted the DAIP review and consultation on Puranyangu-Rangka Kerrem (PRK) Radio.
- The Disability Services Commission's Local Area Coordinator (LAC) contacted some local individuals and families to let them know the DAIP was being developed and that they could have input in a variety of ways.

The various consultation methods included:

- A community survey form. This was available in hard copy and was available at the Shire offices. Staff at the high school also requested an emailed copy.
- The option for community members to phone (using a Freecall number), fax or email the consultants direct.
- Individual interviews with community members, including staff of local health services.
- A briefing to and consultation with elected members of Council
- Individual interviews with key Shire staff;
- A survey of Council staff. The survey sought staff input on access issues and also included questions relating to their awareness of disability and access and their training needs in this area.

- Liaison with the LAC for Halls Creek, based in Fitzroy crossing, who provided valuable input.
- A meeting with the LAC Regional Manager in Broome.

3.3. Findings of the consultation

The consultation provided a variety of views on access and inclusion in the Shire of Halls Creek.

The Shire of Halls Creek's previous plans have provided a useful guide for staff and there has been steady progress in working to improve access for people with disabilities. However, the existing DSP did not fully comply with the requirements of the amended Disability Services Act. A new plan is needed in order to meet the new requirements and 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 minimum compliance with access standards. It must also keep abreast of ongoing legislative and regulatory changes.

While the review and consultation noted a number of achievements in improving access it also identified some remaining barriers to access and inclusion, to be addressed in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

Community and staff feedback was reported to the Shire Council in the Report on the DAIP Review and Consultation. The Council provided feedback and clarification on the issues listed in the report. The community, staff and Council input has combined to inform the development of strategies in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

3.4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DAIP

IT IS A REQUIREMENT OF THE DISABILITY SERVICES ACT THAT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES MUST TAKE ALL PRACTICAL MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT THE DAIP IS IMPLEMENTED BY ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of council. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of council while others will apply to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action.

3.5 COMMUNICATING THE PLAN TO STAFF AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- The plan was endorsed by Council on 18 September 2008 and lodged with the Disability Services Commission on 19 September 2008.
- The Shire of Halls Creek then made copies of the disability access and inclusion plan available to all those who contributed to the planning process including council officers, Shire Councillors, individual community members and relevant community groups.
- The Shire of Halls Creek has advised, through the local media – newspaper and radio, and on its website that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the council website.

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

3.6 REVIEW AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Shire's DAIP will be reviewed at least every 5 years, in accordance with the Act. The DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and monitoring

- The Disability Service Planning Group will meet regularly to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the disability access and inclusion plan.
- A report will be prepared each year on the implementation of the disability access and inclusion plan. A status report will be provided to Council.
- The Shire of Halls Creek will annually endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process.
- Once a year prior to 31 July the Shire of Halls Creek will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of strategies. This will inform the further implementation of the plan.
- A notice about the consultation process will be placed in the local newspaper, posted on the Shire's website, announced on the local radio and circulated to local disability, health and aged care service providers.
- In seeking feedback the Shire of Halls Creek will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- The Shire of Halls Creek will offer a range of ways for people to provide feedback such as phone, face to face meetings, email and written feedback.
- Elected members of Council and Shire employees will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- The Implementation Plan will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended Implementation Plan will be available to the community in alternative formats once endorsed by council.
- The amended Implementation Plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.
- The review of the Shire's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2013-2017 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2013. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2008-2012.

4.0. Reporting on the DAIP

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

The Shire of Halls Creek will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its annual report and on the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

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

Shire of Halls Creek

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2008 – 2012

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan itemises what the Shire of Halls Creek will be undertaking in 2008 -2012 to improve access to its services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Implementation Plan is presented using a table to outline the:

- DAIP Outcome area being addressed;
- individual tasks being undertaken;
- the officer position or part of the Shire with responsibility for completing the individual tasks;
- timeline for completion of the individual tasks; and
- any other relevant details or comments.

Task	DAIP 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 Halls Creek	Who	When	Comments
1.1	Disability Service Planning Group to meet regularly as required to monitor, guide and report to Council on the implementation of DAIP activities.	CEO	2008 & ongoing	Consider name change to DAIP Planning Group. Include community representation on the DAIP Team. See Task 6.1
1.2	Ensure that all of the Shire's policies, plans, strategies and management practices are consistent with the DAIP and support equitable access to services by people with disabilities throughout the various functions of Council.	All Managers	2008 & ongoing	Periodic review of existing documents. Integral to new documents.
1.3	Ensure all Shire events are planned using the Accessible Events Checklist (In State Government Access Guidelines).	All Managers	2008 & ongoing	Include awareness of Access to Events in Disability Awareness training.
1.4	Design all briefs and selection processes for contractors to ensure they meet legislative requirements.	All Managers	2008 & ongoing	Use the "Agents & Contractors" booklets provided by DSC as a guide.
1.5	Review street signage to ensure there are signs at all intersections and signage is easily readable and compliant with Australian Standard AS1742.5 – 1997 <i>Street name and community facility name signs</i> .	E/Mgr Technical Services	2009	
1.6	Investigate road safety issues, including heavy traffic through town and need for a safe crossing point between shops and recreation centre, and advocate to Main Roads WA if appropriate.	E/Mgr Technical Services	Ongoing	
1.7	Investigate external funding sources which will foster access and inclusion across all areas of Council.	All Managers	2008 & ongoing	
1.8	Continue to ensure an adequate supply of large print and talking books in the library to meet local demand.	Library staff	Ongoing	
1.9	Continue to provide a priority bin service for people with mobility difficulties. Promote via local health, seniors, disability service providers.	Environmental Health Officer	Ongoing	

Task	DAIP OUTCOME: 2 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities of the Shire of Halls Creek.	Who	When	Comments
2.1	Undertake an access audit to determine the current status of physical access to all Shire buildings and facilities. To include safety issues and signage.	Property Management Officer & Environmental Health Officer	2009	Use checklists in DSC Access Resource Kit or engage disability & access consultant
2.2	Schedule and implement remedial works to meet the recommendations of the access audit.	Property Management Officer	2009 & ongoing	
2.3	Seek the advice of a Disability Access Consultant when planning new Council buildings or major refurbishments.	Property Management Officer & Environmental Health Officer	2008 & ongoing	Consultants to be engaged as required.
2.4	Develop all briefs, tenders and contracts to ensure the Shire's agents and contractors provide services that are consistent with the Shire's DAIP and access and inclusion principles.	All relevant Managers	2008 & ongoing	Follow the guidelines provided by DSC in the agents and Contractors booklets, including use of the "Special Condition" phrase in contracts.
2.5	Ensure that all road and path works, including programmed maintenance and modification work, ensures a continuous accessible path of travel in accordance with Australian Standard on Access AS1428.1.	E/Mgr Technical Services	Ongoing	
2.6	Respond as a matter of priority when a person with disability reports difficulties regarding footpaths.	E/Mgr Technical Services	Ongoing	
2.7	Seek external funding to enable construction of footpaths with lighting in and from the communities outside town so that people have safe and accessible paths of travel.	E/Mgr Technical Services	2008 & ongoing	
2.8	Conduct an access audit of the Shire's parks and reserves and develop a program of ongoing access improvement.	E/Mgr Technical Services	2009-10	Use checklists in DSC Access Resource Kit or engage disability & access consultant

2.9	Apply a non-slip treatment to slippery floor surfaces at the swimming pool.	Property Management Officer		
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Task	DAIP OUTCOME: 3 People with disabilities receive information from the Shire of Halls Creek in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it	Who	When	Comments
3.1	Continue to ensure that all public information is made in clear and concise language and is available in alternative formats on request.	All staff	Ongoing	Use State Government Access Guidelines as a resource.
3.2	Promote to the community the availability of information in alternative formats.	Records Manage	Ongoing	Notation on printed information, promote on website and in local media.
3.3	Develop all brochures, forms and other public information in accordance with the State Government's Accessible Information Guidelines.	Records Manage	Ongoing	To be incorporated with Disability Awareness training.
3.4	Ensure that local radio is included on the distribution list for media releases and other public information such as brochures.	CEO	Ongoing	
3.5	Ensure that documents on the Shire's website are available in accessible formats.	Records Manager	2008 & ongoing	
3.6	Provide information about the accessibility of facilities and services in the Shire Directory, and on the website. Promote this.	Records Manager	2009 & ongoing	
3.7	When the Shire Directory is to be reprinted, incorporate the recommendations from the review of the directory conducted in April 2008.	Records Manager	At next reprint	

Task	DAIP OUTCOME: 4 People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Halls Creek as other people receive.	Who	When	Comments
4.1	Investigate and implement Disability Awareness training for staff across all areas. Methods need to be realistic, practical and locally achievable due to remoteness from training providers and transience of staff.	CEO	2009 & ongoing	Use DSC training package "You can make a difference", or seek funding to have a tailored package developed. DSC LACs may be able to organise some awareness activities.
4.2	Include disability access awareness information in the Shire's induction material provided to new staff and new elected members.	CEO	2008 & ongoing	Source DAIP info from DSC website.

Task	DAIP OUTCOME: 5 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Halls Creek	Who	When	Comments
5.1	Review the Shire's complaints policy & procedures to ensure they meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities.	Records Manager	2009	Need to provide different options to lodge complaints.
5.2	Ensure that information about complaints procedures is in clear and concise language and is available in a range of different formats on request.	Records Manager	2009 & ongoing	
5.3	Ensure staff are aware of the accessible complaints mechanisms and know how to support people to use them.	Records Manager	2009 & ongoing	To be incorporated with Disability Awareness training
5.4	Have a link on the front page of the website to an accessible online comments/complaints form.	Records Manager	2009	

Task	DAIP OUTCOME: 6 People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Halls Creek.	Who	When	Comments
6.1	Develop an advisory group or register of local people to advise Council on strategic issues regarding access and inclusion and monitor and guide DAIP activities.	E/Mgr Community Services	2009 & ongoing	Ensure this group also has representation on Disability Service Planning Group – see Task 1.1
6.2	Ensure information about consultations is in clear and concise language.	All Managers	Ongoing	
6.3	Ensure consultation documents are available on the website in an accessible format and in alternative formats on request.	Records Manager	2008 & ongoing	Offer choice of document formats – not just PDF
6.4	Provide the opportunity for people to have a say on community issues, including disability access, via the website.	Records Manager	2008 & ongoing	Use State Government Access Guidelines as a resource.
6.5	Ensure meetings and forums held as part of all community consultations (not just with a disability focus) comply with accessible events guidelines.	All Managers	2007 & ongoing	Use accessible events checklist as an aid.
6.6	Ensure Shire media releases go to local radio, the DSC Local Area Coordinator as well as the local newspaper.	CEO	2008 & ongoing	To be incorporated into Media Strategies
6.7	Continue to make Council minutes and agendas available in alternative formats on request and promote this availability to the community via the website, in the local newspaper and radio.	Records manager	Ongoing	
6.8	Ensure all aspects of Council meetings are accessible.	E/Mgr Corporate Services	2008	Use accessible events checklist as an aid.

