



Shire of
Emerald

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN REVIEW

July 2013-July 2018
Adopted August 2013

This Plan is available in alternative formats upon request in hard copy in standard and large print, electronically by email, in audio format by cassette or cd and on the Shire's website.

Contents

Item	Page Number
Background	2
Process	4
Consultation	4
Objectives and Strategies	6
Next Steps	12
Appendices	13

Background Information:

The Shire of Exmouth is an area of 6,261 square kilometres situated on the tip of the North West Cape in Western Australia 1,270 kilometres north of Perth. Our town, which is quite remote, was originally constructed in 1964 as a support town for the United States Naval Communications Station Harold E Holt. The 2011 Census indicates that the population comprises 2,392 people, with a distribution of 53.7% male to 46.3% female. A total of 53.6% of the population are under 39 years of age. Conversely 9.7% of the population in Exmouth are over 65 years of age. The majority of the population is Australian born. The Shire has a total indigenous population of 44 which is 1.8% of the total population and their median age is 14 yrs of age. The Shire of Exmouth is expected to grow from the 2011 figure of 2,392 to 2,500 by 2026.

The main local industries are prawning, fishing, tourism, pastoral, aquaculture and the Harold E Hold Military Communications Base. Both Woodside Energy and BHP Billiton have Floating Production Storage and Offtake (FPSO) facilities off the North West Cape and major employers are Raytheon and the Department of Defence due to the presence of the Harold E Holt Naval Communications Station, the Department of Parks and Wildlife due to the marine environment and Cape Range National Park, the Shire of Exmouth, Kailis Fisheries and Pearl Farm, Exmouth Hospital and the many tourism operators.

Exmouth is one of the few areas in Australia that can boast the Range to Reef experience. The Cape Range National Park, with its spectacular gorges, is nestled on the west coast of the Cape and provides a large variety of camp sites on the coastal fringe of the park. You can hike through walk trails and gorges offering some of the best views in the west, or indulge in relaxing at pristine sandy beaches with crystal clear turquoise waters. Visit the top of the Range to see the sun rise and set over the beautiful beaches that encompass the North West Cape.

The world-heritage listed Ningaloo Marine Park extends 260 kilometres along the west coast of the Cape and provides one of the world's best reef experiences. Accessible directly from the shore, the Ningaloo Reef boasts an abundance of beautiful corals and amazing marine life. Explore the reef by snorkelling, diving or swimming amongst unique and colourful fish, ancient and vibrant corals, inquisitive dolphins, dugongs, turtles and manta rays. Visit at the right time of year and swim alongside the majestic whalesharks as they migrate past the coast

SHIRE OF EXMOUTH FACILITIES, FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES

The Council of the Shire of Exmouth comprises a Shire President, Deputy Shire President and four Councillors and meets monthly in the Council Chamber.

Reflecting the fact that the Exmouth area is undergoing a period of strong development, the Shire is undertaking an increasing range of functions and roles. The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for all Shire activities across the business units listed below:

Business Units at the Shire of Exmouth 2013

Community Engagement – Executive Manager Rogé Kempe

Corporate Services – Executive Manager Sue O’Toole

Aviation Services – Executive Manager Jenny Kox

Engineering Services – Executive Manager Keith Woodward

Health and Building Services – Executive Manager Rob Manning

Planning and Emergency Management – Executive Manager Rhassel Mhasho

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IN THE SHIRE OF EXMOUTH

Fewer than one in five Australians has a disability. The 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found the disability prevalence rate was 18.5%, a drop from the 20% record in 2003 and 19% recorded in 1998. Of those with a disability, 87% had a specific limitation or restriction; that is, an impairment restricting their ability to perform communication, mobility or self-care activities, or a restriction associated with schooling or employment.

As people grow older, there is an increased tendency to develop conditions that cause disability. This strong relationship between age and disability is evident in that younger people are less likely to report disability than older people. This is significant for Exmouth with our younger population and possibly one of the reasons why there are low numbers of disabled people in Exmouth.

There are 382,300 people in Western Australia with a disability. In Exmouth the statistics show that there are 64 people that require assistance due to a disability. The local Area Co-ordinator for the Disabilities Service Commission currently works with 6 families.

2007-2012 DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

The 2007-2012 DAIP was produced after a period of evaluation of the Disabilities Services Plan (DSP) and community consultation. This Plan identified what progress had been made since 1996, and what current barriers were in place for those with disabilities. The Plan has been reviewed annually and the Shire has reported on its progress to the Disability Services Commission. This was a robust Plan that has assisted in the consideration of our residents needs with a variety of disabilities. Our community consultation has indicated that residents overall are satisfied with the Shire’s performance in relation to the 6 Objectives. The consultation will be discussed in greater detail in a later section.

It would appear that it is still necessary to work with staff so that they understand some of the legislation and what is required of them, hence some similar strategies and targets in this Plan. However as previously discussed the Shire of Exmouth is experiencing a period of significant infrastructure investment and development and it is important that this is reflected by the Review.

Processes of the Review:

The previous DAIP strategies were reviewed through the community consultation process. This structure allowed the Shire the framework to review the strategies and consider where progress has been made and what needs to remain in the current plan. In addition to this feedback was sought on what were current areas of concern. The Shire of Exmouth Corporate Business Plan 2013-2014 and the Community Strategic Plan 2012-2017 were also examined as part of this process.

Review Report:

Objective one: People with Disability have opportunities to access the services of, and any events organised by the Shire of Exmouth.

- 2012 Vlaming Head Lighthouse Celebrations were inclusive. The project manager worked with the HACC team to ensure their clients could attend. Their bus was allowed to remain on Lighthouse Hill, when it was closed to traffic. Accessible toilets provided. The HACC manager was involved in the planning of the event to ensure that this major event was inclusive.



- The Airport Shuttle bus is now wheelchair friendly and this is part of the contract with the service provider.
- Items are included as a matter of course on the Shire's new website and in the Shire Newsletter



Objective 2: People with Disability have opportunities to access the building and other facilities of the Shire of Exmouth.

- In 2010 the redevelopment of the Ross Street Mall was completed, the redevelopment included tactile surface indicators, appropriate ramps, levelling of access ways and removal of obstacles to improve access.

Opening of Ross St Mall Upgrade



- The Building Officer ensures that legal requirements for access are met in terms of new Shire buildings / facilities
- There is information on the Exmouth Visitors Centre website in relation to travelling with disability – follow link <http://www.exmouthwa.com.au/pages/travelling-for-people-with-disabilities-dogs-kids/>



Objective 3: People with Disability receive information from the Shire of Exmouth in a format that will enable them to readily access information

- The Shire has produced and endorsed its Access and Inclusion Policy
- Work has commenced on corporate branding and font, this task continues in the current DAIP

Objective 4: People with Disability receive a high level of service from the staff of the Shire of Exmouth to meet individual requirements

- Those consulted felt that the level of service received was high from Shire staff



Objective 5: People with Disability have opportunities to make complaints to the Shire of Exmouth in a way that meets individual requirements

- Local people with disability that were involved in this process felt that their needs were met by the Shire in relation to this.

Objective 6: People with Disability have opportunities to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Exmouth

- There have been 2 major public consultation exercises in Exmouth, one for the Community Strategic Plan and the second for the Town Centre and Foreshore Re-development. Both these consultations have involved a number of different methods, organisations and agencies to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible. This has included setting up in the town centre, at the hospital, at the school, public meetings and information via newsletter and website. There are also bi-annual Community Forum meetings at the Shire Hall.

It is clear that there is still work to be done, however this is a good foundation to start from and move forward.

Consultation Process

The DAIP 2013-2018 has been produced in consultation with the following groups:

The Shire's DAIP Review working group
Local organisations and agencies
Residents who have a disability
Carers
Staff of the Shire of Exmouth
The Local Area Coordinator for the Disability Services Commission

A survey questionnaire was developed and respondents were able to comment in person, by email, phone or by any other form of correspondence. The Exmouth Hospital's Home and Community Care (HACC) service assisted in promoting the questionnaires on their rounds and for their clients to get involved in the process. The local Area Co-ordinator for the Disabilities Service Commission sent the questionnaire to all her clients in the area. The Questionnaire was also advertised on Exmouth Info website and at the public Library, for a period of 3 weeks.

There were only 7 responses to the questionnaire, despite extensions to the deadline for returning it. As with the working group the responses were positive.

Comments included:

"The Shire are extremely approachable"

"My son is nearly 4 years old and this is the first time I have known about the Shire's Access and Inclusion Plan for disabled in Exmouth. It is great to be included"

Objective Three was highlighted by two of the respondents and echo's the views of the review working group. Additional strategies have been adopted to address this matter.

Questionnaire respondents used the opportunity to mention other Shire issues, for example footpaths and ramps.

Comments included:

"...So access can be difficult in some areas – ramps and rails are beneficial for my son to steady himself up and down raised areas / inclines in particular"

"some of the newer footpaths in town has a 40mm lip where path meets the road – require level access"

"If caretaker had more control of maintenance requests and add on's for disabled maintenance"

The DAIP Review working group was formed as a result of seeking interested parties from questionnaire responses and an advertisement in the Shire Newsletter. The working group meeting had a low turnout, however the information received from the community has been very useful. The responses and discussions that were held mirrored the information that came from the questionnaire. Therefore although sample size is incredibly small, it would appear that we have been able to capture the main issues for this community. However with a total of approximately 64 people, we have captured the concerns and issues of 10% of the population.

Findings of the Consultation:

In terms of the 6 objectives of the DAIP, the members of the working group and questionnaire respondents felt that on balance the Shire was doing well. There were a few issues highlighted in terms of objective 3 – access to information and new strategies have been put in place to address these concerns.

There were a number of issues raised that do not fall within the remit of the review, but do concern the Shire. These included access to the cemetery area, footpaths, availability of disabled toilets and other items of maintenance. These issues have been acknowledged by the Shire and have been passed on to the Engineering Services Department for information and where possible addressing.

For example the cemetery maintenance issue has been an ongoing problem and through this process we now have a date when the work will be completed by. This feedback has been fed back to the group so that they are aware their input has been valuable and we will act on it, not only in relation to the 6 Objectives but to other matters of concern.

Please refer to appendix 1 for an example of the questionnaire

Please refer to appendix 2 for a copy of the meeting notes

Monitoring and Reporting

The plan will be monitored by the Community Engagement Team and reviewed regularly. The formal review process will take place annually every July to coincide with the formal reporting required by the Disability Service Commission.

Informing Agents and Contractors – When the Shire uses agents and contractors to complete work(s) related to the DAIP they be informed of its strategies and tasks via a hard copy during the tendering process.

Communicating the DAIP

The DAIP will be promoted via the Shire's website and an advertisement taken out in the Newsletter. The Newsletter is the preferred method of communication from the Shire identified by the DAIP working group. It will be promoted that the DAIP is available in alternative formats if required.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Objective 1: People with disability have opportunities to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Shire of Exmouth

STRATEGY	TASK
<p>1.1 Ensure that events, whether organised or funded, are accessible to people with disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure officers and organisations planning events are aware of the Accessible Events checklist • Work with Youth Action Exmouth (YAE) to ensure they understand their responsibilities when organising events for their peers / the community • Work with the Whale Shark Festival (WSF) committee to ensure the WSF is accessible.
<p>1.2 Ensure Shire of Exmouth staff and agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the Disability Services Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Health and Building guidelines continue to be circulated to agents / contractors
<p>1.3 Improve community awareness of services available to people with disability and their carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on accessible Shire of Exmouth facilities and services on the Shire website, as available • Include relevant items in the Shire's monthly newsletter • Complete a service guide for all relevant services for people with a disability in Exmouth and make available to the community and visitors

Objective 2: People with disability have opportunities to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Exmouth

STRATEGY	TASK
2.1 Ensure that all Shire of Exmouth buildings and facilities meet the standards for access, where required or practicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify access barriers to buildings and facilities • Prioritise and make recommendations to Council regarding work on rectifying identified barriers
2.2 Ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability where practicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the legal requirements for access are met in plans for new or redeveloped buildings/facilities for example town centre redevelopment, federation park revitalisation and foreshore.
2.3 Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure existing ACROD bays are compliant and monitored for appropriate usage • Consider needs for additional bays at some locations as part of the town centre revitalisation
2.4 Advocate to local businesses and tourist venues the requirements for, and benefits of, the provision of accessible venues by making them aware of the Disability Service Commission’s Access Information Checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (available on the DSC website) on the needs of people with disabilities and of legal requirements and best practice • Encourage tourism operators/businesses to promote their accessible venues/services via the Exmouth Visitor Centre ‘<i>Travelling for People with Disabilities</i>’ section on their website www.exmouthwa.com.au • Establish where the beach wheel chairs are and assist to promote this service to both residents and tourists. • Work with the Exmouth Visitors Centre to address this issue and provide up to date information

Objective 3: People with disability receive information from the Shire of Exmouth in a format that will enable them to readily access information

STRATEGY	TASK
3.1 Provide information through a variety of channels – both electronic and paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use the newsletter and notice board but investigate other methods of communication that will work best for people with disabilities.
3.2 Provide information in a variety of formats, where practicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek guidance from the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities when producing public documents
3.3 Ensure that the community is aware that Shire information is available 'on request' in a variety of formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that public documents carry a notation that it is available in alternative formats • Promote this facility via the Shire website
3.4 Use clear and concise language and easy to read typeface fonts in all publications, documents and other printed matter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the current rebranding exercise ensure the corporate font style and size for all public documents that is easy to read

Objective 4: People with disability receive a high level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Exmouth to meet individual requirements

STRATEGY	TASK
4.1 Encourage all Shire of Exmouth staff and Elected Members (existing and new) to be aware of access needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a training plan for front line staff on the needs of disabled and other minority groups to ensure that service is consistently at a high level.
4.2 Where practicable, raise community awareness of disability and access issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate relevant information as appropriate via newsletters, notice board and website
4.3 Seek expert advice from disability organisations, as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate disability enquiries via the Executive Manager of Community Engagement

Objective 5: People with disability have opportunities to make complaints to the Shire of Exmouth in a way that meets individual requirements

STRATEGY	TASK
5.1 Ensure current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow flexibility in grievance mechanisms to ensure that those with a disability are able to make complaints.

Objective 6: People with disability have opportunities to participate in any public consultation by the Shire of Exmouth

STRATEGY	TASK
6.1 Ensure methods of consultation meet the needs of people with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use universal methods of consultation that meet the needs of people with disabilities • Include reference to accessible options if conducting community consultation • Refer to DAIP Review working group to assist with this function and other local partners
6.2 Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress against DAIP, include information in the Shire of Exmouth Community Strategic Plan and lodge an update report with the Disability Services Commission annually

Next Steps and Immediate Priorities:

1. Review document endorsed by DAIP Review working group
2. Review document then endorsed by Council (July 2013 meeting)
3. Information session to staff in relation to the review and the tasks that have been set – as it is the responsibility of all staff to meet the requirements
4. Identify 3 priority areas to focus on in the first 6 months
5. Address the areas of concern from the DAIP review working group with Engineering Services

Appendices