



Access Inclusion Plan 2024-2029



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THE SHIRE OF BROOKTON

The Shire of Brookton is located in the Central Wheatbelt and covers an area of 1,626 km². The principal town site of Brookton is located on the Brookton Highway 138km from Perth. The town was established in 1899 and has a current population of approximately 929.

The area is predominately mixed cropping and livestock, with increasing hay production since the establishment of two export hay facilities. Brookton has recently been experiencing a changing population due to the movement of retirees and other mature-aged people to the area.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN THE SHIRE OF BROOKTON

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers Summary of Findings (2021) in 2021 there were 5.5 million Australians with disability, 21.4% of the population. It can therefore be estimated that around 100 people living within the Shire of Brookton have a disability. Any influx of retirees will increase this number as according to the ABS survey, 52.3% of older Australians identified as having a disability. The seasonal influx of tourists, including tourists with a disability, must also be considered.

PLANNING FOR BETTER ACCESS

The Disability Services Act 1993 (the Act) requires all public authorities, including state and local government to develop and implement a Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) in accordance with the principles of the Act.

The Act requires agents and contractors of public authorities to conduct their business in a manner consistent with their funder's Access and Inclusion Plan. Agents and contractors are required to report annually on progress they have made against the outcomes of the Shire of Brookton's Access and Inclusion Plan. Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes:

- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Western Australia)
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Disability trends in Western Australia



The ABS estimates 405,500 people live with disability. That's about 20% of the population or one in every five people.



115,800 people have profound or severe core activity limitation - that's almost one in four.



Between 2006 and 2026, the number of people with disability in WA is expected to increase by more than 210,000. This is due to an ageing population.



The unemployment rate for people with disability is more than double that for people without disability.



Disability impacts a large cross-section of the community, with almost one in three identifying as a carer or a family member of someone living with disability.

Source: <https://www.wa.gov.au>

PROGRESS SINCE 2017

The Shire of Brookton is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through the improvements of access to its facilities and services. Since the implementation of the first AIP in 2017, a range of facilities and initiatives have been implemented to support equitable and inclusive access and inclusion for people with disability to our services, facilities and information. Some of these are highlighted in Appendix 1.

The Shire of Brookton is committed to ensuring that the community is accessible for and inclusive of people with disability, their families and carers. The Shire of Brookton interprets an accessible and inclusive community and one in which all Shire 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 as other people in the community. The Shire of Brookton:

- ❖ 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 of its members makes for a richer community life;
- ❖ Believes that people with disability, their families and carers should be supported to remain in the community;
- ❖ Is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and disability organisations in addressing barriers to access and inclusion;
- ❖ Will ensure its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the Access and Inclusion Plan;
- ❖ Is committed to achieving the seven desired outcomes of its Access and Inclusion Plan. These are:
 - ❖ People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.
 - ❖ People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.
 - ❖ 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.
 - ❖ 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.
 - ❖ People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
 - ❖ People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.
 - ❖ People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.
- ❖ Celebrating International Day of People with Disability (IDoPWD) through a community event and promotions.
- ❖ Chair Yoga for Seniors
- ❖ Ensuring our library collection contains large print and audio

PROGRESSION OF THE ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

Responsibility for the planning process, the Manager Corporate and Community has responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the AIP. Council endorses the final AIP, and it is the responsibility of officers to implement relevant actions.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Shire of Brookton is required to undertake a review of its Access and Inclusion Plan and consult with key stakeholders to guide further improvements to access and inclusion, every five years. The process includes:

- ❖ Examination of the 2017 – 2022 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- ❖ Examination of other relevant documents and strategies
- ❖ Consultation with staff
- ❖ Consultation with the community

The Disability Services Act Regulation (2004) set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to Access and Inclusion Plans. Local Governments must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a newspaper circulating in the Local Government area and on any website by or on behalf of the Local Government. Other mechanisms may be used. The following methods were used by the Shire of Brookton:

- ❖ A whole of Shire survey was conducted in April 2024 within the Shire of Brookton. This survey was made available online, with a link to the survey provided on all forms of communication to the community, and in hard copy / paper format upon request.
- ❖ Advertising by way of both electronic communications and placement of notices on the Shire's website, social media, and in the local newsletter within the Shire of Brookton inviting comments and feedback.
- ❖ Community Consultation workshop

Findings of the consultation

The consultation process identified 2 persons as having a disability, with 2 respondents identifying as being a family member, carer or friend of a person with disability. It was found that 70% of the respondents were aware that the Shire of Brookton had a AIP. 30.7% of respondents believed that they had experienced difficulties or barriers when dealing with Shire employees either infrequently or never. 78.6% believed that access to Shire buildings and facilities was either good or very good, while 79% rated the level of access to the Shire information as either good or very good. 63% believed that the Shire of Brookton is an inclusive community.

The consultation found a common community call for additional improvements to footpaths, accessible doors and ramp access to all buildings.

Future projects relevant to community feedback

The Shire of Brookton has committed to:

1. Assessing upgrades to footpaths
2. Investigation of additional ACROD parking
3. Access to chalets and facilities at Brookton Caravan Park
4. Additional signage

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

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE AIP

Implementation of the AIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Shire. The Disability Services Act (1993) requires all public authorities to take all practical measure to ensure that its officers, employees, agents and contractors implement the AIP.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability

- ❖ The community will be informed by way of both electronic communications and placement of notices on the Shire's website, social media, and in the local newsletter that the finalised AIP is available upon request and in alternative formats, if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format by email.
- ❖ As AIPs are amended, Shire staff and the community will be advised of the availability of the updated Plans, using the above methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act (1993) requires that the AIPs are reviewed at least every five years. Whenever the AIP is amended, a copy of the amended AIP is lodged with the Department of Communities. The Implementation Plan can be updated more frequently.

Monitoring and reviewing

The employee with the responsibility for the AIP will analyse progress in implementing the AIP and provide a report to management and Council on progress and recommended changes to the implementation plan annually.

- ❖ The Shire's AIP will next be reviewed and submitted to the Department of Communities in 2029. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Shire's AIP in the period 2024 – 2029.

Evaluation

- ❖ An evaluation will occur as part of the five yearly review of the AIP.
- ❖ The community, staff and Elected Members will be consulted as per the endorsed consultation strategies, as part of any evaluation.

Reporting on the AIP

The Disability Services Act (1993) requires the Shire to report on the implementation of its AIP in its annual report, outlining:

- ❖ Progress towards the desired outcomes of its AIP;
- ❖ Progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the seven desired outcomes; and
- ❖ The strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its AIP.

The Shire is also required to report on progress, in the prescribed format, to the Department of Communities by July 31 each year.

SHIRE OF BROOKTON
ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2024 - 2029

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The following overarching strategies (refer to the Appendixes) have been developed to address each of the seven desired outcome areas of the Disability Services Act 1993 from feedback gained in the consultation process. (Refer to the Implementation Plan below).

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan details the task, timelines and responsibilities for each broad strategy to maintain and/or progress the strategies of the AIP. Whilst all strategies have been actioned, they are ongoing and open to improvement where possible.

The Implementation Plan will be updated annually to progress and record the strategies over the duration of the five-year plan.

REFERENCES

- ❖ Australian Bureau of Statistics
- ❖ Disability, Ageing and Carers Summary of Findings 2021
- ❖ Disability Services Act Regulation (2004)
- ❖ Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (Western Australia)
- ❖ Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993
- ❖ United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ❖ State Disability Strategy 2020-2030
- ❖ Shire of Brookton – Strategic Community Plan

APPENDIX 1

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	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disability are consulted on their needs for services and the accessibility of current services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop a feedback mechanism for use by all services, provided or funded. ❖ Develop consultation guidelines for all future reviews of services. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Monitor Shire services to ensure equitable access and inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conduct systematic reviews of the accessibility of services. ❖ Rectify identified barriers and provide feedback to consumers 	Ongoing Program	All Managers, Building Maintenance
Improve access to the information in the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Incorporate the objectives and strategies of the AIP into the Shire's existing planning processes, particularly the Strategic Plan. 	Ongoing Program	All Managers
Develop the links between the AIP and other Shire plans and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide large print and audio books for relevant community members. ❖ Promote access to business. ❖ Make access information available on the Shire's website. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conduct audit of halls and pavilions and playgrounds. ❖ Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrade 	Ongoing	All Managers

OUTCOME 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.			
Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that all public buildings and facilities meet the standards for access and any demonstrated additional need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Identify access barriers to public buildings and facilities. ❖ Prioritise and make a submission to Council to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. 	Ongoing Program	Manager Infrastructure and Works
Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensure that the legal requirements for access are met in all plans for new or redeveloped buildings and facilities. ❖ Ensure that no development application is signed off without a declaration that it meets the legal requirements. ❖ Ensure that key staff are trained and kept up to date with the legal requirements. 	Ongoing Program	All Managers, Building Maintenance
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Undertake an audit of ACROD bays and implement a program to rectify any non-compliance. ❖ Consider the need for additional bays at some locations. 	Ongoing	Manager Infrastructure and Works
Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for and benefits flowing from the provision of accessible venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide information (available on the DSC website), on the needs of people with disability and of legal requirements and best practice. ❖ Promote access to business. ❖ Make access information available on the Shire's website. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Ensure that all recreational areas are accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conduct audit of halls and pavilions and playgrounds. ❖ Develop and implement a program of progressive upgrade 	Ongoing	All Managers

OUTCOME 3: People with disability have the same 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	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available in alternative formats upon request.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensure that all documents carry a notation that it is available in alternative formats. ❖ Publicise the availability of other formats in the local newspaper. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in other formats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Make State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities guidelines available to Shire employees. Train employees in providing accessible information. 	Ongoing	All Managers
Ensure that the Shire's website meets contemporary good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Maintain website to web content guidelines. ❖ Budget for and provide interpreters to significant events upon request. ❖ Make budget provision for interpreters and advertise the availability of the service. 	Ongoing	All Managers

OUTCOME 4: People with disability have 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	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that all employees, existing and new, and Elected Members are aware of disability and access issues and have the skills to provide appropriate services.	❖ Determine training needs of Elected Members and employees and conduct training as required.	Ongoing including staff training	CEO and MCC
Improve community awareness about disability and access issues.	❖ All public documents state that they are available in different formats.	Ongoing	CEO and MC

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

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disability and are acted upon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review current grievance mechanisms and implement any recommendations. ❖ Develop other methods of making complaints, such as web-based forms. ❖ Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	Ongoing	CEO and MCC

OUTCOME 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.			
Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that people with disability are actively consulted about the AIP and any other significant planning processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Consult people with disability in a range of different consultation mediums, eg focus group, interviews, surveys. ❖ Develop a register of people to provide comment on access and inclusion issues. 	Ongoing	CEO and MCC
Ensure that people with disability are aware of and can access other established consultative processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ensure agendas, minutes and other documents are available on request in alternative formats and are published on the Shire's website. 	Ongoing	CEO and MCC

OUTCOME 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as others to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.			
Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Use inclusive recruitment practices and improve methods of attracting, recruiting and retaining with disability.	<p>Ensure that job advertisements are in an accessible format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Include Equal Opportunity Employment statement, e.g., “promotes a workplace that actively seeks to include, welcome and value unique contributions of all people and encourages people with disability, Aboriginal Australians, young people and people from culturally diverse backgrounds to apply for this job.” ❖ Ensure that interviews are held in an accessible place. ❖ Consider job flexibility with regards to location and work hours. ❖ Monitor Diversity Questionnaire feedback for disability requirements / changing needs. ❖ Consult with Disability Employment Services (free service for employers) for advice, when applicable 	Ongoing	CEO and MCC
Ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Occupational Health and Safety ❖ Procedures manual. 	Ongoing	All Managers

Review and Monitoring

The Coordinator will monitor and review progress towards achieving stated outcomes in the AIP. A progress report will be submitted to the Department of Communities by the 31st of July each year. Information on the implementation of the AIP is included in the Shire of Brookton Annual Report.

Communicating the AIP

The Shire will advise via the local media and its own publications that copies of the AIP are available. Shire staff, relevant government departments, local health centres, disability service providers and the local Community Resource Centres will be provided with a copy of the AIP.

The AIP is also available to the public via the Shire's website: www.brookton.wa.gov.au

Appendix 1

Progress since 2017 under the Access and Inclusion Plan:

Since the review and implementation of our AIP in 2017, a range of facilities and initiatives have been implemented to support equitable and inclusive access and inclusion for people with disability to our services, facilities and information, including:

- ❖ Installation of a chalet with disabled access at the Brookton Caravan Park.
- ❖ Installation of a camper's kitchen at the Brookton Caravan Park, allowing access to all, under cover.
- ❖ Installation of access ramp to the Shire of Brookton Council Chambers.
- ❖ Improvements to the Shire's Administration building, including a low-level table counter at reception for wheelchair users.
- ❖ Refurbishment of Memorial Hall.
- ❖ Improvements to the Community Resource Centre building, including installation of handrails in bathrooms and externally, and modification of the entry ramp.
- ❖ Trimming or replacement of trees along footpaths.
- ❖ Various footpath upgrades, including Richardson Street and Lennard Street.
- ❖ Installation of an ablution block at the Brookton Cemetery.