



# **City of Armadale DRAFT Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016 - 2021**

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## **1. Introduction**

The City is committed to ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to access its services, facilities and information, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community.

Local Governments are required under the Disability Services Act (1993), as amended in 2004, to have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to improve access and inclusion for people with disability.

The DAIP provides a framework for the identification of areas where access and inclusion can be improved and the development of strategies to best improve access and inclusion. These strategies work towards a number of access and inclusion outcomes, which are defined in the Act as the minimum standard for DAIPs. The seven access and inclusion outcome areas specified in the Act aim to provide a mechanism for people with disability to be included and have access to their community.

In addition to these seven mandatory minimum standards for DAIPs under the Act, the City has included one additional outcome in its DAIP, being that the City will provide information, and encouragement to raise the awareness of the community regarding disability, access and inclusion.

## **2. Background**

### ***1.2 The City of Armadale***

The City of Armadale is located about 30km in Perth's south-east and covers an area of 560km<sup>2</sup>. The City includes suburbs such as Kelmscott, Roleystone, Mt Nasura, Armadale and Seville Grove, along with growth areas in Harrisdale, Piara Waters, Haynes and Hilbert.

The Armadale region has grown from an historic country town on the fringe of the Perth metropolitan area, to an important regional activity centre for surrounding growth areas including Byford and other areas within the City of Armadale. Armadale is now one of the fastest growing local governments in Australia, with a current population of 76,885.

### ***2.2 Functions, Facilities and Services Provided by the City of Armadale***

The City of Armadale provides a range of services and supports to the community broadly defined as:

- Services to Property. For example construction and maintenance of council owned buildings, footpaths and roads; street lighting, and waste management collection;

- Services to the community. This includes parks and reserves, library and information services and community development;
- Regulatory Services. This includes planning of road systems and subdivisions and town, building approvals for construction, and Ranger services;
- General Administration. This includes the provision of general information to the public and the lodging of complaints and payment of fees including rates and dog licenses; and
- Processes of Government. This includes ordinary and special council meetings, electors meetings and election of council members; community consultations.

### ***2.3 People with disability in the City of Armadale***

Data from the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers estimated that 4.3 million Australians, or 18.3% of the population, has a disability. With an additional 2.7 million Australians who are carers, disability impacts on approximately one third of the population.

By 2026 the number of people with disability in Western Australia is expected to increase by more than 210,000, due mainly to our ageing population. As the 'baby boomer generation' moves into the older age groups individuals will acquire disability associated with aging.

For the purposes of the data collection (ABS), disability is defined as any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

The WA Disability Services Act (1993) defines disability as a condition that:

- Is attributed to an intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- Is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- May or may not be episodic in nature and the result is; a substantial reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

The City of Armadale recognises that as the National and State demographic grows, so too will the number of people requiring support within the City of Armadale.

### ***2.4 Planning for better access***

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993, amended 2004, that local government authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services. This is governed

through the City's overarching Strategic Community Plan which provides the vision for all work undertaken within the City. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is one of many plans that informs the Corporate Business Plan and clarifies how the business of the City is to be delivered.

Armadale will become a trial site for the WA National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) with Serpentine/ Jarrahdale and Murray in October 2016. This will bring changes to how people with disability in the City of Armadale access services and funding. The NDIS will implement changes to the system of care and support for Australians with disability and their carers, introducing a nationally consistent approach to funding.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the:

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the WA Equal Opportunity Act;
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD);
- Access to Premises Standard 2010;
- Count Me In – Disability Future Directions; and
- Alzheimer's Disease International Dementia Friendly Communities Key Principles.

### **2.5 Achievements since 1995**

The City of Armadale adopted its first Disability Services Plan (DSP), (now known as DAIPs), in 1995 to address the barriers in the community for people with disability. The plan addressed both statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993) and obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992). City of Armadale embraced the opportunity to address access through the DSP, being the first Local Government Authority to lodge their plan with the Disability Services Commission. The plan underwent reviews and the City developed new plans in 2007 and 2011. Following the 2004 amendment to the Disability Services Act (1993) the City aimed at ensuring people with disability can access services provided by the City in a way that facilitates increased independence, opportunities and inclusion within the community.

Since the adoption of the initial plan, the City of Armadale has implemented a number of initiatives to ensure access and inclusion for people with a disability including:

- Improving engagement opportunities for people with disability including establishing a disability reference group representation of a broad range of stakeholders;

- Supporting accessible events through developing an accessible events checklist, with training being provided to key staff;
- Increasing staff awareness through ongoing staff disability awareness training;
- Developing an All Abilities Playground within the City of Armadale;
- Review of the website to meet accessibility guidelines (AA W3C),
- Development of an Access and Mobility Map;
- Increasing community awareness by celebrating International Day of Disability each December;
- Improvements within administration to support better customer service for all community members including the Audio Loop technology and lowered counters;
- Introduction of resources such as DAISY readers, desk top magnifiers and e-readers available at the Armadale Library;
- Continual upgrading of the City's walkways considering the access needs of community members; and
- Improving outcomes for people with dementia through supporting Alzheimer's Australia's Dementia Friendly Communities project.

### **3. Access and Inclusion policy statement**

The City has an overarching Strategic Community Plan which provides the vision for all work undertaken within the City. At an operational level the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is one component of an integrated set of strategic plans which inform the development of the City's Strategic Community Plan.

### **4. The Act's requirements for agents and contractors**

A requirement of the Disability Services Act (1993) is that agents and contractors of the public authority conduct their business in a manner consistent with the DAIP of the public authority. The City therefore seeks to encourage agents and contractors to be sensitive to the needs of the community specifically in:

- New contracts or variation of contract, and
- Services being provided to the public.

This requirement does not apply to services provided directly to the public authority such as cleaners, and regular maintenance.

## **5. Development of the DAIP**

### **5.1 Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of City staff to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. This includes requirements of contractors and agents engaged by the City who supply services to the public and the responsibilities of the City's Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group.

Each department of Council is responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting within its own area. The Community Development Department will have an advisory, support and coordination role.

### **5.2 Review and Consultation Process**

The City of Armadale is committed to actively consulting people with disability, their families, carers, disability organisations, encouraging and seeking input on planned initiatives and feedback on strategies already in place. This approach incorporates the Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group is the most appropriate and effective way to ensure barriers to access and inclusion are successfully addressed.

The City of Armadale contracted E-QUAL disability consultants to review their current Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and develop a new DAIP which comply with the legislative requirements of the Disability Services Act (1993) as amended in 2004 and guide the City of Armadale's work to ensure equitable access to its buildings, facilities, information, services and events for people with disability and their carers, over the next five years.

The methodology for the review included examination of the City of Armadale's 2011 – 2016 DAIP, progress reports and other relevant Council documents, plans and strategies. The consultants also reviewed other relevant literature on the changes to disability legislation and on contemporary and developing trends and best practice in access and inclusion.

Consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders including City of Armadale staff, key organisations and the community, in accordance with the Disability Services Act Regulations 2004. The consultation, held in March 2016, was promoted through various mediums, including:

- Local newspaper;
- City of Armadale website;
- Communication with key disability organisations;
- Information provided to City of Armadale services ie Libraries;
- Information provided to Disability Services Commission Local Area Coordinators; and
- City of Armadale intranet.

The consultation included:

- Focus groups/workshops with community and staff;
- On line surveys;
- Hard copy surveys;
- Surveys e-mailed directly to community groups and individuals; and
- Telephone interviews.

A total of 191 staff and community members provided feedback through the consultation process. Additional workshops were also held to discuss the findings and to gather further feedback in May 2016 with:

- City of Armadale Councillor's;
- Cities Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group; and the
- Positive Ageing Network Group.

The draft DAIP will go out for public comment to allow for final feedback before the plan is endorsed by Council.

### ***5.3 Findings of the consultation***

The review and consultation showed that the City of Armadale has made many changes and implemented sound strategies that have improved access and inclusion for people with disability to the City of Armadale's facilities and services, but that there are still many opportunities to further improve access and inclusion.

During the consultation period key issues were identified by both community members and City of Armadale officers. These are documented below.

#### *Community Members*

- Lack of and poorly placed ACROD parking;
- Some events are not easy to access for people with disability, including parking and toilets,
- Lack of awareness of events and services;
- Not feeling safe within the City of Armadale;
- Lack of services and opportunities for youth;
- Concerns with the pool only being an outdoor pool and therefore seen to lack availability all year round; and
- Lack of public transport services in and out of the City.

#### *City of Armadale Officers*

- Staff not having accessed disability awareness training;
- Difficulty in finding the balance between access and heritage. The need to address access to heritage areas sensitively, maintaining their integrity;
- Poor workplace access for potential and current staff members with disability (primarily wheelchair access);



- Staff are unclear on how to obtain correct, contemporary information around disability including accessible documentation;
- The need for budget provision to ensure events, facilities and services are accessible’;
- Difficulty in getting contractors to be mindful of the objectives of the DAIP; and
- A lack of information on how to consider all needs of all groups in relations to future housing development, ie Livable Homes.

The above issues were defined by such comments as:

- *‘I think that events need to be planned where it isn’t too hard to push a wheelchair (such as concrete), have more awareness of disability friendly events’.* (Community Member);
- *‘Lack of transport options into Armadale, especially from Byford, Serpentine and Jarrahdale. One AM bus in and one PM bus out - leaves our whole day in city Centre. Perhaps a safe space for a person with mental health to go, like a drop in Centre, you can also see a lot of people you know.’* (Community Member);
- *‘Would like to see the City offer more employment opportunities to people with a disability. I had a staff member through an employment agency for a while and it was beneficial to the employee and the staff group to be part of this program.’* (City of Armadale Officer); and
- *‘Information where people who need help with access and inclusion could access it.’* (City of Armadale Officer)

The identification of these issues, with the review of the existing DAIP will inform the development of strategies for the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016 – 2020. While implementation of the strategies will be subject to the approval of yearly budgets as a part of the normal council budget approval process, the City is mindful of its commitment to people with disability, their families and carers and its legislative obligations.

#### **5.4 Responsibility for implementing the DAIP**

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that the City must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

It is the responsibility of City staff to implement the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016 – 2021. An internal document, the Disability Access and Inclusion 2016 - 2021 Implementation Plan will provide clear actions and areas of responsibility for the City Business Units with a timeline for completion. Departmental Managers will be responsible for the implementation of the actions for their Department and ensuring the actions are in their Departments Business Plan. The implementation plan outlines how the Community Development team will work with Managers to assist and advise on specific relevant actions and indicators to achieve the required outcomes.

The City will inform its agents and contractors of their responsibilities under the DAIP, and will encourage and model best practice in providing accessible and inclusive services to people with disability.

### ***5.5 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability***

Staff and Community will be advised through a notice in the local newspaper and on the City's Website that the draft DAIP is available for public comment. A copy of the draft DAIP will be forwarded to relevant stakeholders and the Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group for comment.

Upon adoption, the City will ensure the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016-2021 are available:

- On request, at the City of Armadale Administration Building in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format
- On the City's website; and
- Hard copies at various City locations.

The community will be advised of the availability of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2016 -2021 through:

- The City's website;
- City Views (City of Armadale Newsletter);
- Facebook;
- Media release to the local newspapers; and
- Local organisations.

### ***5.6 Review and Evaluation mechanisms***

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The City's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act. The DAIP Implementation Plan will be updated annually to reflect progress and include any strategies to manage additional access and inclusion issues which may arise. This plan is a dynamic document intended to guide the City of Armadale to continue its work in creating an accessible and inclusive community.

Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

## **6. Reporting on the DAIP**

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The City of Armadale will report on the implementation of its DAIP in Councils Annual Report and to the Disability Services Commission by the end of June of each year, outlining:

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

## 7. Strategies to improve access and inclusion

As a result of the consultation process, the following strategies will guide more detailed tasks reflected in the Implementation Plan that the City of Armadale will undertake from 2016-2021. The desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability in the City of Armadale.

The City of Armadale is committed to working towards achieving the following objectives:

**Objective 1:** People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised in the City of Armadale.

Strategy
1.1 Embed the principles and objectives of the DAIP throughout the organisation's policies, documents and planning.
1.1 Support accessible events in City of Armadale.
1.2 Support accessible programs in the community.
1.3 Improve communication with agents and contractors.
1.5 Improve feedback channels with state and local government authorities.
1.6 Provide Accessible and safe footpaths.
1.7 Improve pedestrian access to busy roads.
1.8 Continue to improve and promote accessible City resources and services.
1.9 Develop, maintain and promote accessible public spaces.

**Objective 2:** People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the City of Armadale.

Strategy
2.1 Provide accessible and inclusive buildings.
2.2 Develop strategic processes to address access to heritage areas sensitively, maintaining their integrity.

2.1 Provide accessible and inclusive parks, playgrounds and reserves.
2.4 Establish interim accessibility processes for works in progress.
2.5 Support accessible non-City buildings.
2.6 Maintain the focus on providing Accessible Parking.

**Objective 3:** People with disability receive information from the City of Armadale in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

<b>Strategy</b>
3.1 Provide public documents in alternative formats.
3.2 Provide Council documents in alternative formats.
3.3 Support alternative options for receiving and giving information.
3.4 Develop accessible options in Customer Service Charter.
3.4. Improve website /online accessibility.

**Objective 4:** People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the City of Armadale as other people receive from the staff.

<b>Strategy</b>
4.1 Build on a disability access and inclusion culture at the City of Armadale.
4.2 Develop an access and inclusion culture in the customer service charter at the City of Armadale.

**Objective 5:** People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the City of Armadale.

<b>Strategy</b>
5.2 Provide an equitable and accessible complaints feedback mechanism.
5.3 Develop a guide to making complaints in a variety of formats.

**Objective 6:** People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the City of Armadale.

<b>Strategy</b>
6.1 Provide accessible and inclusive opportunities for engagement.
6.2 Communicate with qualified and experienced individuals, including people with disability, carers and organisations on disability access and inclusion matters.
6.3 Support a Disability Access and Inclusion Reference Group.
6.4 Continue to monitor the progress against Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

**Objective 7:** People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to be employed at the City of Armadale.

<b>Strategy</b>
7.1 Implement recruitment and employment policies and practices to reflect equal opportunity for the ageing workforce and people with disability.
7.2 Provide a workplace to ensure equitable access for employees.
7.3 Provide opportunities for engagement with specialist services for employment for people with disability for recruitment, advice and resources.
7.4 Continue to provide staff awareness of disability issues.

**Objective 8:** Provide information, and encouragement to raise the awareness of the community regarding disability, access and inclusion.

<b>Strategy</b>
8.1 Inform and support local businesses regarding access and inclusion.
8.2 Inform and support community groups regarding access and inclusion.
8.3 Promote Access and Inclusion to the community.
8.4 Engage with Disabilities Services Commission regarding the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
8.5 Promote the aims and availability of the DAIP in the community.
8.6 Investigate options to incorporate Dementia Friendly Communities.