

# Access and Inclusion Plan

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## 1 Foreword

With great pride and enthusiasm, we launch the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) for 2023-2028. Building upon the achievements and lessons learned from the previous 2018-2022 DAIP, we embark on this journey with a renewed dedication to creating a Shire that welcomes and accommodates individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Over the past years, we've achieved significant improvements, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group. Establishing this group, developing a dedicated Working Group page on Your Say SJ, and introducing the Mobile Library Service are testaments to our commitment to inclusivity.

As we move forward, we recognise the importance of continuity and enhancement, addressing the unique needs and challenges of individuals with disabilities in our community.

According to the latest census in 2021, 3.6% of the Shire's population, equivalent to 1,151 people, reported requiring assistance with their day-to-day lives due to disability.

These statistics underscore the significance of our mission to ensure that every resident can fully participate in and contribute to the life of our community. By fostering an environment that is accessible to all, we not only uplift the lives of people with a disability but also enrich the lives of every member of our community.

The invaluable input provided by the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group during the design phase of our projects has been instrumental in helping us achieve positive outcomes. Their insights ensure that our initiatives are well-intentioned and effectively implemented, making a meaningful impact from the outset.

As we present this finalised DAIP for 2023-2028, we acknowledge the collaborative spirit that has brought us to this point. This plan is not merely a document but a commitment to action, guided by a comprehensive implementation plan that outlines realistic timelines for delivering our objectives. We are confident that, together, we will continue to create positive change, ensuring that the Shire remains a place where everyone, regardless of their abilities or background, can thrive and feel a sense of belonging.



## 2 What is Access and Inclusion?

The Shire is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive place for all people – no matter their age, ability or background. Access and inclusion creates a place that is liveable for everyone. Promoting a sense of connection and belonging can lead to improved mental health and other individual and community benefits; feeling valued and comfortable socially can prevent and reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, depression, and more.<sup>1</sup>

Access in this context refers to an individual's physical ability to get to, into, and around facilities and services. This access is created by removing structural barriers and including mechanisms to enable structural access.

*Inclusion* in this context refers to an individual's ability to participate as fully as possible in programs and services provided by organisations in an integrated and holistic manner that does not ostracise, embarrass or humiliate an individual.

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities. In the Disability Services Act, *disability* means a disability –

- a) which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; and
- b) which is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- c) which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and
- d) which results in –
  - i) a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
  - ii) a need for continuing support services.

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<sup>1</sup> Sourced from [www.headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/community](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/connectedness/community).



# 3 Background

## 3.1 Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale – Overview

The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (the Shire) is home to more than 37,000<sup>2</sup> people and is one of the fastest growing communities in Australia.

Located 45km from the Perth CBD, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale spans 901 square kilometres and is set against the picturesque backdrop of the Darling Scarp within the Peel region. Located on the northern boundary of the Peel Region, there are 13 townsites and localities, being Byford, Serpentine, Jarrahdale, Oakford, Oldbury, Mundijong, Mardella, Karrakup, Whitby, Keysbrook, Cardup, Hopeland and Darling Downs.

It is geographically diverse with forested hills and wetlands being complemented by areas of pristine wilderness and an abundance of wildflowers and wildlife. The coastal flats are dominated by rural residential properties with a mix of natural vegetation and cleared grazing land supporting a vibrant equine industry. The Shire incorporates urban, suburban and rural communities. This unique landscape delivers an enviable rural setting in close proximity to a major metropolitan area.

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2 Forecast id. [forecast.id.com.au/serpentine-jarrahdale](https://forecast.id.com.au/serpentine-jarrahdale)

## 3.2 The Shire's role in access and inclusion

As a Local Government Authority, the responsibilities of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale are varied, all of which influence the day to day lives of its residents. The Shire is responsible for a wide range of functions, facilities and services, many of which directly intersect with matters of access and inclusion. Key functions of the Shire includes, but is not limited to the following:

### 1. Services to Property

Construction and maintenance of public buildings owned by the Shire (including car parks); construction and maintenance of local roads, footpaths and kerbs; drainage and land development; waste collection and disposal; litter control and street cleaning; planning and caring for street trees; numbering of building and lots; street lighting; and bush fire control.

### 2. Services to the Community

Provision and maintenance of playing areas, parks, gardens, reserves and facilities for community use (such as sporting and community groups); provision of social and recreation programs – including those for youth, seniors and culturally diverse backgrounds; public library and information services; environmental sustainability and health education programs; community, art and cultural events; and providing assistance for community groups via grants, workshops and club development advice.

### 3. Regulatory Services

Planning road systems, subdivisions and town planning schemes; building and land development approvals, additions or alterations to buildings; public health inspections; and ranger services, including dog control and parking compliance.

### 4. General Administration

The provision of general information to the public; the administration of compliments and complaints; payment of fees and charges such as rates, hall hire and dog licenses. Responsibilities of the Shire also include effective administration and compliance with the *WA Local Government Act 1995* and other applicable legislative requirements, such as ordinary and special council meetings, Local Government elections; public notices; procurement and purchasing.

## 3.3 Community profile

Around 1 in 6 people in Australia have a disability (or about 4.4 million people<sup>3</sup>).

According to the latest census (2021), 3.6% of the Shire's population (or 1,151 people) reported needing help with their day-to-day lives due to disability<sup>4</sup>. This has increased since 2016, with the highest growth in the 20 – 59 age group. With the growth that our Shire is experiencing – over the life of this plan we're expected to grow by 29% - these numbers are only increasing and so too is the need for accessible and inclusive services and facilities.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018) [Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2018](#)

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) [Census Community Profile 2021](#)

Currently in our community, the people accessing disability service providers are primarily people with autism; intellectual disability; neurological disorders; vision, hearing, speech or other sensory impairments; and mental illness associated disability<sup>5</sup>.

We also recognise that access and inclusion challenges can impact the lives of many others in our community, not just those living with disability. This includes people with other health conditions, carers, families with young children and culturally diverse people.

In our Shire<sup>6</sup>:

- 8.6% of our population is aged under five years (suggesting families with prams that benefit from accessible and inclusive services and spaces);
- 10.8% of our community speak a language other than English at home;
- 28.9% of the population are living with one or more long term health condition;
- More people are now providing unpaid care to others than ever before.

5 Australian Government NDIS Demand Map [blcw.dss.gov.au/ndis-demand-map/](https://blcw.dss.gov.au/ndis-demand-map/)

6 Profile id. [profile.id.com.au/serpentine-jarrahdale](https://profile.id.com.au/serpentine-jarrahdale)





## 3.4 Planning for access and inclusion

### Related legislation

To plan for better access and inclusion, there is a range of legislation and strategic frameworks to guide and direct the Shire in its delivery of services and facilities, programs and projects. These include:

<u><b>WA Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004)</b></u>	This act provides a foundation for promoting the rights of Western Australians with disability and the delivery of programs and services. It requires that all Western Australian Government departments develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.
<u><b>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</b></u>	This act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person, in many areas of public life, including employment, education, getting or using services, renting or buying a house or unit, and accessing public places, because of their disability.
<u><b>WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984</b></u>	This act aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for all persons regardless of sex, pregnancy, race, religious or political conviction, trade union association, sexual preference, gender history, impairment, age, family responsibility or family status.
<u><b>Disability (Access to Premises Buildings) Standards 2010</b></u>	These standards are legislated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and aims to makes sure that people with disability (and their family members, carers and friends) have equal access to public buildings.
<u><b>WA State Disability Strategy 2020 – 2030</b></u>	This strategy sets the foundation for building a more inclusive Western Australia, empowering people with disability to participate meaningfully in all parts of society and to have the resources to do so.

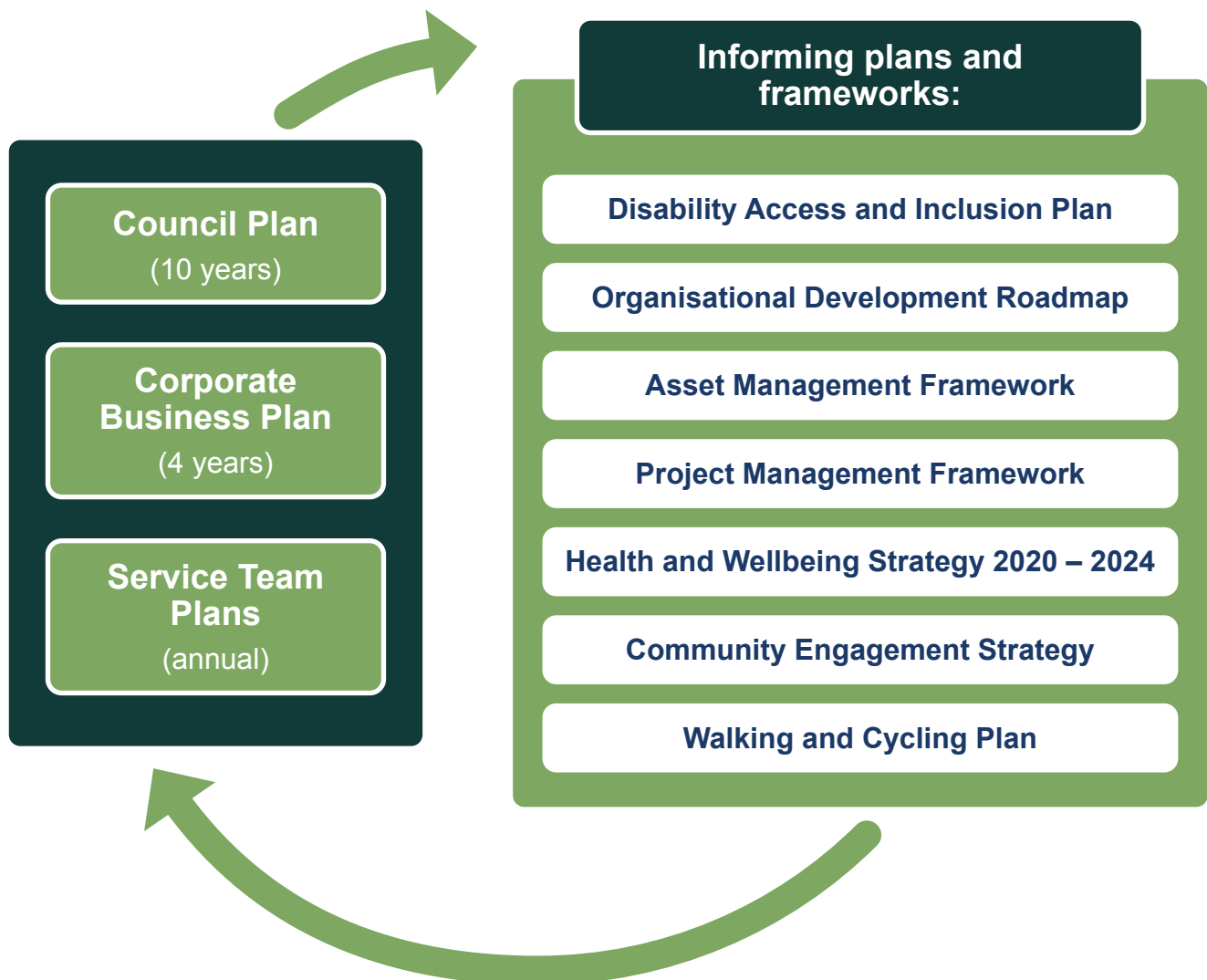
To respond to the requirements of the Disability Services Act, the Disability Services Regulations 2004 identifies the following seven (7) desired outcomes which provide the framework for the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale's Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the **services** of, and any **events** organised by, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the **buildings and other facilities** of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.
3. People with disability receive **information** from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale in a format that enables them to access the information as readily as other people.
4. People with disability receive the same level and **quality of service** from the staff of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale as other people receive.

5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make **complaints** to the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any **public consultation** by the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain **employment** with the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.

## Strategic alignment

The Access and Inclusion Plan aligns with the Shire's Council Plan (formerly referred to as the Strategic Community Plan) and Corporate Business Plan and plays an important role in informing the short and long-term planning for the Shire.



# 4 Development of the Shire's Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028

## 4.1 Review

In preparing the Shire's Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028, the following steps were taken:

- A review of the AIP 2018 – 2022 to identify gaps and areas which require ongoing development;
- Review of annual progress reports, relevant Council documents and disability legislation;
- Community and stakeholder consultation (section 4.2);
- Benchmarking in order to investigate best practice in access and inclusion.

The Shire continues to make progress in improving access and inclusion for its community. The previous Access and Inclusion Plan (2018 – 2022), saw the implementation of a number of initiatives that enhanced accessibility and inclusive practices across the Shire, many of which are identified as continuing as part of the 2023 – 2028 Access and Inclusion Plan.

1



Establishment of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

2



Development and launch of the dedicated Access and Inclusion Working Group page on Your Say SJ

3



Establishment of Mobile Library Service

4



Completion of a facility audit and establishment of a Priority Works Plan for accessible improvements on Shire facilities





## 4.2 Consultation process

To develop the Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028, consultation took place with:

- Residents and ratepayers, in particular people with a disability, their families, carers
- Disability service agencies and organisations
- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale employees, executive management and elected members

Input was facilitated via an online and hard copy survey (as well as the option for verbal feedback where preferred), two community workshops, workshops with staff, and ongoing consultation with the Shire's Access and Inclusion Advisory Group.

The opportunity to participate was widely promoted via:

- All Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale digital communication platforms (social media; Your Say SJ; website).
- Local newspapers.
- Direct email and newsletters, including local community groups, service providers and subscribed residents and stakeholders.
- Access and Inclusion Advisory Group and associated member's networks.
- Local community places and spaces, including Shire Administration, Library and Mobile Library Van displays.
- Pop-Up displays at events in the consultation period including the International Day of People with Disability come-and-try sports event (3 December 2022).
- Radio promotion via Heritage FM

## 4.3 Feedback from the consultation

The community reported positive experiences in many areas such as interaction with Shire staff members and the various services and events provided by the Shire. There were more mixed views expressed regarding accessing information from the Shire and the accessibility of the Shire's buildings and facilities.

Throughout the review process, key themes emerged that were consistently expressed. These are summarised as follows, noting a range of other valuable and worthwhile suggestions were received:

1. **Facility and infrastructure improvements** – to improve people's ability to access events, engage with services, attend facilities and to allow for employment opportunities.
2. **Improving communication and promotion** – targeted, thoughtful messaging in diverse formats, encouraging participation in events and programs, feedback and engagement with services and to enable involvement in consultation activities.
3. **Building understanding, awareness and tolerance** – initiatives to improve the service received from the Shire and other places, supporting an improved culture and improving people's sense of belonging in their community.

# 5 Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028 Implementation

## 5.1 Implementation Plan

In order to effectively address feedback received through the consultation process (outlined Section 5 above), the Shire has developed a 5-year implementation plan that focuses on realistic and achievable actions to improve multiple outcome areas for access and inclusion in the Shire.

Each action will be reviewed and considered annually in context of the specified aim, as part of the Shire's associated integrated planning frameworks and budget processes. It is recognised that over the life of the Plan, alternative actions or initiatives may be identified, that still address the specified aims.

## 5.2 Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

The Shire has an Access and Inclusion Advisory Group, that supports the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the Access and Inclusion Plan. The group also supports the Shire to form positive community partnerships, assists in the delivery of high-quality outcomes consistent with the Council Plan, and provides advice to Council on matters related to access and inclusion when required.

The Shire is committed to the ongoing facilitation of the advisory group, providing an avenue for people with lived and learned experience to share their knowledge and expertise for improved community outcomes.

## 5.3 Communication of the plan

The new Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 – 2028 will be communicated via the following means:

- Shire website
  - Electronic copy
  - E-reader version
  - Video describing Plan
- Dedicated Your Say SJ Group Page
- Advert in the local newspaper promoting the new Plan
- Shire Facebook page and E-Newsletters
- Copies being available upon request and available in different formats
- A copy distributed to each member of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group.
- An email to Shire staff advising how it influences their business area and any training available.
- Information to contractors and agents as appropriate.

# 6 Monitoring, reviewing and reporting

## 6.1 Monitoring and reviewing

The Access and Inclusion Plan 2023 - 2028 is to be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act. Should the Plan be amended, a copy of the amended Plan will be lodged with the Department of Communities. The Implementation Plan will be updated as frequently as required.

The Shire will continue to inform and seek feedback from people with a disability, their families, carers and disability organisations regarding the Access and Inclusion outcomes and identified objectives in the Implementation Plan.

## 6.2 Annual reporting

As per the *Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004)*, the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale reports on the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan through its annual report and the prescribed proforma provided by the Department Communities each year.

These annual reports advise of the progress made by the Shire, and its agents and contractors, in achieving the desired outcomes.

In addition, the Shire will provide updates to the community on the progress of the plan in a variety of ways.







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