



Shire of Hall's Creek

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2022 - 2027

Adopted June 2022

Available in alternative formats, such as Large Print, Braille, accessible electronic format or audio, on request.

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Introduction

All public authorities in Western Australia are required under the Disability Services Act to develop, implement, review and report on a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan sets out the Shire's commitment to creating a community that welcomes and includes people of all abilities. It outlines the ways in which the Shire will work towards addressing barriers to and enhancing access and inclusion for people with disability, and other diversity groups over the next five years.

Thank you

The Shire thanks the individuals and groups within the community and its staff who took part in the DAIP review and consultation process and provided their invaluable input to guide the development of the new DAIP.

Shire of Hall's Creek profile

Halls Creek is a busy service town for surrounding pastoralists, Aboriginal communities and travelers exploring northern 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 unique Australian outback.

Covering 142,908 square kilometers 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.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducts a survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers every five years. Data from the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers estimated that 4.3 million Australians, or 18.3% of the population, had a disability. Add to that the estimated 2.7 million Australians who are carers (12% in 2012), and disability therefore impacts on approximately one third of the population.

Northern WA generally has a lower population of older people than other parts of the State, and this is particularly so in Hall's Creek, where the

median/average age of the population is 27 years, 10 years below the Australian average. However, it is important to understand there is a greatly increased likelihood of people having a disability as they age. This is especially so for members of the Aboriginal population, who are estimated to have around double the rate of disability, and acquire disability at a younger age than others in the community.

Our services

The Shire of Hall's Creek is responsible for a wide range of functions, facilities and services, typical to local government authorities of such size and revenue. These include:

Services to Property

- Construction and maintenance of roads and 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

- Provision and maintenance of playing areas and reserves;
- Management of recreation and aquatic centres;
- Library and information services;
- Environmental health services;
- Building and planning services; and
- Health education.

Regulatory Services

- Planning;
- Building; and
- Environmental Health Services.

General Administration

- The provision of general information to the public;
- Lodging of complaints; and
- Payment of rates.

Processes of Government

- Ordinary and Special Council and Committee meetings; and
- Electors' meetings and Election of Council members.

Developing the DAIP

The Shire carried out a review of the existing plan, included additional information for the new and draft a new DAIP for 2022 – 2027.

Review

The Shire's DAIP and Implementation Plan for 2017- 2021, as well as Shire Annual Reports and an annual DAIP status report were reviewed to identify what progress had been made as well as any incomplete actions remaining. The Shire of Hall's Creek Community Strategy 10-year plan, 2015 - 2025 was also examined to identify any potential links with the DAIP.

The review identified that the Shire has implemented some key initiatives to help ensure access and inclusion for people with a disability and other groups. These include strategies to improve both accessibility and safety, such as:

- Accessible events checklist made available to staff
- Advocacy through attendance of local interagency meetings
- Installation of automatic doors at the Shire Administration Centre to allow for wheelchair access.
- Improved access to the Shire library including access to bookshelves for wheelchair access.
- Large print and talking books made available through the Shire's library which are regularly updated.
- Ensuring Shire owned buildings leased to government agencies are accessible.
- Additional 1.2 kilometers of footpaths including pram ramps.
- Conversion of all Shire Street lights to LED lighting to improve visibility of pathways and roads.
- Induction program for staff and Councillors includes disability access and inclusion.
- Mental Health training provided to relevant staff.
- Revision of Complaints process and policy to be more accessible to customers.
- Council meetings held twice a year in remote communities to allow for more community members, including those with disability, to attend.
- Agreement with agents and contractors to communicate any identified access issues with the Shire.
- Accessible location, promotion and information considered for consultations.
- The strategic community plan highlights the importance of the four key areas for the Shire being social, economic, environment and civic leadership, which many strategies supporting the seven outcomes of the DAIP.

Some key findings from the review that highlight the need for future work are:

- Access to staff training and information.
- The need to keep informed and responsive to changes as the NDIS rolls out across the Kimberley and impacts on communities.
- The need for additional automatic door access to other Shire including the Post Office, Recreation Centre and Olabud Doogethu office.

Consultation

The consultation was advertised:

- On the Shire's website;
- On the Shire's Facebook page;
- Directly to local services and stakeholders by e-mail, post and phone.

People were offered a range of ways to take part in the consultations including individual interviews in person and by phone, group meetings and online, electronic or hard copy surveys.

The consultation invited people to provide their views on access improvements to date and to raise any concerns they may have regarding specific buildings, facilities, services and information that need improvement.

People noted that the main achievements in recent years are the improvements to access with new buildings and refurbishments in the town of Hall's Creek.

Community and staff members also raised some concerns, about both council and non-council services. These included:

- Physical access issues at specific locations;
- Information needs to be written in a way that the reader can understand, including those with English as their second language;
- The need for training for staff and community groups;
- The need for more accessible seating around the town;
- The need for more employment and other activities.

Overall, the review and consultation showed that the Shire of Hall's Creek has made some progress in improving access for people with disability to its facilities and services; however there are still barriers to full access and inclusion that can be addressed with the new DAIP and ongoing strategies.

The findings of the review and consultation were provided to the Shire in a comprehensive report containing recommendations for the new DAIP. Following feedback and clarification, this DAIP and an accompanying Implementation Plan were developed.

This DAIP was endorsed by the Shire of Hall's Creek Council in June 2022 and submitted to the Department of Communities.

DAIP 2022 – 2027

This five-year plan focuses on the following strategies.

Outcome 1

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Shire of Hall's Creek.

The Shire to:

1. Continue to ensure the DAIP is linked with the Shire's Community Strategy strategic plan and any other Shire strategies to embed inclusive practice across the organisation.
2. Develop and maintain strategic partnerships with key agencies (such as disability service providers, mental health, frail aged), to maximise access to services for people with disability, including supporting local interagency meetings
3. Maintain a directory of local services and organisations to ensure current information and contact details are readily available.
4. Keep informed and involved with current public health research, initiatives and services; the Kimberley roll out of the NDIS and other State and Federal government initiatives impacting on the Shire and community of Halls Creek.
5. Ensure the Accessible Events checklist is available on the shire website, along with grant information, for all Shire and community events.
6. Maintain equipment available to enhance the hearing augmentation at events.

Outcome 2

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities of the Shire of Hall's Creek.

The Shire to:

1. Prioritise replacement of the heavy doors at the Visitor Centre and Post Office.
2. Ensure access and inclusion is integral to all projects from the planning stage and throughout implementation, including use of an Accessible building checklist is used when planning and designing any public facilities or undertaking major refurbishments.

3. Where access barriers fall outside the responsibility of the Shire, advocate to relevant authorities and other organisations to improve accessibility for residents with disability.
4. Review facilities at rest stops and camp grounds within the Shire boundaries.
5. Continue to audit Shire buildings and facilities against access requirements and develop a works schedule considering continuous path of travel philosophy.

Outcome 3

People with disability receive information from the Shire of Hall's Creek in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it

The Shire to:

1. Inform the community that documents are available in alternative formats on request via the Shire Website and in the library and front office.
2. Ensure that staff are aware of how to provide information in alternative formats on request.
3. Develop strategies to ensure communication needs of the different language groups and diverse groups in the Shire are met.
4. Continue to use a variety of methods to disseminate information to the community, website, social media and notice boards.
5. Review the website to ensure compliance to the W3C Accessibility Guidelines, and develop a schedule of ongoing audits to ensure continual compliance.
6. Library services continue to facilitate access to alternative format resources such as Large Print and Audio collections through access to the WA state library collection.

Outcome 4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of Hall's Creek

The Shire to:

1. Continue to conduct training on access and inclusion for staff across all areas, including provision of induction training on DAIP requirements to new staff and elected members.
2. Make a range of relevant and up to date access resources (such as links to the *Access Guidelines*, *Access Resource Kit*, *Employment Toolkit*) and other useful disability information available to staff.
3. Increase the knowledge of relevant staff in relation to current public health issues with the support of 6 Community Health Plans as well as a whole of Shire Public Health Plan required under the Act.

Outcome 5

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Hall's Creek.

The Shire to:

1. Ensure that all staff are able to promote and implement the Shire complaints process.
2. Ensure that there are multiple avenues for people to make complaints and provide feedback to the Shire.
3. Promote customer service charter through Council
4. Review and report on all complaints relevant to access and inclusion in the Shire.

Outcome 6

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any consultation by the Shire of Hall's Creek.

The Shire to:

1. Implement ways of gathering regular input from the community regarding disability access and inclusion matters.
2. Ensure that Council meetings and information are accessible.
3. Ensure that meetings and forums held as part of community consultations are planned and implemented according to accessible events guidelines.

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to gain and maintain employment at the Shire of Hall's Creek.

The Shire to:

1. Continue to develop an inclusive culture that supports and encourages employees with disability.
2. Carry out an access audit of workplaces.
3. Ensure any new council buildings or refurbishments meet the Access to Premises – Buildings Standard, and other relevant standards
4. Use the LG Professionals Lighthouse project resources to guide recruitment and employment of people with disability.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

The DAIP Implementation Plan will contain specific responsibilities; however all officers, employees, agents and contractors under Shire supervision have a legislated responsibility to carry out their work in accordance with the DAIP. As such, all officers, employees, agents and contractors under Shire supervision will be informed of the Shire's DAIP and their responsibilities as part of their induction process.

The Shire will seek feedback from the community to inform DAIP implementation and report on progress in the Shire's Annual Report

The Shire's Management Group will oversee DAIP implementation.

Reviewing the DAIP

The DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, as required by The Act. The Implementation Plan may be amended more regularly to reflect progress and any new issues that may arise. If the DAIP is amended, the revised plan will be sent to the Department of Communities.

The Shire will consult with the community to gather feedback on DAIP progress.

There will be a standing item on DAIP implementation at Management Group meetings when needed to inform progress reporting requirements with each management area providing information on progress.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Management Group will prepare an annual status report in the Annual Report, in the prescribed format, for Council on DAIP Implementation. The report will outline:

- The Shire's progress towards each of the outcome areas in the DAIP;
- The ways in which the Shire informed its agents and contractors about their obligations under the DAIP; and
- The progress of the Shire's agents and contractors towards meeting relevant DAIP outcome areas where applicable.

The status report will be lodged with the Department of Communities by June 30 each year.

The Shire's Annual Report will contain a summary of DAIP implementation over the year, including specific examples.

The review of this DAIP 2022 - 2027 will be included in the new DAIP to be developed and lodged with the Department of Communities.

Telling our community about the DAIP

The DAIP was endorsed by Council in June 2022 and lodged with the Department of Communities.

The Shire of Hall's Creek made copies of the DAIP available to individuals who took part in the consultation and indicated they would like ongoing involvement.

The Shire has promoted the DAIP in the local media and on its website, so that people know they can either download a copy or request a hard copy or a copy in their preferred format, which may include Large Print, Braille, audio or accessible electronic format.

DAIP contact information

If you would like to receive an alternative format copy, ask questions or give feedback about the DAIP, please contact:

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