



shire of Ashburton
opportunity to community

Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2027

DRAFT
June 2023

Contents

1. Overview	3
2. Acknowledgements.....	3
3. Our Mission.....	4
4. What is Access and Inclusion?.....	4
5. Disability in the Shire.....	4
6. Ashburton at a glance.....	5
7. Commitment to Access and Inclusion	6
8. Outcome Areas.....	6
9. Community Consultation.....	7
10. Findings.....	8
11. Communicating the CAIP.....	9
12. Monitoring and reporting	9
13. Action Plan	9

This document is available in alternative formats upon request including electronically by email or through the Shire website, in large print and in hard copy.

To talk to someone about the CAIP, contact the Shire of Ashburton in these ways:

- In person at the Shire Administration offices:
 - Lot 246, Poinciana Street, Tom Price WA 6751
 - Ashburton Avenue, Paraburdoo WA 6754
 - Second Avenue, Onslow WA 6710
 - 70 Deepdale Drive (meeting rooms 1&2), Pannawonica WA 6716
- Call us:
 - Tom Price 9273 6000
 - Paraburdoo 9190 2220
 - Onslow 9184 9301
 - Pannawonica 9134 9501
- Email soa@ashburton.wa.gov.au
- Write to us at PO Box 567 Tom Price, WA 6751
- Message us on our [Facebook](#) page

1. Overview

The Shire of Ashburton has a diverse population with many people actively involved in community life. However, we want to provide services and spaces that meet the needs of all our residents and visitors. We know barriers exist that limit accessibility and inclusion, particularly for those with a condition that restricts everyday activities, including a disability.

The aim of this Community Access and Inclusion Plan (CAIP), also known as a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is to identify areas for improvement. This will help to ensure our services, facilities, buildings, events and information are accessible, and everyone in our community feels welcome and included.

Small changes make a big difference, and the Shire is committed to building, accessible, inclusive and connected communities. Our community is full of everyday hero's in all shapes, colours and abilities, but not every hero wears a cape, so in support of our community and our everyday hero's, we've named our CAIP in your honour.

2. Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Ashburton respectfully acknowledges the local Indigenous people, the traditional custodians of this land, and pay respect to them and all their elders, both past, present and emerging.

We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of our community and the region.

Participation

The Shire appreciates the invaluable feedback from the community including people with disability, families and carers, medical and allied health providers, educators, residents and Shire employees.

We also recognise the work undertaken by Wicked Strategies in developing this CAIP including engagement with stakeholders and the community.

Legislation

The CAIP is mandated by the **Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004)** that requires all local government to develop a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

3. Our Mission

To contribute to the social, economic and environmental prosperity of the Shire of Ashburton by providing in alliance with others, strong community leadership, advocacy, and cost effective facilities and services.

4. What is Access and Inclusion?

Almost everyone faces temporary or more permanent difficulties at some point in their life. But for people with a condition that restricts everyday activities, barriers to access and inclusion can be more frequent and have greater impact.

Access refers to physical access to the natural and built environment including buildings, recreational facilities, parks and footpaths as well as access to the City's services, events and information.

Inclusion refers to the practice of ensuring all people feel they belong, are engaged or connected within the community regardless of ability, age, gender, nationality or religion.

Everyone benefits from enhanced access and inclusion including:

- Older adults
- People with temporary injury and chronic illness
- Families, friends and carers of a person with disability
- Parents who use prams
- People with mental health conditions
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Not everyone that needs greater accessibility has a permanent limitation, restriction or impairment, not everyone has a physical limitation and not all are clearly visible, so an 'everyday person' approach ensures the CAIP is for everyone. This includes people on crutches, those struggling with stairs and even people using prams, as well as invisible disabilities including asthma, arthritis, learning disorders and many other examples.

5. Disability in the Shire

The latest Census (ABS 2021) collected information from people in the Shire and their need for assistance in these categories:

- Self-care
- Communication
- Mobility due to disability
- Long-term health conditions
- The effects of old age

The ABS notes a person is considered to be living with disability if they have at least one limitation, restriction or impairment, which will last for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. The groups of disability defined in the ABS are -

1. Sensory: vision, hearing, speech, touch
2. Intellectual
3. Physical: breathing difficulties, blackouts/seizures, chronic pain, incomplete use of limbs, difficulty gripping, restriction in physical activities, disfigurement or deformity
4. Psychosocial: nervous or emotional, mental illness, memory, social or behavioural
5. Head injury, stroke or acquired brain injury
6. Other: conditions or ailments restricting everyday activities

The Census helps us to better consider the needs in our community. It's a key source of information that allows us to understand sectors of our population that are more likely to need assistance.

According to the 2021 Census, 1.2% or 89 people in the Shire reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability, which was very similar to 2016.

The Census also looked for the first time at the level of incidence of selected long-term health conditions. Almost 9% or 869 in the Shire noted one or more long-term condition. The most prevalent were Asthma 426 (5.8%), Mental Health 341 (4.6%), Arthritis 207 (2.8%), Diabetes 198 (2.7%), Heart Disease 113 (1.5%), Cancer 91 (1.2%).

However, the community consultation revealed a significantly greater number of people across the Shire with a high need for assistance, particularly Children. While the Census identified 30% or 27 of those living with disability are young people, with 10 under the age of 9 and 17 aged 10-19, educators across each of the six Primary and Secondary schools in the Shire tell a different story. The numbers of children reported by schools to have psychosocial disorders totals approximately 120, indicating the Census data is grossly under reported, and could be up to three times higher.

6. Ashburton at a glance

The Shire is a vast and ancient area within the spectacular Pilbara region, and at 105,647m², it spans almost half the size of the state of Victoria.

The mining and resources industry keeps the Shire firmly on the global resource map, and it boasts some of the world's largest open cut mines. Employment in the area is dominated by the sector, led by Rio Tinto, Chevron, BHP and Mineral Resources, who collectively employ approximately half of the Shire's residents. The area also holds some

of the largest pastoral leases and cattle stations, it has a thriving fishing industry and a major salt field. 39% of all jobs in the Pilbara Region are located in the Shire.

The population was estimated to be 7,391 in 2021, representing a drop of 43% on 2016, which peaked at 13,026. The majority of residents live in the four established town sites of Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Onslow and Pannawonica. The Shire also encompasses the Aboriginal communities of Bindi Bindi, Wakathuni, Bellary (Innawonga), Youngaleena, and Ngurrawaana, while the de-gazetted town of Wittenoom also falls within the boundaries.

Demographics

- ABS population in 2021 is 7,391
- Children (0 to 9 years) are 18% of the population
- Youth (10 to 19 years) are 8.9% of the population
- Aged (65 and over) are 5% of the population
- Median age is 34 years old
- Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people are 10.4% of the population

7. Commitment to Access and Inclusion

We believe that an accessible community is one in which all Shire services are open and available to people with disability, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by others in the community, including the same level of dignity and respect.

We believe that a community that recognises its diversity and supports the participation of all its members makes for richer community experiences. We recognise that people with disability are valued members of our community and make a variety of contributions to local, social, economic and cultural life.

We're committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers, and service providers, to ensure barriers to access are identified and addressed. We're also committed to working in partnership with local businesses to improve access to community facilities and services.

8. Outcome Areas

The following seven outcome areas of the CAIP are prescribed in the Disability Services Act 1993:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised 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 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 a public authority as other people receive from 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 can obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

9. Community Consultation

From late 2022 to mid-2023, the Shire sought feedback across the community to identify areas for improvement, and guide the development of the new CAIP. Consultation included people with disability, families and carers, medical and allied health providers, educators, residents, key stakeholders and Shire employees.

The process included a series of activities to better understand current levels of accessibility and inclusion in the Shire. A total of 145 people including 26 Shire staff and 119 community members participated in the following ways:

- Community Survey, printed and online
- Community Pop ups in all four towns
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community group meetings
- Shire staff workshops and focus groups

The activities were promoted in the following ways:

- Shire website
- Shire facebook
- Posters at community hub locations
- Stakeholder email
- Media release
- Newsletter

The Shire's intention to develop the Community Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2027 was also formally advertised in the Pilbara News.

10. Findings

There was a positive response to discussing access and inclusion and many had a high level of personal experience, including a majority with 'invisible' rather than physical disabilities.

The general satisfaction of living in the Shire is high across all towns, with residents commenting on:

- Similar reasons for living in the Shire, like-mindedness by association
- Good social connectedness, people know each other
- Strong feeling of safety, a simple lifestyle to raise kids
- Small towns with everything close together, flat layout
- Pool, events and playgrounds are activity hubs

Shire facilities including pathways, public toilets, playgrounds & parks were topical, with residents wanting:

- Better place connectivity including pathway condition, a continuous accessible path of travel
- More heat mitigation across green spaces, parks, playgrounds and recreational areas
- Enhanced playground infrastructure to incorporate play options for all ages and abilities
- Increased toilet access with better internal facilities to meet different needs

The overwhelming concern was the limited medical and allied health services available in Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica. The impact of not being able to receive necessary treatment and the cost of travelling elsewhere for treatment was highlighted with comments that:

- Solutions are needed to attract medical and allied services
- Advocacy is needed to address urgent accommodation for medical and service staff
- Hospital conditions are becoming increasingly worse, the State Government needs to make good on its hospital promise

The results of the consultation indicate a high probability that health issues are a main driver for families leaving towns, compounding the already transient nature of the region. This propels the Shire backward in its efforts to effectively plan its services into the future, and deprives community members of a long-term choice to live in the area.

11. Communicating the CAIP

Following the endorsement of the CAIP by Council and Department of Communities, the Shire will promote the document to the community via the following methods:

- Shire website
- Shire facebook
- Media release
- Newsletter
- Email to community members and stakeholders who participated in the initial consultation Stakeholder
- Hard copies and alternative format documents will be made available upon request including large print and electronic format

12. Monitoring and reporting

The Shire is required to submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the CAIP, to the WA Department of Communities. Additionally, the Shire will report on its developments each year in its Annual Report.

The Shire will establish an internal reference group to support its delivery of the CAIP and monitor its performance.

The Shire is also committed to ensuring its agents and contractors align with the desired outcomes of the CAIP.

13. Action Plan

The following strategies and actions have been developed in consultation with community stakeholders to guide the implementation of the CAIP. Once endorsed by Council, the Shire, its contractors and agents will work together over the next four years to improve access and inclusion across the seven legislated areas.

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

Strategy	Action	Responsible
Advocacy – Shire advocacy and partnerships address access and inclusion solutions for regional communities	Review advocacy stakeholder groups to address priority access including medical, education and accommodation	Council, ELT
	Maintain, enhance and establish partnerships with key agencies and peak bodies across health, disability, aged care allied services and education, to leverage local and state networks, shared knowledge and community solutions	Council, CEO, ELT, Economic Development, Community Development, Media and Comms
Services – Internal planning incorporates access and inclusion across service delivery	Ensure the Shire’s policies, plans, strategies and processes are consistent with the CAIP	Governance, Organisational Development, Procurement
	Provide alternative formats of library resources	Libraries
	Review emergency management arrangements to enhance information access	Regulatory Services
Technology – Digital, equipment and technology enhancements are identified	Research technology options to enhance accessibility of Shire services	ICT, Community Development, Media and Comms
Events – Access and inclusion is considered in the planning and delivery of all Shire and community led events.	Review the Shire events program to enhance access and inclusion	Communities
	Develop access and inclusion requirements for community led events	Regulatory Services
	Introduce sensory spaces at relevant Shire events	Communities, Media and Comms
	Review outdoor and green spaces used for Shire events	Facilities, Infrastructure, Communities, Economic Development

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

Strategy	Action	Responsible
Awareness – Access and inclusion awareness is enhanced among Shire staff, contractors and agents	Provide training for relevant staff on contemporary access and inclusion practices, models and design guides	Facilities, Infrastructure, Organisational Development
	Review contractor and agent information to enhance awareness of the CAIP and their obligations in meeting the relevant requirements	Procurement, Facilities, Infrastructure
Library – Sensory spaces are developed for accessible learning	Review library spaces and allocate availability for sensory play and learning	Libraries
Wayfinding and Building Signage – Signage is enhanced to support increased accessibility	Review wayfinding and building signage to identify accessibility enhancements	Facilities, Infrastructure, Planning
Pathways – Shared paths are enhanced for increased connectivity	Conduct hot spot mapping of pathways with high usage to identify access enhancements	Facilities, Infrastructure, Communities
Facilities – Shire facilities are more accessible to the community	Review Shire facilities to identify access enhancements	Facilities, Infrastructure
	Review scope requirements for new, replacement, upgrades or redevelopment of parks and playgrounds, to ensure access and inclusion is a standard component	Facilities, Procurement
	Develop a toilet strategy to address future access requirements	Infrastructure, Facilities
Aquatic centres and water access – Shire pools and recreational activities are more accessible to the community	Review Shire pool and water access to identify enhancements and upgrades	Aquatics
Building Design – Shire buildings are more accessible to the community	Review Shire buildings to identify accessibility enhancements	Planning, Facilities, Infrastructure
	Review scope requirements for new, replacement, upgrades or redevelopment of buildings, to ensure access and inclusion is a standard component	Facilities, Procurement

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	Action	Responsible
General Information – Shire information is more accessible to the community including in alternative formats	Review the accessibility of Shire information to identify enhancements	Media and Comms, Communities, Procurement
	New, and relevant Shire documents include a statement that they are available in alternative formats, on request	Media and Comms, Governance
Communication channels – Shire communication channels meet enhanced accessibility standards	Review Shire website and develop a roadmap to enhance access	Media and Comms
	Digital access to Shire photographs and videos is enhanced	Media and Comms,
Achievements – The Shire promotes its achievements in enhancing access and inclusion	Progress and achievements in access and inclusion are promoted to staff and the community	Communities, Media and Comms
Aboriginal culture – Local Aboriginal history and heritage is promoted to enhance inclusion	Progress engagement with Aboriginal people and groups, to identify and promote the history and heritage of local Aboriginal cultures	Tourism, Communities, Media and Comms,
	Review existing signage and identify locations for new and prominent signage or appropriate cultural acknowledgements	Tourism, Facilities
	Develop marketing assets to promote Aboriginal cultural awareness and inclusion in the community	Tourism, Media and Comms

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	Action	Responsible
Staff Training – The Shire supports the community with high quality service, achieved through staff training	Continue to provide disability awareness, access and inclusion training for employees	Organisational Development
	Provide disability awareness, access and inclusion training for Elected members	Governance
	Provide specific communication and interaction training for staff in front line service roles	Governance, Organisational Development
	Update the Customer Service Charter to include access and inclusion.	Governance
	Continue to review the onboarding process for new employees to ensure information on access and inclusion is included	Organisational Development,
	Review the onboarding process for contractors to ensure information on access and inclusion is included	Procurement
	Review the onboarding process for Elected Members to ensure information on access and inclusion is included	Governance
	Enhance the access and inclusion information available on the staff intranet	Communities
Advocacy – The Shire’s quality of service is enhanced to ensure access and inclusion for the wider community	Establish an internal Access and Inclusion Reference Group to review and report on progress	ALL
Achievements – The Shire promotes its achievements in access and inclusion	Progress and achievements in access and inclusion are promoted to staff and the community	Communities, Media and Comms

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

Strategy	Action	Responsible
Management – The Shire’s complaints management is enhanced to ensure access and inclusion for the wider community	Provide specialised training for relevant staff on the receipt and management of complaints, to enhance access for people with disability	Governance, Organisational Development
	Establish a dedicated page on the website for all community feedback	Media and Comms
	Review the Complaints Management Policy to include access and inclusion, ensuring a coordinated approach to complaints management	Governance

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

Strategy	Action	Responsible
Practices and Policy – The Shire supports enhanced community and consultation for the wider community	Review scope requirements for engagement consultants, to ensure access and inclusion is a standard component	Communities, Media and Comms, Tourism
	Review the Engagement Policy to include access and inclusion, ensuring a coordinated approach to community consultation	Media and Comms, Communities
Methods and Tools – Community consultation participation opportunities are more accessible to the wider community	Establish innovative ways to consult with the community	Media and Comms, Communities
	Establish a dedicated page on the website for community consultation projects	Media and Comms

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

Strategy	Action	Responsible
Practices – Recruitment practices are enhanced to support enhanced inclusion in employment	Ensure all position descriptions state that workplace diversity, access and inclusion is a shared responsibility of all staff.	Organisational Development
	Review recruitment processes to ensure people with disability can succeed in their roles	Organisational Development
Workplace – Build an accessible and dignified workplace to enable people with disability to succeed	Review the Equal Employment Opportunity Policy to include guidelines on access and inclusion	Organisational Development
	Provide annual training to staff about their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act	Organisational Development
	Include questions on access and inclusion relating to personal requirements, in staff surveys.	Organisational Development