

SHIRE OF KOJONUP DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2014-2019



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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Shire of Kojonup

Nestling in the rural heartland of the Great Southern region, historic Kojonup is more than just a gateway to the beautiful South. Settled over 150 years ago this bustling rural town still bears all the trademarks of a traditional country settlement with its historic buildings and friendly, safe atmosphere.

At the heart of Kojonup is the fresh water spring which first attracted European settlers to the town in 1837. Overlooking the Spring is the old Military Barracks, constructed in 1845 and one of the oldest surviving military buildings in Western Australia.

Today, Kojonup is a thriving country town, proud of its heritage but looking to the future.

Located on Highway 95, running directly from Perth to the historic port of Albany, Kojonup is just 255km and a three hour drive from the state capital, and a short 160km from Albany.

It is the administrative and commercial centre of a prosperous pastoral district, offering a wealth of business and lifestyle opportunities to those who set store by traditional Australian values.

1.2 Functions, Facilities and Services

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

These include the provision of roads, footpaths and waste collection. Facilities include a library, recreation centre/sporting complex, swimming pool, recycling and waste disposal site. Health services include a Frail Aged Lodge and Child Health Centre.

1.3 People with disability in the Shire of Kojonup

The residential population of the Shire of Kojonup is around 1982. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2009), 18.5% of Australians (or just under 1 in 5 people) identify themselves as having some form of disability. Disability is defined as any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months. Examples range from loss of sight that is not corrected by glasses, to arthritis which causes difficulty dressing, to advanced dementia that requires constant help and. (Based on synthesised data from Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings ABS 2009)

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 disability 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 DSP in December 1995 to address the barriers within the community for people with disability and to address its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993).

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 under the relevant DSP outcome headings in improving access for people with disability.

Outcome 1: Improved access to services

- The Shire's library services have been responsive to the needs of people with disability through the development of collections in alternative formats and regular home deliveries for people who cannot come to the library
- Installation of seating at regular points around town
- Kerb ramps have been provided to assist wheelchair access around town
- The Shire has a program of ongoing footpath construction and improvement
- The provision of an ACROD parking bay in the Shire Administration Office public car park, providing level access to the Shire Offices, Library, Council Reception Lounge and Chambers.

Outcome 2: Improved access to buildings and facilities

- Access to the Community Resource Centre was improved and the adjacent footpath upgraded to provide seamless access
- A ramp and deck has been constructed at the new recreation centre, funded through a submission to the State Government's Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)
- Access to the swimming pool has been improved through the installation of ramps and a hoist – work has begun on the unisex disabled toilet/mothers room/change room for patrons at the pool
- Access was improved to the Muradup War Memorial, with footpaths, shelter and seating installed

Outcome 3: Improved access to information

- The Shire's Disability Access & Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is available in the library and at the Administration Offices
- The Shire's website is updated regularly. Jobs, tenders, public notices, hire forms and Council documents are posted online
- Social media (Facebook) is used to promote the Shire's activities and the role of the Shire
- All public information is able to be provided in alternative formats on request
- Consideration is being given to rearranging office space within Council Administration centre with care given to the reception counter for access with people in wheelchairs

Outcome 4: Improved staff awareness and skills in assisting people with disability

- Additional customised training for all staff to improve awareness of individual needs of customers, including people with disability

Outcome 5: Improved access for people with disability to complaints mechanisms and consultation processes

- People can obtain Council minutes in a range of formats on request
- Staff will assist people if they need help to make complaints, such as filling in the complaints forms available at the Shire office

2.0 SHIRE OF KOJONUP DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

The Shire's commitment to people with disability is encompassed within the vision for the whole community:

"A safe community to live, work, play and prosper"

3.0 ACCESS AND INCLUSION STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

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

The Shire of Kojonup 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 enjoyed by all other people in the community.

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

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

The Shire of Kojonup is committed to working in partnership with local community groups and businesses to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability through improved access to facilities and services in the community. We are committed to increasing the opportunities for people with disability to be welcomed and included in the workforce.

The Shire of Kojonup is committed to achieving the desired outcomes of its DAIP.

4.0 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIP

4.1 Responsibility for the planning process

Responsibility for developing, monitoring, implementing, reviewing and amending the DAIP rests with a DAIP Team 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.

4.2 Community Consultation Process

In 2013, the Shire undertook to review its Disability Access and inclusion Plan and consult with key stakeholders to draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion and meet the requirements of the amended WA Disability Services Act.

The consultation process included:

- Examination of the Shire's current DAIP the light of the new legislative requirements;
- Examination of other council documents and strategies;
- Investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion; and
- Consultation with the community

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 be used.

In July 2014 the community was informed through the local newspaper, the Kojonup News and on the Shire's website, that the Shire was developing a disability access and inclusion plan to address the barriers that people with disability, their families and carers experience in accessing council functions, facilities and services and that they could provide input into the development of the plan.

4.3 Findings of the consultation

The consultation provided a variety of views on access and inclusion in the Shire of Kojonup

The Shire of Kojonup's previous plans have provided a useful guide for staff and there has been steady progress in working to improve access for people with disability.

Access Barriers

While the review and consultation noted a number of achievements in improving access it also identified some remaining barriers that required redress. These access barriers include that:

- The topography of Kojonup, being very hilly and with the main street having a steep slope, in itself constitutes an access problem and is a particular challenge for the Shire
- More attention needs to be given to the design of kerbs and kerb ramps to ensure they provide safe access for people in wheel chairs, people with vision impairment and seniors
- The need to continue to build and upgrade footpaths which provide good access

The identification of these barriers helped to inform the development of strategies in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

4.4 Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that public authorities must take all practical measure 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.

4.5 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability

- The plan was lodged with the Disability Services Commission by...and endorsed by Council in ...
- The Shire of Kojonup has advised, through the local newspaper and on its website and Facebook that copies of the draft plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required such as electronic format, hard copy format in both large print and standard print, audio format, by email and on the website
- As plans are amended both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updates plans

4.6 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

- A DAIP team of key staff and community representation will be formed, and will meet every 6 months 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 Kojonup will annually endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process
- Once a year prior to 31 July the Shire of Kojonup 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 Kojonup will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation
- The Shire of Kojonup will offer a range of ways for people to provide feedback such as phone, face to face meetings, emails 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 2019-2023 which will be submitted to the Disability services Commission in 2019. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's DAIP 2014-2019

5.0 REPORTING ON THE DAIP

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

The Shire of Kojonup 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 seven desired outcomes; and
- The strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP

Shire of Kojonup

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2014 – 2019



Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan itemises what the Shire of Kojonup will be undertaking in 2014-2019 to improve 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
- Timeline for completion of the individual tasks; and
- Any other relevant details or comments

DAIP 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 Kojonup

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Establish a DAIP team which will meet regularly as required to monitor, guide and report to Council on the implementation of DAIP activities	Ongoing	Include community representation on the DAIP team
Develop links between the DAIP and other Council plans and strategies, including business plans and implement the DAIP consistently across the organisation.	Ongoing	
Ensure other plans and strategies consider access and inclusion as an integral part of their development and include reference to the DAIP		
Ensure that all E-business initiatives such as online payments are accessible	Ongoing	Work in progress
Continue to implement the Shire's footpath program by investigating and implementing good practice in kerb ramp design and construction. Responds as a matter of priority when a person with a disability reports difficulties regarding lack of or condition of footpath	Ongoing	Prioritise carrying out remedial work to existing footpaths that do not provide safe and easy access for people with disabilities
Review street signage to ensure it is easily readable	Ongoing	To be included in Main Street Master Plan discussions
Investigate road safety issues and advocate to Main Roads WA if appropriate	Ongoing	Discussion with Main Roads and Council re heavy vehicle bypass
Review the Shire's sport and recreation services, facilities and programs regarding access and inclusion for peoples with disabilities	Ongoing	Upgraded sporting complex to provide improved access and inclusion. Master Plan of Sporting Complex Precinct currently in progress

DAIP OUTCOME #2

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities of the Shire of Kojonup

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Undertake an access audit to determine the current status of physical access to all Shire buildings and facilities – to include safety issues and signage and schedule and implement remedial works to meet the recommendations of the access audit of buildings and facilities	Ongoing	Use checklists in DSC Access Resource Kit or engage disability and access consultant
Assess the Shire Office's entry and reception area, including the front counter and library to ensure better access, ie possibility of automatic opening doors	Ongoing	Use checklists in DSC Access Resource Kit or engage disability and access consultant
Work to improve signage and enhance way-finding throughout buildings, facilities and outdoor environments	Ongoing	Incorporate in sign replacement program
Ensure that the advice of a Disability Access Consultant is sought when planning and designing any new Council buildings or undertaking major refurbishments	Ongoing	Consultants to be engaged in discussions for the Main Street Upgrade Master Plan and Sporting Complex Precinct Master Plan
Ensure that key regulatory staff continue to maintain an awareness of the developments regarding a Premises Standard under the DDA	Ongoing	Subscribe to email updates from the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
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	Ongoing	Follow the guidelines provided by DSC

Continue to ensure that all new roads including programmed maintenance and modification work, is carried out in accordance with Access Standards	Ongoing	
Include the requirements for all new developments to comply with Australian Standards on Parking for People with Disabilities as a footnote on Planning Approvals	Ongoing	Currently a requirement for buildings under BCA. Insert info at planning approval stage to provide early notice
Incorporate disability access into Parks Department policies and management plans, and ensure access is an essential feature of all improvements to parks and reserves	Ongoing	Links to points in access barriers Kodja Place

DAIP OUTCOME #3

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

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Continue to ensure that all public information is made in clear and concise language and is available in alternative formats on request and promote to the community	Ongoing	Use State Government Access Guidelines as a resource Notation on printed information, promote on website and in local media
Develop an Accessible Information Policy	Ongoing	PPGO
Provide Auslan interpreters as required (if available)		
Provide information about the accessibility of facilities and services in hard copy, and on the website. Promote this	Ongoing	e.g. picnic spots, playgrounds, halls, Council and non-council facilities/services

DAIP OUTCOME #4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Kojonup as other people receive from the city areas

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Include disability access awareness information in the Shire's Induction material provided to new staff and new elected members	Ongoing	New Induction Manual - WIP
Conduct Disability Awareness training for staff across all areas	Ongoing	Look at training senior management to conduct for all staff
Provide the opportunity for staff to identify further training needs specific to their roles	Ongoing	
Ensure swimming pool staff are trained in the correct use of the access hoist	Ongoing	All current staff are competent in use of existing gear
Develop a staff skills register e.g. staff who understand sign language and use existing skills and competencies to enhance customer service to people with disabilities	Ongoing	

DAIP OUTCOME #5

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Kojonup

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Review the Shire's complaints policy and procedures to ensure they meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities ensuring that information about complaints	Ongoing	

procedures is in clear and concise language and is available in a range of different formats on request.		
Ensure staff are aware of the accessible complaints mechanisms and know how to support people to use them	Ongoing	To be incorporated with Disability Awareness Training

DAIP OUTCOME #6

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Kojonup

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Maintain an Advisory Group of local people to advise Council on strategic issues regarding access and inclusion and monitor and guide DAIP activities. Aim to have Aboriginal and youth representation	Ongoing	Ensure this group also has representation on DAIP Team
Consult with Disability organisations and networks as required	Ongoing	Strategic Plan (automatically included)
Provide the opportunity for people to have a say on community issues, including disability access, via the website and by using the external letter box at the Shire offices	Ongoing	Use State Government Access Guidelines as a resource
Ensure meetings and forums held as part of all community consultations (not just with a disability focus) comply with accessible events guidelines	Ongoing	

DAIP OUTCOME #7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment within the Shire of Kojonup

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	COMMENTS
Ensure that staff workplaces in all new Council buildings are wheelchair accessible	Ongoing	Use checklists in DSC Access Resource Kit to check accessibility of existing workplaces (Statutory requirement under building code BCA)
Work with local schools to provide work experience opportunities for local students with disabilities	Ongoing	
Work with local aboriginal groups to develop employment opportunities for aboriginal people with disabilities	Ongoing	
Assist in awareness of training/education available at TAFE	Ongoing	
Promote job vacancies via supported employment agencies	Ongoing	All Shire vacancies are posted on website
Review recruitment processes to ensure equal opportunity for people with disabilities	Ongoing	Supported employment agencies may be able to assist
Be mindful of the access implications of an ageing workforce and consider people with disabilities and older employees in the job designing process	Ongoing	