

3.1: CITY OF ALBANY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2012-2017

Proponent	: City of Albany
Attachments	: City of Albany Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017
Appendices	Summary of Community Consultation
Responsible Officer(s)	: Acting Executive Director Community Services (C Woods)

IN BRIEF

- Noting of the City of Albany Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.
- The City is required to implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in accordance with the Disability Services Act (1993), to demonstrate how it intends to become more accessible to people living with disability.
- In order to emphasise the City's commitment to access and inclusion for all, it is recommended the updated Plan simply be titled 'Access and Inclusion Plan'.
- Access and inclusion planning is the most appropriate way for public authorities, including local governments to address barriers people with disabilities face in accessing public services, information and facilities. This is consistent with the approach taken by other local governments.
- Planning for access does not just benefit people with disabilities, but the wider community, including seniors, parents with young children, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

RECOMMENDATION**ITEM 3.1: RESPONSIBLE OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
VOTING REQUIREMENT: SIMPLE MAJORITY**

THAT Council NOTE the Access and Inclusion Plan which will be implemented by the City over the period 2012–2017.

BACKGROUND

1. In order to meet its statutory obligations, the City is required to implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, and to review this Plan at least once every five years.
2. The City's existing Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy fell due for review in 2011-2012.
3. The City's Community Development Officers have now undertaken this review and developed an updated Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.

DISCUSSION

The Importance of Access and Inclusion Planning

4. Access and Inclusion Plans assist public authorities identify access and inclusion issues that preclude people with disability from participating in the community.
5. In addition, Access and Inclusion Plans outline how a public authority will make its information, services and facilities accessible to people with disability. As such, Plans are an important mechanism for public authorities to be more accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities.
6. The Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2009 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* states that 17.4% of Western Australia's population live with disability, and 10.3% of its population are carers of people with disability. When family of people with disability are included, this is a significant proportion of the state's population directly or indirectly affected by barriers to access and inclusion within the community.
7. There is a direct, linear relationship between disability and age; forty-six percent of Western Australians aged over 60 years live with disability, and this increases with age - nine in ten people aged over 90 live with a disability.
8. As a regional centre with a growing proportion of aged residents, it is in the City's interests to be more accessible to, and inclusive of people with disability, including seniors living with disability.

Legislative Requirements for Access and Inclusion Planning

9. Since state Parliament passed the Disability Services Act (1993), public authorities in Western Australia have been required to implement Disability Service Plans. The City of Albany has had a Disability Service Plan in place since 1 September 1998 (since 1 January 1996 for the former Shire and Town of Albany).
10. In 2004 the Act was amended to require public authorities to implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans which must be reviewed at least once every five years. The City of Albany implemented a Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy in 2007.
11. In accordance with the 2004 amendments, Plans are required to address six outcome areas, outlining how people with disability will have access to a public authority's:
 - Services and events;
 - Buildings and other facilities;
 - Information;
 - Same level and quality of service; and
 - Consultations.
12. The Act stipulates that public authorities are required to consult widely in the development and/or review of Plans.
13. The City is required to lodge its Access and Inclusion Plan with the Disability Services Commission (DSC) once noted by Council, and to report annually to the DSC on implementation progress. Plans and progress reports are tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Disability Services.

Review of the City's Existing Plan

14. The City's Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy fell due for review in 2011-2012. As stipulated by the Act, public consultation underpinned the review process, led by the City's Community Development Officers. Consultation occurred with:
 - People with disabilities;
 - Families and carers of people with disabilities;
 - Agencies and organisations which provide services to people with disabilities;
 - Relevant state government agencies such as the DSC; and
 - The City's Access and Inclusion Working Group.
15. The review process also included identifying achievements under the Plan, and what gaps or issues remained outstanding. Under the existing Plan, the City's improvements to access and inclusion issues included:
 - Introduction of the Companion Card service at the Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre (ALAC) and the Princess Royal Fortress Military Museum (the Forts);
 - Provision of accessible change facilities, including change table for people with disabilities at ALAC;
 - Erection of a tactile sculpture at Mill Park for people with vision impairment, designed and constructed by people living with a vision impairment;
 - 'Beach access' to the pool at ALAC, enabling access to pool facilities by people who use wheelchairs;
 - Construction of a floating jetty at Emu Point;
 - Provision of a hoist at ALAC for use by people with disabilities;
 - Installation of automatic doors front doors at the Vancouver Arts Centre, thereby making the building independently accessible to people living with mobility impairments.
16. In order to emphasise the City's commitment to access and inclusion for all, it is recommended the updated Plan simply be titled 'Access and Inclusion Plan'.

Development of the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017

17. Using the feedback and information collected through the review process, the City has developed an updated Access and Inclusion Plan for the next five year reporting period. The Plan is in two sections: introductory material (about the City, people living with disability in Albany, strategic and legislative implications), and an implementation plan which describes the actions the City will take in order to be more accessible to people with disability.
18. Community Development Officers consulted Executive Directors, Managers, and other relevant staff in the development of the Plan as follows:
 - Feedback was sought from relevant business units on the strategies and tasks in the implementation plan;
 - An internal stakeholder briefing of the Plan was attended by Executive Directors, Managers, the Occupational Health and Safety Officer and Acting CEO; and
 - Specific, additional input was sought from Executive Manager Building and Health, Manager Infrastructure, and Senior Project Planner.
19. In accordance with the Act, agents and contractors who have dealings with the public are required to implement the City's Plan in order to ensure that services provided to the public on behalf of the City are provided in an accessible manner.

20. The City is required by the Act to report on strategies used to inform agents and contractors about its Plan and to report annually on progress of the Plan's implementation by contractors and agents.
21. Contracted services in which the City itself is the recipient of the services (eg stationery supplies, cleaning contractors) are not included. However, contracted activities such as, for example, waste management services, design and/or construction of facilities that the public can enter, or upgrades to public facilities such as footpaths and car parks will require contractors undertaking these activities to implement the City's Access and Inclusion Plan, and to report on progress against it.

Consequences of not implementing an Access and Inclusion Plan

22. While the Disability Services Act does not prescribe any punishment to public authorities who do not implement Access and Inclusion Plans, the City would be in breach of the Act should the City not have a Plan. The Act states that public authorities must develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
23. The Act requires the DSC to provide the Minister for Disability Services with a report on the effectiveness of Plans, which is tabled in Parliament each year. The information contained in annual progress reports submitted by public authorities is used to inform the Minister's report.
24. The DSC has a legal obligation to provide information on Plans, and those public authorities without a Plan in place can be identified to the Minister.
25. A current Access and Inclusion Plan in place can assist in defence of a disability discrimination or equal opportunity claim being made against the City.
26. People with disability may face barriers to accessing City facilities, information and services that assist them in living a fully inclusive life in the community.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

27. The City has consulted with the DSC Local Area Coordinators in Albany, as well as the DSC Access and Inclusion staff in Perth as part of developing the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT

28. Public consultation with members of the target community was undertaken by Community Development Officers last year. This included people living with disability, their families and carers, and representatives from agencies which deliver services to people with disabilities. A list of access and inclusion issues raised during this process is at Attachment 2.
29. The City has engaged its Access and Inclusion Working Group in the development of the Plan. The Working Group membership includes people living with disabilities, family and carers of people living with disability, the DSC, and agencies which deliver services to people with disabilities.

16/10/2012

REFER DISCLAIMER

30. The City also made the Plan available for wider public comment for the period 9 August 2012 to 7 September 2012. In this period there were no requests to Customer Service/Community Development Officer's for a copy of the Plan, but two copies of the document were taken from the Customer Service counter. Further, there were 46 'page views' of the relevant page on the City's website where the Plan was located throughout the public comment period. Seven of those views clicked through to the public comment page on the City's website.
31. There were two public submissions received. The first submission recommended amendments relating to facilities and buildings which are not owned or operated by the City of Albany, and so cannot be incorporated into the Plan. The second submission recommended reducing financial barriers associated with accessing recreational programs by people with disabilities. A minor amendment to the Implementation Plan (Strategy 1.5) reflects this recommendation.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

32. The City is required to implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in accordance with the Disability Services Act (1993). In addition, the following State and Commonwealth legislation also underpin the City's Access and Inclusion Plan:
- WA Equal Opportunity Act (1984); and
 - Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

33. The Plan relates directly to the following areas in the City of Albany Strategic Plan (2011-2021):

<i>Community Priority</i>	<i>Proposed Strategy</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
KEY FOCUS AREA: Lifestyle and Environment		
<i>A built environment for active lifestyles</i>	<i>Incorporate into future plans, infrastructure parks that encourage activity for all ages and abilities (rather than passive parks).</i>	<i>Short-Medium</i>
<i>Services for seniors and people with disabilities</i>	<i>Incorporate 'Age Friendly Cities' into future town planning to accommodate a growing seniors' population (infrastructure, health services, housing, public open spaces, transport etc).</i>	<i>Short</i>
	<i>Provide safe crossing points on busy roads for seniors and less mobile residents (ie North Road, York St, Albany Hwy).</i>	<i>Medium</i>
	<i>Install additional bench seats (with back supports) in parks, gardens, and in the CBD.</i>	<i>Medium</i>
	<i>Improve accessibility to City services/facilities for seniors and people with a disability.</i>	<i>Medium-Long</i>
KEY FOCUS AREA: Community Focussed Organisation		
<i>Improved communication</i>	<i>Promote City of Albany processes, procedures and project outcomes.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Continue to be proactive in updating the community through newspapers etc.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Distribute a regular email community newsletter regarding City of Albany events and projects to interested community members.</i>	<i>Short (ongoing)</i>

16/10/2012

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	<i>Communicate with residents and stakeholders clearly and concisely in a timely manner.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Regularly advertise programs and services through a variety of mediums including website, newspaper, radio and community noticeboards</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
	<i>Invite community representatives to participate in working and advisory groups on an as-need basis.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Community consultation</i>	<i>Develop a community engagement strategy that incorporates consulting with communities that will be the most impacted by Council decisions.</i>	<i>Short</i>
KEY FOCUS AREA: Organisational Performance		
<i>Customer service</i>	<i>Conduct regular surveys of customer satisfaction and City of Albany customer service standards.</i>	<i>Short (ongoing)</i>
<i>Policy and procedures</i>	<i>Regularly review all policies in consultation with community and key stakeholders.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Staff development</i>	<i>Train and develop staff through adequate budget resourcing.</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

34. The Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 is a City-wide Plan, and as such applies across the whole organisation. The policy implications in relation to this item are set out in the Plan, and address the six outcome areas.

RISK IDENTIFICATION & MITIGATION

35. The risk identification and categorisation relies on the City's Risk Management Framework.

Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Analysis	Mitigation
<i>Council does not adopt the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Mitigation entirely dependent on Council</i>
<i>Implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017 negatively impacts on the City's general operations.</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Substantial internal consultation has taken place in order to brief EDs and Managers about the impact of the Access and Inclusion Plan on their Directorate, and seek feedback on strategies and tasks assigned to them.</i>
<i>The City is unable to complete the tasks outlined in the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.</i>	<i>Unlikely</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Business Units will report regularly on their progress implementing the Access and Inclusion Plan.</i>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

36. There are no direct financial implications in relation to this item.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

37. Not applicable.

ALTERNATE OPTIONS

38. As a public authority, the City has a statutory obligation to implement an Access and Inclusion Plan. There is no alternative option.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

39. The City is required to implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in accordance with the Disability Services Act.
40. The City's current Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy has been reviewed following consultation with the target community, across the organisation, and having sought wider public comment.
41. It is recommended that Council NOTE the Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-2017.

Consulted References	:	City of Albany Disability Access and Inclusion Strategy Ref: NS073133
File Number (Name of Ward)	:	CS.PLA.13 (All Wards)
Previous Reference	:	N/A