



Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2029

Alternative Formats

Electronic copies of Shire of York documents are available for download from the Shire of York website at www.york.wa.gov.au

Copies of all Shire documents are available in alternative formats upon request.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of York acknowledges the Ballardong people of the Noongar Nation who are the Traditional Owners of this country and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, sky and culture. We pay our respects to all these people and their Elders past, present and emerging.

Other Acknowledgements

The Shire of York would like to thank all those people who contributed to the development of the Shire of York Access and Inclusion Plan 2024-2029.

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Message from our Shire President

I'm pleased to present the Shire of York's Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) 2024-2029 which is about making our community a welcoming and inclusive place for people of all abilities to enjoy. It demonstrates that continually improving access to information, providing high quality services, facilities, programs and events for people with disability remains a top priority for us.



Over the past five years, the Shire has improved existing infrastructure and introduced new initiatives which make our Shire more inclusive and welcoming.

Going forward the new AIP will guide capital works and Shire planning to meet the needs and aspirations of people of all abilities. The formation of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group will pave the way for ongoing feedback and guidance on access and inclusion matters in the Shire.

The development of the AIP has been a collaborative journey. With extensive consultation, the Shire gathered feedback from our local community, service providers, key stakeholders and staff to help identify key priorities and actions for the new AIP 2024-2029.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all who participated in these consultations and acknowledge that your involvement has helped play a pivotal role in creating a comprehensive and responsive plan.

We acknowledge there is more work ahead to achieve our vision of building an inclusive community for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, and with your ongoing support we can make it happen.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your ongoing contribution to making the Shire of York a welcoming and inclusive place.

Cr Kevin Trent

Shire President

Introduction to our Access and Inclusion Plan

Our Access and Inclusion Plan aims to improve access and inclusion for all people living, working or visiting the Shire of York, including people with disability. By improving **access** we mean making the environments, services and information we provide easy for everyone to understand and use. Improving **inclusion** is about making sure everyone feels valued and respected and has equal access to opportunities and resources.

It is a requirement of the WA Disability Services Act (1993) that all public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan or Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services. The AIP must be lodged with the Department of Communities, reported on annually and reviewed at least every five years.

The 2024-2029 Shire of York AIP has been created with input from Shire staff, elected members, contractors, service providers, community clubs, and community members including people with disability and their families.

The AIP follows on from the 2018-2023 Shire of York Access and Inclusion Plan. The Plan has a broad focus of access and inclusion for all, including people of all ages, abilities, cultures, genders, religions, beliefs and preferences.



Alignment with Other Strategies

The AIP supports a number of legislative and good practice initiatives that strive for human rights, equity, and accessible and inclusive communities including:

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020 – 2030](#)

At a local level, the AIP supports our [Strategic Community Plan](#) 2020-2030 goals:

1. **The place to be** - To be a close-knit community, full of life, in a welcoming and accessible place for all.
2. **Driving the York Economy Forward** - To have a vibrant, diverse and prosperous local economy which creates local jobs, business opportunities and a positive image for the Shire
3. **A Leader in Sustainable Environment** - To be a place which is renowned for the quality of its natural environment, the astounding beauty of the landscape, and the care taken by the community.
4. **Built for Lifestyle and Resilience** - To have a built environment which supports community, economy and the environment, respects the past and creates a resilient future.
5. **Strong Leadership and Governance** - To have effective and responsive leadership and governance, where a sense of collective purpose and shared direction combine to work together.

Community Snapshot

The Shire of York covers an area of 2,131 square kilometres (213,159 hectares) in the Wheatbelt region, and was the first inland settlement in Western Australia. It is bounded by the Shires of Northam and Cunderdin to the north and north-east respectively, Quairading to the east, Beverley to the south and Mundaring and Kalamunda to the west.

The Shire of York’s estimated resident population in the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Census was 3,459¹. The average age of residents was 56 years and 91% of the population spoke English only or very well in addition to another language/s. Less than 1% of people spoke English poorly or not at all. Religious affiliation was reported as majority Christianity, with small numbers of others including Hinduism and Islam.

Based on the results from the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey on Disability, Ageing and Carers² approximately 612 (17.7%) residents will have a disability. Of those approximately 201 (5.8%) are likely to need assistance with core activities such as self-care, mobility or communication³. Whilst some of this assistance will be provided by paid carers and services, approximately 374 (10.8%) residents will be providing unpaid support to a family member or friend⁴.



¹ [2021 York, Census Community Profiles | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au)

² Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2018

³ Disability and Carers: Census, 2021

⁴ Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2018

Access and Inclusion Progress to Date

The Shire of York has implemented a number of initiatives already to improve access and inclusion. Some examples over the past five years include:

Improving access to services and events

- Launch of an online catalogue for the York Library improving access for people with limited mobility or transport.
- Provision of an accessible desk (various height options) in the York Library.
- Increasing the availability of ACROD parking bays for people with disability.
- Installing and upgrading footpath crossovers, access ramps, and pram ramps.
- Slope adjustments and better paving to facilitate easier movement for wheelchairs, prams, and walkers in the town centre and around Avon Park.
- Launch of “Experience York” app which includes interactive maps and information about attractions, activities and services in York. Metrics from the developer show improved access for people of various ages and abilities.
- Inclusion of accessible and inclusive activities and a quiet area for those who need reduced stimulation at YORKids festivals.

Improving access to buildings and facilities

- Installing lifts and ramps in public buildings such as the historic Town Hall and other Shire buildings.
- Improvements to public toilets.

Improving access to information

- Launch of an e-newsletter as another channel to keep community informed.
- Mail out of information relating to Covid – 19 to reach people who are not online or able to access other channels of communication for this information.
- Making documents available in multiple formats on request to cater to different accessibility needs.
- Collaboration with the Centre for Accessibility Australia around improvements to communications and information.

Improving staff skills

- Training in partnership with Holyoake on dealing with disclosure of vulnerability, based on staff concerns about mental health.
- Offering training opportunities for staff as they arise such as the recent “Digital Accessibility” workshop provided in York by the Centre for Accessibility Australia.

Improving access to complaints and consultation mechanisms

- Formation of an Access and Inclusion Advisory Group to provide input on accessibility and inclusion in the Shire.
- Engaging in regular community consultations through a variety of methods to gather feedback and improvement ideas.
- Ensuring venues for consultation are accessible.

Improving access to employment

- Development of an Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Policy.
- Partnering with Disability Employment Services to ensure they are aware of Shire employment opportunities.
- Offering flexible working arrangements such as work from home or flexible hours for staff who need this.



Community Suggestions for our new AIP

As part of the review and development of our AIP, a consultation was carried out with Shire of York staff and community members to identify barriers to access and inclusion as well as potential strategies to be incorporated into the new AIP.

The consultation was advertised widely including:

- On the Shire's website over May 2024
- On radio - Triple M and Voice of the Avon, multiple times at different timeslots during May 2024
- Posters and flyers distributed throughout York including a letterbox drop to all residents at Balladong Retirement Village and Residential Aged Care facilities.
- Direct communications to stakeholders in the community including the hospital, school, support agencies, police, all businesses on the main street, the Men's Shed, community groups and sporting groups.
- Social media posts

A total of 86 submissions were received during the consultation through surveys, meetings/forums, interviews and emails.

The key suggestions in the consultation included:

- More services and activities that are accessible and inclusive of people of all ages and abilities and promotion of these.
- Improvements to pathways, ramps and crossovers so that navigating around York is easier.
- More accessible and inclusive toilet facilities including good signage to these and specifically including the Town Hall and Shire Administration.
- Information for businesses about being more accessible and inclusive – how to and the benefits.
- Events planned or supported by the Shire to include more accessible and inclusive elements and promotion of these.
- Further improvements to the accessibility of specific buildings such as Shire Administration and public spaces such as Avon Park.
- Involvement of experts for advice on access and inclusion including people with lived experience.
- Improvements to printed and digital information so it is easier to access.
- Regular staff training to understand the diverse needs of community members and how to provide accessible and inclusive services and information.

- More promotion of how the community can provide feedback or make a complaint to the Shire.
- Improvements to the way complaints are managed.
- Incentives for businesses to employ people with disability.
- More opportunities for work experience and skill development with the Shire.

The strategies and actions for our new AIP were developed in collaboration with key staff after reviewing all the feedback received.



AIP 2024-2029 Outcomes and Strategies

These outcomes reflect the Shire's commitment to access and inclusion and address the seven outcomes mandated in the WA Disability Services Act (1993).

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any event organised by, the Shire of York.

Strategies:

1. Continue to support the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group to provide advice and advocacy for community needs and guide the implementation of the AIP.
2. Continue to improve the accessibility of events, both organised and funded.
3. Continue to monitor and improve services to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.
4. Continue to develop strategic partnerships with key agencies to maximise access to services for people with disability.

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

Strategies:

1. Encourage best practice in access and inclusion when planning and approving new and redevelopment works.
2. Consider accessibility requirements and opportunities in maintenance and renewal works.
3. Improve external infrastructure including pathways, parking, transport, playgrounds, streetscapes and public open spaces.
4. Advocate to local businesses and venues the requirements for and benefits of providing accessible and inclusive buildings and facilities.

Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from the Shire of York in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategies:

1. Ensure information provided by the Shire is accessible and/or available in alternative formats.
2. Ensure marketing and promotional materials reflect York as an accessible and inclusive place to live, work and play.
3. Improve accessibility of the Shire's website for both external and internal users.

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of York as other people receive from the staff of the Shire of York.

Strategies:

1. Provide all front facing services staff with training about access and inclusion, and services and supports available.
2. Include access and inclusion training in the onboarding of all new staff and councillors.
3. Improve the accessibility of the customer service areas at the Shire administration.
4. Provide publicly available information about accessibility in the Shire.

Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities as others to provide complaints and feedback and participate in any public consultation by the Shire of York.

Strategies:

1. Ensure that grievance mechanisms are accessible for all people.
2. Ensure that consultations undertaken by the Shire for any activity meet access and inclusion requirements.
3. Provide feedback about the outcomes of complaints and consultations.

Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of York.

Strategies:

1. Provide opportunities for people of all abilities to gain employment with the Shire.
2. Advocate for procurement from contractors that provide employment opportunities for people with disability.
3. Support a culture of access and inclusion within the organisation.
4. Provide training to hiring managers on accessible and inclusive recruitment practices.

Implementing our AIP

Implementing the AIP is the responsibility of all Shire staff. An internal action plan has been developed to support the AIP with key deliverables allocated to specific Shire business units. The AIP action plan is a living document that is continually edited and updated as progress is made, or new information is received.

Responsibility for developing, monitoring, implementing, reviewing and amending the AIP is a core function of the Corporate and Community Services business area. This includes responsibility for ensuring that actions are integrated into the service plans of relevant business units.

Our Access and Inclusion Advisory Group (AIAG) also have a key role in monitoring the progress, achievements and updates of the AIP.

Promoting our AIP

The Shire of York will promote the availability of the new AIP by:

- Notice in the Community Matters newspaper
- On the Shire of York website
- Email notification to all staff
- Directly to the Shire's Access and Inclusion Advisory Group
- Hard copies of the AIP available at the York Library and Community Resource Centre

Agents and contractors will be informed about their obligations by referencing the AIP in procurement documents and in the induction checklist.

Reporting on our AIP

The Shire will report annually on its progress in implementing the AIP to the Department of Communities and in the Shire's Annual Report.

Updates on the implementation of the AIP will also be posted on the Shire's website.

Contact Details for More Information or Feedback

Manager, Community & Place
Shire of York
Phone: (08) 9641 0500
Email: records@york.wa.gov.au

Glossary and Definitions

AIP – Access and Inclusion Plan.

AIAG – The Shire’s Access and Inclusion Advisory Group, who provide input to the Shire about the AIP and community needs. The AIAG includes community members as well as staff and reflects the diversity of people who may be impacted by the AIP.

Disability – The Disability Services Act 1993 defines ‘disability’ as something:

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

References

Demographics:

- [Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2018](#)
[Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)
- [Disability and Carers: Census, 2021](#)
[Disability and carers: Census, 2021 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

Key legislation and supporting initiatives:

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006](#)
- [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020 – 2030](#)
- [Shire of York – Strategic Community Plan](#)

