



SHIRE OF UPPER GASCOYNE
Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

2024-2029

Introduction

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne has adopted the following Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to ensure people with disabilities can access council facilities, functions and services. It is subject to annual review and may be amended and extended as priorities and needs change.

The plan includes:

- Background information
- Information on council functions, facilities and services both in-house and contracted
- A policy statement about council's commitment to addressing the issue of access for people with disability, their families and carers,
- Desired outcomes 1 to 7
- Consultation
- Review and Evaluation
- Reporting
- Implementation Plan

This document is available in alternate formats upon request including standard and large print, by email, electronically and on the Shire's website.

Background Information

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne according to the 2021 census has a population of 170 covering an area of 57,809 square kilometres with the only town being Gascoyne Junction with a population of approximately 70.

The Shire has limited medical services with a monthly GP Clinic conducted by Western Australia Country Health Service (WACHS) that recommenced in October 2022 and a nursing clinician visit monthly which recommenced in August 2023 and a monthly physio clinic which commenced in May 2024. The nearest medical services for pharmaceutical or dental are located in Carnarvon 176km to the west of Gascoyne Junction by sealed road.

Our survey was conducted of residents in 2022 with hearing and minor sight problems amongst residents identified. There is a growing need for accessible buildings to cater for mobility aids and wheelchairs with an ageing population and a growing tourism sector.

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne believes that people with a disability, their families and carers who live in our remote region should be supported to remain in the community of their choice.

Since implementing the 2015-2020 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan the council has achieved the following outcomes:

- Additional disabled access toilets in the Shire Offices
- New public amenities that are disability friendly at the Two Rivers Memorial Park for residents and visitors
- Upgrades to Shire Pavilion in Gascoyne Junction with disability access bathrooms
- The Shire has continued to provide information and material to assist people with a disability when requested.
- Upgrade to the Shire website which allows to change colour contrast of the page and make text smaller or larger as required.

Functions, Facilities and Services provided by the Shire of Upper Gascoyne

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne 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; information 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, dog and cat licences.

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

Access Policy Statement

The Shire of Upper Gascoyne is 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 events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disability 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 disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access services and events

- Council will endeavour to be adaptable in responding to the barriers experienced by people with various disability, including people with physical, sensory, cognitive and psychiatric disability.
- Council will ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of council facilities, functions and services are consistent with council's policy on access.

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

- Council will undertake to incorporate the priorities regarding access for people with disability, identified during consultations, into its submission for its capital works improvement programme. Modifications will continue as funds are made available.
- Council will undertake to liaise with developers to increase their awareness of the access requirements of people with disability.

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

- Council will endeavour to produce all of its information on council facilities, functions and services using clear and concise language.
- Council will advise the community that, upon request, information about council functions, facilities and services can be made available in alternative formats, such as larger print and audio files on USB sticks or downloads.

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service as other people receive

- Council will undertake to ensure that 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.
- Where required, council will seek expert advice from the disability field 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.

- Council will endeavour to ensure that information is available in clear and concise language on how residents can participate in decision making processes, public consultations and grievance mechanisms.
- Council will advise the community that this information can be made available in alternative formats upon request.
- Council will where practicable ensure consultations are held in an accessible venue.

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

- Council will strive to provide information about planning processes, electoral processes, council meetings and complaints procedures in clear and concise language and will make these available in alternative formats upon request.

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

- Council will advertise where practicable recruitment in an accessible format, and make alternative formats available upon request.
- Council will ensure adequate support and training is available for all employees including management training.
- Interviews will be conducted in accessible locations for all perspective employees.
- Council will view policies and procedures and occupational health and safety manuals on a regular basis.

Findings of the consultation

The reviewed DAIP has been placed on the Shire's website for people to view as well as being advertised in the June 2024 edition of the Gassy Gossip – a newsletter that is published and available to a majority of residents throughout the Shire, on social media and exhibited on noticeboards at every local government office and library in the Shire stating that it is available in other formats on request.

The review and consultation found that the objectives of the 2015-2020 were achieved and this updated plan addresses other access barriers faced in the Shire of Upper Gascoyne. Two surveys were put into the community as part of the review of the DAIP from October 2021 through to March 2022. 9 staff members responded to the Shire Staff Survey and 2 community members provided feedback through the community survey.

9 shire staff responded to the Staff questionnaire. Two thirds of respondents were unaware of the DAIP

As plans are updated shire staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans.

Access Barriers

The access barriers identified in the consultation process were:

- Processes of the shire may not be as accessible as possible in this remote area
- Events may not always be held in a manner or location that best facilitates the participation of people with a disability in this remote area
- Due to small population and budgetary constraints projects will be prioritised by needs of the community

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act required that the DAIP's 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 Chief Executive Officer will analyse progress in implementing the DAIP and provide a report to the Disability Services Commission 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 2024. The report will outline what has been achieved under the shire's DAIP 2015-2020.

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 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 by way of referencing it in tender and expression of interest documentation
- The reviewed DAIP was endorsed by Council at the May 2024 Council meeting and advertised on the Shire website, community noticeboards, the June 2024 edition of the Gassy Gossip and Shire social media channels.