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DISABILITY SERVICES PLAN

Introduction & Background

The City

The City of Albany was proclaimed on the 1st July 1998 with the amalgamation of the Town and Shire of Albany.

The City with its population in excess of 30,000 stretches around the south coast of Western Australia from Wilson Inlet and Hay River in the west to the Pallinup River in the east with a total area of 4805 square kilometres.

The administration of the City of Albany is conducted from the two locations originally occupied by the former Town and Shire, with offices in York Street, Albany and Mercer Road, Walmsley.

The Legislation

The Disability Services Act (1993) requires each public authority to prepare and implement a Disability Services Plan which in so far as its functions involve dealing with the public, the performance of those functions furthers the principles applicable to meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

The Act further requires each Local Government Authority to report on the implementation of its Disability Services Plan, within its Annual Report to Ratepayers.

The City's Responsibility

The City of Albany recognises its responsibility to provide adequate means of access to Council functions, facilities and services for all persons.

In an endeavour to achieve these objectives, the City has developed this Disability Services Plan by reviewing and merging the plans from the former Town and Shire of Albany. The City of Albany Disability Services Plan provides a blueprint for the removal of barriers faced by people with disabilities, their families and carers.

The City of Albany has established a Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee so that Council can seek the assistance of Council staff and other disability service agencies, in addition to receiving all-important input from those people

in our community who have a disability, their families and carers. The Committee actively liaises with the general public and in particular those members of the community who have a disability, on matters relating to the Disability Services Plan and other disability and general access issues.

Review Process

The City of Albany Disability Services Plan is subject to an on-going schedule of evaluation and review in order to ensure it remains current, active and responsive. As the needs of the community change – so must the plan.

The City's Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee is responsible for the review process and for making recommendations to Council on changes to the Plan.

Methodology

Consultation Process

In 1995, the community was informed through local newspapers and radio that the Town and Shire Council's were developing Disability Services Plans to address the barriers that people with disabilities, their families and carers experienced in accessing functions, facilities and services provided by the Council's. The Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee continues the consultation process by raising awareness of disability issues through media and other promotional opportunities. Community members expressing an interest are invited to attend Committee meetings to discuss their concerns with Committee members.

Process

Invitations were extended to a number of local organisations providing service to disabled people to nominate members and advisers on the Council's original Disability Services Plan Committee. The Committee was developed as the Disability Services Plan reference and advisory group. The Committee is now called the Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee.

The community was advised through local newspapers and radio that they could provide input into development of the Disability Services Plan by:-

- Phone-In – the community was invited to contact the Council by phone or personally to discuss any of the difficulties they were experiencing in accessing Council services or facilities and in moving around the community.
- Community members have been invited to attend meetings of the Committee to identify and discuss any barriers faced with a disability in the Albany area in general.
- Committee Members Contact – the individual members of the Disability Services Plan Committee made regular contact with the organisations they represented in addition to other people with disabilities with whom they had regular contact. Information has been fed back to the Committee for discussion and/or action.

Results

Feedback from the community identified a number of barriers, which have been recognised in the Disability Services Plan.

Disability and Discrimination Audit

In June 2000 the City of Albany engaged MPL Group Pty Ltd to conduct a Disability and Discrimination Audit of its buildings and facilities. The purpose of this audit was to ascertain the City's compliance with relevant statutes and standards relating to disabled and other access. The Disability and Discrimination Audit report was presented to the City's Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee, prior to its presentation to Council.

The Disability and Discrimination Audit Report now forms an integral part of the City of Albany Disability Services Plan and is an appendix to this document.

Communicate the Plan to Staff and People with Disabilities

Council will distribute copies of the Disability Services Plan to all relevant staff members, those will contribute to the planning and implementation process and to people with disabilities, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups for advice and feedback.

Council will advertise, through the local media and its own networks, that copies of the Plan are available to the community upon request. A copy also be available in the Albany Public Library.

City of Albany - Strategic Direction

Vision, Mission & Values

Albany 2020 Charting Our Course, outlines the City's strategic vision and mission. These are:-

Vision:

"The superbly located rural city of Albany will be a safe, caring community in harmony with its natural environment, historic past, prosperous hinterland and unique sense of place.

Future generations will enjoy a quality lifestyle and benefit from a range of educational, recreational and cultural experiences, sustainably managed environments and diverse robust economy".

Mission:

"As trustees for Albany's future on behalf of our diverse communities, your Council will be a customer driven organisation committed to service and on-going communication in order to evaluate and respond to changing community needs and expectations. We will:

- *Provide decisive leadership;*
- *Advocate strongly to maximise opportunities offered by external influences and to minimise any adverse impacts;*
- *Establish and encourage a culture of innovation and enterprise;*
- *Responsibly manage Council's services and assets;*
- *Promote the development of dynamic, diverse and sustainable rural and urban communities;*
- *Promote a positive attitude towards the sustainable management and use of all resources;*
- *Encourage a diverse range of industry, business and investment throughout our region; and*
- *Advocate and provide for strong, sound and accessible infrastructure."*

Strategic Ports of Call

"Attraction and development of a broad range of social cultural and economic entities – Community Development."

Under the Albany 2020 strategic plan the City of Albany is committed to developing a vibrant community where all are encouraged to participate and contribute.

"The continual development of Council services and facilities to meet the needs of all stakeholders."

The Council is committed to meeting the needs and aspirations of the whole community, as well as meeting the needs of specific stakeholder groups.

In accordance with these strategic objectives and recognising that people with a disability are a valued part of the Albany community and that they have specific needs, the City of Albany, in conjunction with its Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee, has developed this Disability Services Plan.

Functions, Facilities and Services Provided by the City of Albany

Facilities Provided to the Community Including:

- Administration Buildings;
- Works Depot and Workshop;
- Parks and Reserves, including beaches, picnic areas and camp sites;
- Library and information services;
- Town Hall Theatre;
- Airport;
- Ovals and playing fields;
- Aquatic and Leisure Centre;
- Boat pens, launching ramps and jetties;
- Public toilets;
- Day Care Centre;
- Cattle saleyards;
- Tourist information bays;
- Princess Royal Fortress Museum;
- Brig Amity replica;
- Vancouver Arts Centre;
- Public car parks; and
- Footpaths and dual use paths.

Works and Services Including:

- Design, construction and maintenance of streets, roads and drainage systems;
- Kerbing and verge maintenance;
- Construction and maintenance of paths (footpaths, trails and cycle ways);
- Waste collection and disposal;
- Animal control including dogs, cattle, sheep, horses etc;
- Parks and gardens maintenance;
- Fire control;
- Litter control and street cleaning;
- Street lighting (in conjunction with Western Power);
- Children's Day Care;
- Civic functions and Citizenship Ceremonies;
- Saleyards cleaning and maintenance; and
- Public functions and events.

Regulatory Services Including:

- Town Planning processes;
- Building control;
- Environmental health;
- Public health; and
- Municipal Law Enforcement.

General Administration Including:

- Executive Management;
- Financial Management;
- Administration;
- Community Development;
- Strategic Planning;
- Provision of general information; and
- Collection of rates and charges.

Processes of Local Government including:

- Election of Mayor and Council members;
- Ordinary and special Council meetings;
- Committee meetings;
- Electors meetings; and
- Community consultation.

Involvement in regional issues including:

- Regional Saleyards committee;
- Rainbow Coast Regional Council;
- Country Urban Council's Association; and
- Regional Waste Committee.

Policy Statements and Objectives

Policy - Access for People with Disabilities, their Families and Carers

"The City of Albany is committed to ensuring that the services and facilities it provides to the community are accessible to each and every individual person. The City of Albany is committed to ongoing consultation with people with disabilities, their families and carers through the City of Albany Disability Services and Community Access Advisory Committee, disability organisations and individuals to ensure that barriers to access are addressed appropriately."

The City of Albany is committed to achieving the following objectives:

Objective – Existing functions, facilities & services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Council is committed to being adaptable in responding to barriers experienced by people with disabilities in the community; and
- Council will ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of Council facilities, functions and services will be consistent with relevant legislation.

Objective – Access to all buildings & facilities is improved.

- Council will undertake to incorporate the priorities regarding access for people with disabilities, identified during consultations into its submission for its capital works improvement program. Modifications will commence as funds are made available; and
- Council will undertake to liaise with developers to increase their awareness of the access requirements of people with disabilities.

Objective – Information about functions, facilities & services is provided in formats, which meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities.

- Council will use clear and concise language in all its information on Council facilities, functions and services; and
- Council will advise the community that upon request, information about Council functions, facilities and services can be made available in alternative formats, such as large print or audio cassette.

Objective – Staff awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and skills in delivering advice and services are improved.

- Council will undertake to ensure that staff are aware of the key access needs of residents with disabilities and visitors with disabilities, in relation to the provision of all services; and

- Where required, Council will seek advice from the Disability Services Commission or other relevant agency or person/s on how to meet the access needs of people with disabilities.

Objective – Opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes are provided.

- Council will ensure that information is available in clear and concise language on how residents can participate in decision making processes, public consultations and complaints procedures;
- Council will advise the community that this information can be made available in alternative formats upon request; and
- Council will undertake to aid people with disabilities to attend meetings of Council

ACTION PLAN

Objective – Existing functions, facilities & services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Strategy – Council to adapt services to ensure that they are accessible to people with disabilities.

Functions, Facilities & Services	Barriers	Action	Timeline (Completion Date)	Responsibility
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Swing doors makes entry to pool area difficult for people with mobility problems.	Provide automatic sliding doors to pool entry.	July 2000 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No "Better Hearing Counter Card" on display at ALAC reception	Install "Better Hearing Counter Card" at ALAC reception	July 2001 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No seating provided in ALAC reception area	Provide adequate seating in ALAC reception area	July 2001 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Lack of informative directional signage at entrance to ALAC building	Install appropriate signage at entrance to ALAC building	December 2003	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Lack of informative directional signage within ALAC building	Install appropriate signage throughout ALAC building	December 2003	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Lack of building layout map on ALAC signage	Include building map on appropriate signage at ALAC	December 2001 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No visual alarms within ALAC building	Install visual alarms throughout ALAC building	December 2003	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No public telephone at ALAC	Liaise with Telstra to initiate installation of public telephone at ALAC	December 2001 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No unisex accessible toilet available in ALAC building.	Provide unisex, accessible toilet, associated handrails wash basin, mirror and airlock, in accordance with relevant standards	To be addressed as part of ALAC redevelopment and refurbishment project.	Leisure Centre Manager

Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Food and drink counter at ALAC is not accessible to people in wheelchairs	Section of counter to be adjusted to comply with relevant standards	June 2002 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Drinks vending machine not easily accessible	Drinks vending machine to be located so as to be easily accessible and to comply with relevant standards	June 2002 COMPLETED	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No hoist available to assist pool entry	Provide suitable hoist and train staff in usage	To be addressed as part of ALAC redevelopment and refurbishment project	Leisure Centre Manager
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No hand rails around perimeter of pool for use by disabled	Install hand rails around perimeter of appropriate sections of the pool		
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Showers have hobs at entrance, no hand rails, no seating and inappropriate hardware	Provide at least one accessible shower in each shower/change room, including seating and appropriate hardware		
Albany Leisure & Aquatic Centre	No protection from the weather for set down /pickup area.	Provide weatherproof undercover set down /pickup area		

Objective – Access to buildings & facilities improved

Strategy – Council to ensure that Council offices and chambers are accessible.

Functions, Facilities & Services	Barriers	Action	Timeline (Completion Date)	Responsibility
Services Located in Council Offices and Chambers		The relevant Australian Standards will be consulted in the development of the following strategies.		
Administration Buildings – York Street	No disabled / Unisex toilets available.	A disabled / unisex toilet to be installed.	To be addressed as part of the construction of a new Municipal administration building and civic centre. York Street building to be demolished	Chief Executive Officer
Administration Buildings – Mercer Road	Counters too high for people in wheelchairs or who need to be seated whilst receiving attention.	Modify height of a portion of counter to accommodate seated persons.	To be addressed as part of the construction of a new Municipal administration building and civic centre. Mercer Road building to be disposed of.	Chief Executive Officer
	No public toilets.	Provide public toilets.		
Library	No disabled / unisex toilets available.	A disabled / unisex toilet to be installed.	COMPLETED	Library Manager
Leisure and Aquatic Centre	Lack of facilities for carers in change rooms at pool eg. Change bench and unisex toilet for people with disabilities.	Consultations to be held with carers and relevant disability organisations to identify specific needs for change rooms.	To be addressed as part of ALAC redevelopment and refurbishment project	Leisure Centre Manager
Forts Complex	No disabled / unisex toilets available.	A disabled / unisex toilet to be included in refurbishment.	December 2003	Executive Director Corporate & Community Services

Public Facilities – Toilet Facilities	Lack of signage indicating location of disabled / unisex toilets.	Clear signage to be put in place.	June 2000 COMPLETED	Executive Director Works & Services
Buildings on Reserves etc vested in Council & Leased to Community Groups	Many buildings built early in this century or for specific purposes present various access problems.	Council will encourage community groups to upgrade their buildings.	Ongoing.	Executive Director Development Services
Dual Use Paths	Minimal amount of dual use paths around residential areas.	Council to install dual use pathways throughout the City as funding becomes available.	Continual as funding becomes available.	Executive Director Works & Services
Toilet facilities at Picnic Areas	Toilets at picnic areas are not suitable for access by people in wheelchairs.	Council will conduct an access audit to determine access requirements.	June 2000 COMPLETED	Executive Director Works & Services
Toilet facilities at Picnic Areas	Toilets at picnic areas are not suitable for access by people in wheelchairs.	Council to upgrade public toilets throughout the City as funding becomes available.	Continual as funding becomes available.	Executive Director Works & Services

Objective – Information about functions, facilities & services is provided in formats which will meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities.

Strategy – All information about Council functions, facilities & Services to use clear and concise language and to be made available in accessible formats.

Functions, Facilities & Services	Barriers	Action	Timeline (Completion Date)	Responsibility
Applies to all Council functions, facilities and services	<p>Information about all Council functions, facilities & services may not be all written in clear and concise language and not available in format that are accessible for people with disabilities.</p> <p>This includes information on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Community, recreational and cultural activities & facilities; • Rubbish removal; • Rate notices, annual reports; • Council Minutes; and • Electoral material. 	<p>Council to develop and implement a policy that all information to be made available to the community to be written in clear and concise language and clear contrasting print.</p> <p>The following formats to be made available upon request:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large print; • Audio cassette; and • Braille. <p>Council to advise through local newspaper and radio that information about Council services, functions and facilities is available in alternative formats.</p>	Ongoing	Executive Director Corporate & Community Services
Applies to all Council functions, facilities & services	People with hearing impairments may not be able to contact Council by phone.	Council will publicise availability of TTY relay Services (Telephone typewriter)	Ongoing	Executive Director Corporate & Community Services

Objective – Staff awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and skills in delivering advice and services are improved.

Strategy – Council officers to be equipped with information and skills to enable them to appropriately provide advice and service to people with disabilities.

Functions, Facilities & Services	Barriers	Action	Timeline (Completion Date)	Responsibility
Applies to all Council functions, facilities & services	Council officers not sure how to talk to someone with a communication disability – seen or unseen.	<p>Key Council officers to have disability awareness training. The Disability Services Commission and relevant disability organisations to be contacted for assistance in the development of training.</p> <p>Council officers to be targeted to include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter staff at municipal offices; • Electoral officers; • Planning officers; and • Building surveyors. <p>To assist them to increase the access awareness of developers.</p>	<p>A Disability Awareness Training program was delivered to all council staff in 2000.</p> <p>An ongoing program of training is provided for new staff.</p>	Human Resources Manager

Objective – Opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision making processes are provided.

Strategy – People with disabilities to be assisted to participate in decision making processes, community consultation processes and complaint mechanisms.

Functions, Facilities & Services	Barriers	Action	Timeline (Completion Date)	Responsibility
Process of Government	Access to information about processes of Government and how residents can access the decision making process is not available in alternative formats.	Council will improve its provision of information about planning processes, electoral processes, Council meetings and complaint procedures in clear and concise language. This information will be made available in alternative formats upon request in:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large print; • Audio cassette; and • Braille. 	Ongoing	Chief Executive Officer

**** DISCLAIMER ****

This information sheet is a guide only. Verification with original Local Laws, Acts, Planning Schemes, and other relevant documents is recommended for detailed references. The City of Albany accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions.

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