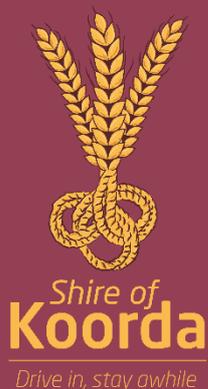


Shire of Koorda

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020 - 2025



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1. Background

1.1 Demographics

The Shire of Koorda is located 233 km north-east of Perth in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. The shire covers an area of 2,836 square kilometres consisting of agricultural land, nature reserves and national parks. The Shires has a population of approximately 414 people and are mostly a farming community devoted to wheat, coarse grains, sheep and some beef cattle and pigs, with seasonal tourism during the wild flower season.

Major features of the Shire include Koorda Museum, Koorda Motoring and Military Museum, Granite Outcrops, Redcliffe, Red Cross (CWA), Koorda Drive-in Theatre, Koorda Hotel, Koorda Recreational Centre and Koorda Wildflower Reserve.

Shire of Koorda also has four interesting granite outcrops - Mollerin Rock, Newcarlbeon, Badgerin Rock and Moningarín, all fairly close to town. Each is a special place with its special wildflower displays between July and October, its native birds and small animals. Moningarín has the extra bonus of native gnamma holes. Most have picnic or barbecue facilities.

1.2 Functions, Facilities and Services (Both in-house and contracted) provided by the Shire of Koorda

The Shire of Koorda provides a range of functions, facilities and services including but not limited to:

- **Services to property include:** 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; dog control; cat control and maintenance of parks and gardens.
- **Recreation Services to the community include:** provision and maintenance of outdoor playing areas for basketball, tennis, lawn bowls, the public swimming pool facility and children's playground and BBQ area, Caravan Park and a Town Halls.
- **General Services to the community include:** Medical services are available on Wednesdays in Koorda and Wyalkatchem on other days. The Shire office provides for and takes bookings for the community bus and caravan park.
- **Regulatory Services include:** planning processes; building control; environmental health; public health; and ranger service.
- **Administration Services include:** provision of general information to the public, lodging and resolution of complaints, collection of rates; vehicle and firearm licensing, and dog registrations.
- **Governance:** ordinary and special council and committee meetings, annual elector meetings and election of council members.

1.3 The Disability Services Act

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

Public authorities in Western Australia, including local governments, are required under the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) to develop and promote a Disability Services and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

Section 29B of the Act states:

...’a public authority that has a disability access and inclusion plan must take all practicable measures to ensure that the plan is implemented by the public authority and its officer, employees, agents or contractors.’

The Act makes the development and implementation of a DAIP mandatory and guides the development, implementation and reporting of the DAIP which applies to staff, agents and contractors.

The improvement of services and access will increase independence, opportunity and inclusion in the community and these goals align with the Vision and Purpose of the council of the Shire of Koorda.

1.4 People with disability in the Shire of Koorda

In the 2016 Census, there were 414 people in Shire of Koorda. Of these 52.3% were male and 47.7% were female. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 2.4% of the population.

The 2016 ABS Census also recorded 40 persons in Wyalkatchem as having delivered unpaid assistance to persons with a disability. This was 12.0% of people aged 15 years and over – greater than the state average of 9.8% and greater than the national average of 11.3%.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2018) estimated that 17.7% of all Australians had disability, down from 18.3% in 2015 and 18.5% in 2012. The Shire population is 414 people and it is therefore estimated that 75 people living in the Shire have a physical disability.

Although there are limited facilities provided in the Koorda Shire for people living with disability, the Shire is committed to a future plan to ensure universal accessible design for new building projects and upgrades undertaken by the Shire.

1.5 Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

The Western Australia Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) requires all Local Governments to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disability have equal access to its information, 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

1.6 Progress since 2008

The Shire of Koorda 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 the 2008 – 2012 and 2012-2017 Disability Access & Inclusion Plan in order to address barriers for people with disability and ensure present and future needs for persons with disability are identified and addressed. Since adopting the plan, the Shire of Koorda has implemented a number of initiatives, some of which are highlighted in '*Appendix 1: Achievements*'.

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 specifically age related disability and increased levels of engagement.

2. Disability Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

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

The Shire of Koorda also interprets an accessible and inclusive community as one in which all Council 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 the Shires capacity to meet the needs of persons with disability.

To this end the Shire of Koorda will strive to –

- recognise that people with disability are valued members of the community who make a variety of contributions to local, social, economic, and cultural life.
- believe that a community that recognizes its diversity and supports the participation and inclusion of all its members makes for a richer community life.
- believe that people with disability, their families and carers should be supported to remain living and participating in the community.
- be 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.
- be committed to supporting local community groups and other relevant organizations to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability through access to information, services, and facilities in the community.
- be committed to ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired outcomes in the Shire's DAIP.

2.1 Seven Outcomes of the DAIP

The Shire of Koorda 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 organized by, the Shire of Koorda.
- 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 Koorda.

- 3) People with disability receive information from the Shire of Koorda 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 Koorda.
- 5) People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Koorda.
- 6) People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation process with the Shire of Koorda.
- 7) People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Council.

3. Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

3.1 Responsibility for the planning process

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) that all local government authorities develop and implement a DAIP which identifies barriers to access and inclusion and propose solutions to ensure that people with a disability have equality of access to the organisations facilities and services. The Shire of Koorda 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 and appropriate plan that reflects the commitment, Vision, Purpose and Values of the Shire of Koorda to the improved quality of life of all persons in the local government.

The Shire Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has the responsibility to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan. The final plan is required to be endorsed by Council and it is the responsibility of all officers to implement the relevant actions.

3.2 Consultation Process

The Shire of Koorda has been conducting a review of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 to guide further improvements to access and inclusion and drafted a new DAIP. 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 process began with an internal review via:

- internal analysis of the Shire's DAIP 2012–2017;
- Review of annual progress reports, relevant council documents, disability legislation, developing trends and best practice in access and inclusion;
- Consultation with Councillors, and key staff.

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

- publication in the local fortnightly newsletter advising the community that the Shire of Koorda is conducting a review of the Disability Access & Inclusion Plan and asked for people to either contact the Shire at the office, by phone or write into the Shire to make suggestions/recommendations of issues related to access and inclusion that should be included in the revised Plan
- the Shire's website inviting readers to 'have your say';
- consultation with Department of Communities and other expertise in the area of disability.

- Consultation with agents and contractors

3.3 Findings of the Review

The consultation provided an opportunity for a cross-section of staff and community members to comment on the plan. Feedback indicated that the community is contented with Shire's commitment to the needs of people with disability. The Shire has made improvements to access across all seven outcomes of the DAIP including buildings, facilities, services and employment as required by the current legislation.

3.4 Implementation of the DAIP

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

A clause has been included in all contract and tender documents advising Contractors of their obligation to implement the Shire of Koorda's DAIP wherever practicable and report annually on their compliance with the plan. Shire tender documents will include reference to the Shire of Koorda 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 (or annually, whichever occurs first).

The Shire has also developed 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.

3.5 Promoting the DAIP

Once the DAIP has been endorsed by Council and the Department of Communities, it will be promoted widely via the website, through an advertisement in the local newspapers and at community events.

Copies of the DAIP can be obtained from the Shire and will be made available in alternative formats upon request. All staff receive Disability Awareness Training and information on how to access the DAIP.

3.6 Review and Monitoring

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Shire of Koorda current DAIP will be formally reviewed 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.

3.7 Reporting on the DAIP

The Disability Services Act 1993 sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Shire of Koorda will report on the implementation of its DAIP through the annual report outlining:

- Progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- Progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and
- The strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

The Shire is also required to report on progress in the prescribed format to the Department of Communities annually.

4. 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 Koorda.

Strategies	Timeline
Consult people with disability on their need for services and the accessibility of current services	Annually Ongoing
Monitor the Shire facilities and support services to ensure equitable access and inclusion	Ongoing
Promote the inclusion of the DAIP values and goals into other Shire plans and strategies	Ongoing
Ensure that as far as possible and practicable, all events are inclusive to people with disability	Ongoing
Engage with appropriate entities to implement and broadcast the Shire's access and inclusion initiatives	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 Koorda.

Strategies	Timeline
Identify footpaths, playgrounds, parks and public buildings which require upgrade to improve access for people with disability	Ongoing
Redevelopment and new building works, wherever practical will provide access for people with disability in accordance with current Australian Standards On Access and Mobility	Ongoing
Ensure adequate car parking for people with disability in all Shire of Koorda car parks	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 Koorda in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure information on Council and Shire services, facilities is available and accessible in a range of formats by all sectors of the community	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 Koorda as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of Koorda.

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)	Annually ongoing

Outcome 5:

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

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure the complaints policy and procedures are accessible to people with disability and available in alternate formats upon request.	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 Koorda.

Strategies	Timeline
Ensure public consultation is accessible to all people with disability	Ongoing
Ensure consultation is facilitated in an appropriate format to enable all members of the community to comment on the DAIP and disability access issues.	Ongoing as requested
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 Koorda.

Strategies	Timeline
Incorporate a statement on each position description and job advertisement that the Shire is an equal opportunity employer.	Ongoing
Ensure the Shire has positive relationships with disability employment providers.	Ongoing
Undertake the monitoring of the needs of any Shire employee with a disability and to address those needs where possible to maintain their employment.	Ongoing as required
Provide management and staff with support and training on inclusion of people with disability in the workplace.	Ongoing

APPENDIX 1: 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 Koorda:

- The Shire 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;
- Agricultural Show and other events where community has involvement are held at the Koorda Recreation Centre, Bowling Club or Shire Chambers, depending on numbers to facilitate persons with mobility disability, a main cause of disability within the Shire.

Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities provided by the Shire of Koorda:

- A public toilet block has been constructed at the Mollerin and Newcarlbeon reserve tourist site that is suitable for people with disability;
- Access ramps from footpaths to road surface have been provided in certain areas;
- Auto door has been installed at the main entrance to the Shire offices;
- Pram ramps to allow minimal trip hazard from road to footpath;
- Disabled toilet signage are provided to appropriate standard.

Outcome 3:

People with disability receive information from Shire of Koorda 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 Koorda as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of Koorda:

- 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 Koorda.

- The Shire provides information through public documents regarding all Council agreed new works;
- On election days the Shire ensures that buildings are accessible and that modified polling booths are in place;
- The Shire staff have proven themselves to be most understanding and very giving in 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 Koorda.

- 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 Koorda:

- 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.