



Shire of Mt Marshall

— THE SANDALWOOD SHIRE —

SHIRE OF MT MARSHALL

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

2020 – 2025

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1. Shire of Mt Marshall Overview

The Shire of Mount Marshall is a Local Government area in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia and is located about 300 kilometres northeast of the state capital, Perth. The Shire covers an area of 10,190 square kilometres, and its seat of government is the town of Bencubbin. The main town centres of Beacon and Bencubbin.

Major industries are agriculture such as grain, sheep and cattle production with seasonal tourism during the magnificent wildflower season.

The Shire currently employs just under 30 staff members to cover the areas of roads, rates, rubbish, town maintenance, gardens and recreation facilities, finance, community development, housing, emergency services and more.

The Shire of Mt Marshall provides a range of functions, facilities and services including:

- **Services to property:** construction and maintenance of roads and footpaths; stormwater drainage; domestic waste collection and disposal, including recycling of certain domestic waste; drumMUSTER collection services and facility; litter control and street cleaning; street tree and roadside tree pruning; bushfire control; animal control; and care and maintenance of parks and gardens.
- **Recreation Services to the community:** provision and maintenance of outdoor playing areas for football, cricket, hockey, basketball, and tennis, including lawn bowls; an aquatic facility; gymnasiums; children's playgrounds, and Pioneer Botanical Walk trail; plus provision and maintenance of the Recreation Centres in both main townsites.
- **General Services to the community:** providing for a medical practice and employment of a Doctor to service the towns of Bencubbin and Beacon via clinics held weekly; public libraries; Community Resource Centres; provide and take bookings for the community bus; caravan parks; and cemeteries.
- **Regulatory Services:** town planning, building approvals, range services, public and environmental health services.
- **Administration Services:** provision of general information to the public, lodging and resolution of complaints, collection of rates; vehicle and firearm licensing, and animal registrations.
- **Governance:** ordinary and special council and committee meetings, annual electors' meetings and election of council members.

2. People with disability in the Shire of Mt Marshall

In the 2016 Census, there were 527 people in Shire of Mt Marshall. Of these 54.1% were male and 45.9% were female. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 1.0% of the population.

The 2016 ABS Census also recorded 53 persons in Mt Marshall as having delivered unpaid assistance to persons with a disability, long-term illness or problems related to old age. This represents 13.0% of people aged 15 years and over living in the Shire. The proportion of people living with a disability increases with age. Given that the shire has a demographic profile with 14.8% of all persons aged 65 years and over, there will be many people in the community living with age related limitations such as restricted movement, loss of sensory perception or loss of understanding.

The WA Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) defines disability as a condition:

- That is attributed to an intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments
- That is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- That may or may not be episodic in nature, and
- That results in a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

3. Disability Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Shire of Mt Marshall is committed to ensuring that the community is accessible and inclusive for people with disability, their families, and carers.

The Shire of Mt Marshall also interprets an accessible and inclusive community as one in which all Shire's functions, facilities, and services (both in-house and contracted) are inclusive and accessible for people with disability as they are for other people in the wider community. The Shire will endeavour to the best of its capacity to meet the needs of persons with disability.

The Shire of Mt Marshall:

- Recognises that people with disability are valued members of the community who make a variety of contributions to local, social, economic, and cultural life;
- Believes that a community that recognises its diversity and supports the participation and inclusion of all its members makes for a richer community life;

- Believes that people with disability, their families and carers should be supported to remain living and participating in the community;
- Is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers, and the community in general, to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are appropriately addressed;
- Is committed to supporting local community groups and other relevant organisations to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability through access to information, services, and facilities in the community;
- Is committed to ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the shire's DAIP.

4. Seven Outcomes of DAIP

The Shire of Mt Marshall is also dedicated to achieving the seven desired outcomes through its DAIP. They are –

1. People with disability, their families and carers have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Mt Marshall.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access all buildings of a public nature, plus other facilities provided by the Shire of Mt Marshall.
3. People with disability receive information from the Shire of Mt Marshall 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, and contractors/agents to, the Shire of Mt Marshall.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Mt Marshall.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation process with the Shire of Mt Marshall.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Mt Marshall.

5. Progress and Achievements

The Shire of Mt Marshall is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. To meet this goal, the Council reviewed both the 2008-2012 and 2012-17 Disability Access & Inclusion Plans in order to address barriers for people with disability and ensure present and future needs for persons with disability is identified and addressed. Since adopting the plan in 2008, the Shire of Mt Marshall has implemented a number of initiatives, some of which are highlighted in Appendix A.

During the life of this plan, the Shire has continued to improve access and remove barriers through the implementation of many strategies contained in the plan. Significant progress has been made towards providing better access to the community.

6. Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) that all local and state 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 the planning of access and inclusion includes:

- WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (amended 1988);
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination (DDA) Act 1992;
- The Building code of Australia (BCA) that provides a set of minimum requirements for new buildings and renovations.
- The Access to Premises Standard under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) that became effective for any buildings or major redevelopments

6.1 Responsibility for the planning process

The Shire of Mt Marshall DAIP 2020 – 2025 intends to meet the requirements of the Act.

All councillors and staff have a responsibility to contribute to the process of developing an appropriate plan that reflects community long-term vision, values, including aspirations and service expectations. The Shire Chief Executive Officer has the responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

6.2 Community Consultation Process

The Shire's Principal Environmental Health Officer has undertaken a review of the DAIP 2012–2017 and a new DAIP 2020-2025 was developed. The consultation process asked for areas of access and inclusion people felt needed to be addressed and/or improved to help develop the Shire's new DAIP or to provide advice on aspects that should be included in the DAIP. The process included both internal and external consultations.

The internal process began with:

- Examination of the current Disability Access Plan and subsequent progress reports to see what has been implemented to date, and to decide which areas require ongoing attention
- Review of annual progress reports, relevant council documents, disability legislation, developing trends and best practice in access and inclusion;
- Consultation with with Department of Communities key staff

The internal review was followed by external consultation, where feedback was sought via:

- an advertisement in local community newsletter;
- the Shire’s website inviting community members to ‘have your say’;
- Consultation with Councillors and the wider community.

6.3 Findings from the Consultation Process

The consultation provided an opportunity for a cross-section of staff and community members to comment on the plan. Overall, there was a great deal of achievement in improving access in past years. The findings formed the basis for the development of strategies in the DAIP 2020-2025

6.4 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability

- On completion, a copy of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is to be distributed to members of the Shire administration staff for comment;
- Council advertised the DAIP in its local newsletter advising that copies can be obtained from the Shire administration office, and via the Shire’s website, as well as in alternative formats on request;

7. Implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Shire. The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) requires public authorities to take all practical measures to ensure that its officers, employees, agents and contractors implement the DAIP. Implementation actions, timelines and accountabilities will be included in other plans and strategies. The implementation is generally an ongoing process and the strategies are supported by an internal actions plan, which will be monitored, on an annual basis by management to check the progress and maintain compliance with the relevant requirements.

A clause will be included in all contract and tender documents advising Contractors of their obligation to implement the Shire of Mt Marshall’s DAIP wherever practicable and report annually on their compliance with the plan. Shire tender documents will include reference to the Shire of Mt Marshall DAIP and the

requirement for contractors to be aware of and work towards its desired outcomes. Contractors will receive a copy of the DAIP and a copy of the contractor reporting form to complete and return to the Shire at the completion of their contract.

7.1 Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Shire will undertake a review of the DAIP at least every five years, in accordance with the Act.

The DAIP Implementation Plan is an internal document that assists the Shire to implement progress of the DAIP and will be amended annually to reflect budget considerations, progress and any access and inclusion issues or initiatives which may arise. Whenever the Shire's DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Department of Communities.

The Shire will also develop an evaluation form for local groups and organisations that receive funding from the Shire to capture how many people with disability attend community facilitated, Shire funded events and activities.

7.2 Review, monitoring and Reporting

The Principal Environmental Health Officer will continue to liaise with the Chief Executive Officer and relevant managers to review progress on the implementation of strategies identified in the DAIP.

All strategies and actions will be included in the shire's corporate planning and subject to corporate key performance indicators and reporting.

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to their DAIPs. The Shire will report on the implementation of the DAIP through its Annual Report and by completing, the Department of Communities prescribed progress report template by 30 June each year.

8. Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion

The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for strategies aimed at improving access and inclusion for people with disability. The following strategies will be reflected in Council's 2020-2025 implementation plan, subsequent budgets and Corporate Business Plans.

Outcome 1:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised or sponsored by the Shire of Mt Marshall.

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure that people with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	Ongoing
Monitor the Shire facilities and support services to ensure equitable access and inclusion	Ongoing
Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into Shire's strategic business planning, budgeting processes and other relevant plans and strategies.	Ongoing
Ensure that as far as possible and practicable, all events are inclusive to people with disability	Ongoing

Outcome 2

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by the Shire of Mt Marshall.

Strategies	Timeline
Identify footpaths, playgrounds, parks and public buildings which require upgrade to improve access for people with disability	Ongoing
Ensure that all future premises leased by the Shire are accessible.	Ongoing
Ensure that ACROD parking, whenever required meets the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location.	Ongoing
Advocate to local businesses the benefits of providing accessible facilities and amenities and the importance of employing people with disability	Ongoing

Outcome 3

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

Strategies	Timeline
Improve community awareness that Shire of Mt Marshall information is available in alternative formats upon request.	Ongoing
Ensure the Shire website meets best practice standards for people with disability	Ongoing
Consider the needs of people with disability when producing advertising materials for events and activities	Ongoing

Outcome 4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Mt Marshall as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of Marshall.

Strategies	Timeline
Raise awareness and understanding amongst existing staff, new employees about the disability access and inclusion.	Ongoing
Provide disability awareness training to staff to ensure they have the skills to offer high quality customer services to people with disability.	Ongoing
Encourage the identification of opportunities to improve the quality of service to people with disability	Ongoing
Ensure that staff, agents and contractors are aware of the relevant legislative requirements of the Disability Service Act (1993)	ongoing

Outcome 5

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Shire of Mt Marshall.

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure the complaints policy and procedures are accessible to people with disability and available in alternate formats upon request.	Ongoing
Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	Ongoing
Encourage feedback from community to assist with removal of barriers and improvement of access.	Ongoing

Outcome 6

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

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure public consultation is accessible to all people with disability	Ongoing
Ensure consultations is facilitated in an appropriate format to enable all members of the community to comment on the DAIP and disability access issues.	Ongoing
Raise awareness of opportunities for people with disability to participate in the public consultation.	Ongoing

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Mt Marshall.

Strategies	Timeline
Commit to using inclusive recruitment practices when advertising new positions.	Ongoing
Ensure the Shire maintain a positive relationships with key disability employment support providers.	Ongoing
Undertake to monitor the needs of any Council employee with a disability and to address those needs where possible to maintain their employment.	Ongoing
Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.	Ongoing

Appendix A: Progress and Achievements

Progress since 2008 under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Outcome 1

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised or sponsored by the Shire of Mt Marshall:

- The Shire public library has increased the number of audio books (talking books) and large print books held at the library, and these are regularly rotated through the WA LISA rotation program. These books are located at easily accessible levels and are well signed;
- Successful uploading of the Shire's DAIP onto the website;
- Positive relationships developed between other Shires through NEWROC grouping allowing a central exchange point of ideas and developments;
- Mt Marshall Community Show and other events where community has involvement are held at the Bencubbin and Beacon Recreation Centres and Beacon Town Hall to facilitate accessibility for persons with disability.

Outcome 2

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by the Shire of Marshall:

- Access ramps from footpaths to road surface have been provided.
- Footpaths have been concreted to ensure smooth accessible surfaces.
- Disabled toilet signage is to appropriate standard.
- Disabled toilets have been installed at Marshall Rock and Billiburning Rock Reserves.
- New Community Resource Centre at Bencubbin is designed with accessibility in mind.

Outcome 3

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

- The Shire advertised through the local Council newsletter that Council information is available in alternative formats upon request;
- Staff are aware of how to reformat information to assist people to access Shire information.

Outcome 4

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Mt Marshall as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of Marshall:

- Shire staff continue to assist persons to help arrange travel to essential service, access books and audio for their enjoyment and to assist in understanding information.

Outcome 5

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Shire of Mt Marshall.

- The Shire provides information through public documents regarding all Council agreed new works;
- The Shire ensures that buildings are accessible to people with disability.
- The Shire staff have proven themselves to be most understanding in providing assistance towards people with disability.

Outcome 6

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

- Shire staff and officers have assisted people with disability to access and be included in all Council discussions and functions on request;
- Staff provide and explain the purpose of the Council function or meetings in a professional manner.

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Mt Marshall:

- Equal Opportunity Statements included in job advertisements;
- Opportunities for volunteering presented to persons with disability;
- Applications accepted from persons with disability and two persons with identified disability interviewed;
- Staff training in the employment of person with disability.