




Disability Access & Inclusion Plan

2020

2025



A healthy & caring community which has strong support for all ages and abilities

Community Connection Goal - Strategic Community Plan 2017-2021

Copies of this Plan in an alternative format (such as large print, electronic, audio or braille) can be provided by the Shire on request. Please contact the Manager Community Support in any of the following ways;

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I. Introduction

The Western Australian *Disability Services Act (DSA) 1993* and Amendments 2004, require all State and Local Government Authorities to implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disability have equity of access and inclusion to functions, facilities, services and information.

A key goal of all Local Governments is to build strong communities. Strong communities are friendly and welcoming places where everyone can experience a sense of belonging, can feel valued and can make their contribution.

The overarching goal of the DAIP is to provide equity of access and inclusion to all services, facilities, functions and information being provided by the Shire of Esperance by identifying and combating any barriers that either restrict or prevent the full participation of people with a disability.

The concept of “equity” means the Shire of Esperance is working toward ensuring that people with a disability, their carers and families will be able to access and participate in all aspects of community life without having to contend with unreasonable or unnecessary barriers.

Addressing the issues that affect people with a disability is not an easy task, however the Shire of Esperance is committed to working toward equity for all community members. This DAIP provides guidance to the Shire of Esperance about issues that exist within the community and how these issues can be overcome to ensure inclusivity for all community members.

Diversity is having a seat at the table,
Inclusion is having a voice,
and belonging is having that voice heard

II. Definitions

Disability: A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activity.

Access: 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: 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 obstruct, embarrass or humiliate an individual.

Discrimination: Discrimination in this context refers to treating people with a disability less favourably than people without a disability would be treated under the same circumstances.

1.2. Related Legislation

There is a range of legislation and strategic framework that guides and directs the Shire's delivery of services and facilities, including;

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)

The Equal Opportunity Act recognises that people with disability require and are entitled to the same level of service and facility as is available to other members of the community. This Act makes it unlawful for a person to discriminate against any person on the grounds of impairment.

Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)

The Disability Services Act states that a person with a disability has the right to be respected for their human worth and dignity and has the same human rights as other community members, regardless of the degree and nature of their disability.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Disability Discrimination Act is a Commonwealth Act providing protection against discrimination based on any form of disability for everyone in Australia. Under this Act it is unlawful to discriminate against a person or their associates (partner, carers, friends, family or business partner), if they have a disability.

Australian Standards

The Australian Standards set out requirements that must be referred to in the decision making

process on issues relating to people with disability;

e.g. Australian Standard 1428 – Design for Access and Mobility

This Standard prescribes the basic requirement for the physical access which must be adhered to in the planning, development and construction of all buildings.

Building Code of Australia

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) applies to new buildings and buildings undergoing significant refurbishment or alteration. The BCA provides a statement on the technical requirements relevant to the design and construction of buildings and other related structures.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability

Australia is one of 50 countries to have signed and ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability, coming into effect in May 2008. As a party to the Convention, Australia is required to promote, protect and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by people with disability and ensure they enjoy full equality under the law.

1.3. Related Documents

The Shire of Esperance's DAIP complements and forms an important part of the Shire's strategic level planning in relation to organisational management as well as project and service provision. Current Plans and documentation in place to support the overall strategic direction of the Shire include:

- Strategic Community Plan
- Corporate Business Plan
- Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan and Workforce Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Playground and Open Space Strategy
- Coastal Management Plan
- Age Friendly Community Report and Youth Friendly Community Report
- Sports Facility and Services Plan

2. Information About the Shire of Esperance

The Shire of Esperance is located approx 700km south east of Perth. The Shire covers an area of approx 42,000km² and has a population of 14,236.

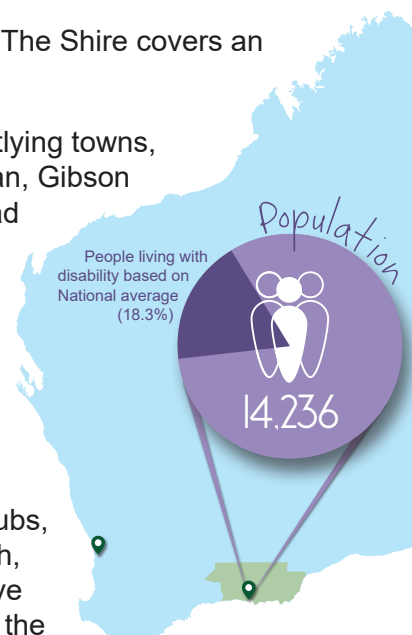
The Shire of Esperance consists of the Esperance town site and 6 outlying towns, being Cascade to the northwest, Salmon Gums, Grass Patch, Scaddan, Gibson to the north and Condingup, to the east. Each of these towns are broad acre farming communities.

Within Esperance there are 2 high schools, both with boarding facilities, and 5 primary schools, with an additional 4 primary schools located in the outlying town sites.

A variety of social interests are catered for with a number of arts and creative groups, including pottery, textiles, photography, painting, drawing, writing, gardening, music and dance and multiple sporting clubs, including AFL, soccer, netball, hockey, tennis, golf, lawn bowls, squash, volleyball and many more. Many of these groups participate in inclusive programs during school holidays and throughout their seasons during the year.

Within the 2016 Census, 18.3% of the Australian population were identified as living with disability. Based on this National average it is assumed some 2,633 people are living with disability in the Esperance Shire.

It was also revealed that 9.2% of the Esperance population provided unpaid assistance to a person with a disability in the two weeks leading up to the 2016 Census.



2.1. Functions, Facilities & Services provided by the Shire of Esperance

The Shire of Esperance operates under a structure of three Directorates, being Corporate Services, Asset Management and External Services and the Executive Services Division. Each area has a level of responsibility and must provide consideration to the DAIP through the roles they perform within the organisation.

The Shire of Esperance seeks to ensure the services, facilities and information of the municipality are inclusive and accessible to people with disability, and where possible, influence other service providers within the community to ensure their services are also inclusive and accessible to all.



The Shire of Esperance is committed to ensuring that it provides a community that is consulted, accessible and inclusive for people with a disability, their families and carers. Within the Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027, this focus is highlighted through a number of outcomes and strategies.

Outcome

Strategy

Leadership

Community confidence and trust in Council

Encourage community participation and insight into activities and decisions

Work together to enhance trust, participation and community pride

Actively engage and communicate with the community to ensure informed decision making

Community Connection

A community where everyone feels welcome, involved and connected to each other

Provide services, facilities and information that are inclusive and accessible

Everyone has access to quality health facilities & educational opportunities

Facilitate improved access to health, welfare and educational opportunities

A variety of accessible sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities that can be pursued by all

Facilitate and support sport, recreation, arts and cultural activities

Built Environment

Provide infrastructure and places that support the services we provide

Maintain the Shire's robust asset management practices and maintenance programs

Transport networks that meet the needs of our community and provide safe movement for all users

Deliver a diverse, efficient and safe transport system

Growth and Prosperity

Esperance is seen as a destination of choice to live and work

Promote the Esperance lifestyle using environmental, built, cultural and social assets

3. Previous Disability Access & Inclusion Plans

In February 1996 Council adopted its first Disability Service Plan, as was required under the WA Disability Services Act 1993. This Act was amended in 2004 requiring public authorities to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans. The requirements of DAIP's were to build on the existing Disability Service Plans, ensuring people with disability could access services, facilities and information in a way that promoted independence, opportunity and inclusion within the community.

The first Shire of Esperance Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was completed and adopted by Council in July 2007, expiring in 2012. A new DAIP was then adopted by Council in July 2012, expiring in 2017.

A review of this Plan was undertaken in 2017/18 whereby it was identified a full rewrite of the Plan was required to reflect the work done in this area and meet the requirements of the Disability Services Act 1993.

3.1. Achievements through previous DAIP's.

The Shire's achievements under the previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012 – 2017 have been plentiful. Some of these successes are highlighted below;

- Completion of Esperance Foreshore redevelopment. Includes accessible public toilets, footpaths and trails, accessible playgrounds.
- Improved access to the Cemetery on weekends available, ensuring the gates are opened to allow vehicle access through the Cemetery to grave sites located at the rear of the reserve more easily. Vehicle access to the cemetery surplus to weekends can be made by prior appointment.
- Cemetery Car Park design completed to include 3 disabled parking bays on bituminised surface. Work was completed in 2018/19.
- Demonstrated disability access improvements to Shire buildings during upgrades and redevelopment works. Esperance Airport upgrades saw wider, self opening doors installed at entry and easier access to toilet facilities.
- Improved access to Esperance Visitor Centre and lower counters installed.
- CBD Parking Strategy identified improved disabled parking access and saw the implementation of pedestrian crossings in the town centre.
- The Shire can now provide information about services and facilities in a range of formats including multiple languages, larger print, Braille or electronically.
- Youth Advisory Council established with representation from Educational Support Unit students
- Working in partnership with Escare Incorporated to implement the Esperance One and All Community Program, a holiday activity program for all ages and all abilities.
- Increased accessibility to Bay of Isles Leisure Centre pool and gym with all abilities equipment purchased and alternative water access available.
- Changes to the recruitment processes and documentation identify the Shire as an equal opportunity employer.

4. Disability and Barriers to Access and Inclusion

4.1. What is Disability?

The concept of disability can have a range of different meanings depending on the context and/or circumstance. For the purpose of this DAIP, the context is one of community inclusion. In this context, the definition of disability is extremely broad. Community inclusion focuses less on the disability and more on the individual and their ability, capacity and interests. In consideration of this Plan, we can consider all disability types to fit in into one of the following categories;

Physical

Including, but not limited to, wheelchair users, amputees, reduced or restricted physical mobility, dexterity and control.

Some of the key issues impacting on inclusion for people with physical disabilities are;

- Public attitudes and understanding,
- Communication and assistance techniques; and
- Mobility, including moving from a to b in the environment and ability to control movement in their own personal space.

Sensory

Vision - Including, but not limited to, total blindness, legal blindness (less than 10% vision) and low or restricted vision conditions.

Some of the key issues impacting on inclusion for people with vision impairments are;

- public attitudes and understanding,
- communication and assistance techniques; and
- independent safe mobility and information provision.

Hearing - Including, but not limited to, deafness and reduced hearing conditions.

Some of the key issues impacting on inclusion for people with vision impairments are;

- public attitudes and understanding,
- communication and assistance techniques; and
- information provision

Cognitive

Includes any condition that impacts on a person's thought processes i.e. intellectual, psychiatric, mental health, dementia, schizophrenia etc.

Some of the key issues impacting on inclusion for people with physical disabilities are;

- public attitudes and understanding,
- communication and assistance techniques; and
- information provision.

4.2. Barriers to Access and Inclusion

There are a multitude of different barriers faced by people with disability as they attempt to build a good life and pursue their citizenship entitlements. It is important that staff at all levels and in all departments have some understanding of the types of barriers and how they might impact on people with different disabilities and then take this into account when completing the work they are required to do as part of their role within the organisation.

Most, if not all, of these barriers can be categorised under the following types;

Attitudinal Barriers (People)

This is by far the most commonly experienced barrier. It comes about when people in society misunderstand what it means to have a disability and how it might impact on an individual. It tends to be characterised by a range of negative stereotypes and assumptions about a person's capacity, abilities and entitlement to belong and participate. When it is experienced by people with disability its impact can be severe and profound. It can result in people being made to feel different, as though they do not belong and as if they are not welcome. Working to reduce this attitudinal barrier is primarily about awareness raising through educational and training initiatives.

Physical Barriers (Places)

The level of awareness around physical barriers is variable. A common misunderstanding is that inclusion for people with disability is only about the built environment.

Physical barriers or obstacles can limit a person's capacity to move independently within the environment in a safe and dignified manner. Physical barriers can also result in people with

a disability experiencing difficulty accessing the built environment or their total exclusion from it all together.

Working to reduce physical barriers is primarily about ensuring that infrastructure is designed, built and maintained in a manner that enables it to be accessed by everyone. There are a range of codes, standards and guidelines available which provide information on best practice physical access for people with disability. The recent introduction of the Access to Premises (buildings) standard, under the DDA (introduced 1/5/2011), which has been incorporated into the Building Code of Australia (BCA), should ensure that these issues are now captured by the formal building approvals mechanisms. The BCA, however, does not apply to all aspects of the built environment. For example, the BCA does not apply to pedestrian infrastructure, and as such alternative measures should be put in place to ensure accessibility by all.

Procedural Barriers

Policies and procedures can present unfair or unreasonable barriers for people with disability.

The impact of disability is unique for every person and every person's capacity to deal with that impact will vary. As a result, people with a disability often have to do things in a different way to others. Sometimes, this can cause conflict with a policy or procedure or with "the way we do things".

Working to reduce procedural barriers is about ensuring that disability access and inclusion becomes an integrated part of the mainstream way of doing things. Initiatives to reduce additional and physical barriers will assist this process.

5. Policy Statement

5.1. Equity for People with Disability

The concept of equity is to ensure that everyone gets a fair go at accessing and participating in all aspects of community life. The Shire of Esperance acknowledges that people with disability have the same fundamental rights and responsibilities as all other members of the community.

The Shire of Esperance is committed to furthering the principles and objectives of the Disability Services Act (amended 2004) and ensuring that the community is accessible for, and inclusive of, people with disability, their families and carers.

The Shire's understanding of an accessible and inclusive community is one in which all functions, facilities, service and information (both in house and contracted) are open, available and accessible to people living with disability, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as other people within the community.

The Shire of Esperance:

- Recognises that people with disability are valued members of our community who make a variety of contributions socially, economically and culturally;
- Values diversity and believes that supporting participation and inclusion for all, makes a stronger more vibrant community;
- Believes that people living with disability, their families and carers should be supported to remain connected, included and visible within our community;
- Is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families, carers and organisations that assist people living with disability in addressing barriers to access and inclusion;
- Will ensure agents and contractors appointed by the shire, will work toward the desired outcomes identified within the DAIP;
- Is committed to supporting local community groups and businesses provide access to, and inclusion of, people with disability;
- Is committed to achieving the 7 specified outcomes of the DAIP; and
- Will work in partnership with other relevant agencies, organisation and authorities as appropriate.

6. Agents & Contractors

The Disability Services Act 1993 requires agents and contractors of public authorities to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with the contracting public authority's DAIP.

The Shire of Esperance will take all practicable measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors. Agents and contractors will be informed of the Shires DAIP by including it in all our procurement documentation including but not limited to requests for quotes, requests for tenders and expressions of interest requests .

Definitions for the purpose of the DAIP

- An **agent** is a person or business authorised to act on another's behalf
- A **contractor** is an entity who performs a service or delivers a product under an agreement (or contract) with a public authority
- There is an exchange of money for service (including grants)

6.1. Responsibilities of agents and contractors

- Where agents and contractors are used as go-betweens in the provision of services to the community for a public authority, the agent and contractor must take the needs of people with disability into account.
- Agents and contractors do not have to develop their own DAIP
- Agents and contractors must conduct their business in a manner consistent with the contracting public authority's DAIP
- Agents and contractors are required to implement strategies which directly relate to the task they are undertaking
- Contracted services in which the public authority itself is the recipient of the services are not relevant to the DAIP.

6.2. Role of agents and contractors

A Special Condition of Contract was developed by the State Solicitors Office for use in contracts under the Dept of Treasury and the Dept of Finance framework. As a result, all state government public authorities are expected to have internal mechanisms and processes in place to facilitate reporting by agents and contractors. The special condition has been provided to local governments as a suggested approach to ensure contracted services are accessible for people with disability

A progress report must be provided each year to the Minister for Disability Services about DAIP implementation across Western Australia. This report is produced from information submitted to the Commission from public authorities via their annual DAIP Progress Report, which includes progress by their agents and contractors.

Agents and contractors are required to provide annual reports to the Shire providing information on activities and/or initiatives undertaken in line with DAIP requirements. This information is then included in the Shire's annual DAIP report to the Disability Services Commission, where the Shire also provides information on actions taken throughout the year to satisfy the seven strategy outcomes identified within the DAIP.

7. Development of the 2020 - 2025 DAIP

7.1. Review

In preparing the Shire's DAIP, a review of the Disability Access and inclusion Plan 2012-17 was undertaken to provide information on the progress made on the key areas to determine relevant or ongoing strategies that might be carried forward into this plan.

In order to research trends and good practice in the area of access and inclusion, a review of DAIPs from various other local governments was completed. Other Shire plans and policies were examined, in particular the Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027

7.2. Engagement

In developing the DAIP 2020-2025, we consulted with various members of the community to hear their thoughts, ideas and experiences so as to ensure that the DAIP is relevant to the local community. These included:

- People with disability or aged and their carers who live or work in the Shire of Esperance
- Agencies and organisations working with or supporting people with disability or aged and their carers who live or work in the Shire of Esperance
- Shire of Esperance Staff

Comment was sought on the Shire's DAIP by way of written submissions or by appointment. The opportunity to comment on the DAIP was promoted through media, public notices in the Esperance Express, the Shire's website and direct mail to identified stakeholders.

8. Outcome Statements & Strategies

Within the *Disability Services Act 1993* strategies have been identified to provide seven desired outcomes from Disability Access and Inclusion Plans. These outcomes are outlined in the following pages and linked to Strategies that the Shire of Esperance can use to achieve each outcome.

Outcome

C1 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and any events organised by the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

C1.1 Coordinate a Disability Access and inclusion Plan Reference Group to guide the implementation of the DAIP strategies

C1.2 Conduct services and events in buildings and facilities that are as accessible and inclusive as possible.

C1.3 Ensure the people with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services

Outcome

C2 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

C2.1 Ensure where appropriate and practical, that all new or re-development works provide access to people with disability

C2.2 Ensure the location and quantity of ACROD parking spaces meet the needs of people with disabilities and relevant statutory planning standards

C2.3 Continue to provide and maintain public spaces and pedestrian walkways to meet universal access requirements

C2.4 Ensure that relevant Shire of Esperance staff, contractors and agents are aware of and comply with minimum access standards as required by Australian Standards on Access and Mobility

Outcome

C3 People with disability receive information from shire of Esperance in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it

Strategy

C3.1 Ensure all promotional materials and documentation regarding services, facilities and customer feedback are in an accessible format using clear and concise language wherever possible

C3.2 Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats

C3.3 Improve community awareness that Shire information can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

Outcome

C4 People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Shire of Esperance as other people receive from the staff at the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

C4.1 Ensure staff have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be able to offer quality customer service to people with disability

C4.2 Ensure that the Shire of Esperance's Customer Service Charter is consistent with the DAIP

C4.3 Ensure all Shire of Esperance's policies and procedures relevant to customer service are consistent with the DAIP

Outcome

C5 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

C5.1 Ensure that the current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disability

C5.2 Ensure that grievance mechanism processes and outcome satisfaction survey forms are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disability

Outcome

C6 People with disability the have the same opportunity to participate in any public consultation held by the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

C6.1 Ensure people with disability have access to any consultative process by the Shire of Esperance

C6.2 Ensure that the Shire of Esperance's consultation policies and procedures are consistent with the DAIP

C6.3 Provide opportunities for people of all abilities to comment on facilities, services and events delivered by the Shire of Esperance

Outcome

C7 People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Shire of Esperance

Strategy

• • • • •
C7.1 Continue to select on merit for open employment opportunities and give fair and due consideration to all candidates, including people with disability
• • • • •

• • • • •
C7.2 Foster an organisational culture that values and is responsive to the diversity of the council and staff
• • • • •

• • • • •
C7.3 Implement fair and inclusive management and administration practices that enable broader and more diverse participation in employment
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• • • • •
C7.4 Provide support for employees with a disability, including but not limited to making available work-place flexibility, modifications and adaptive technologies
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9. Implementation & Review

9.1. Annual DAIP Implementation Plan

An internal working document (DAIP Implementation Plan) outlining the actions to deliver the strategies identified for each of the outcomes will be developed annually with the assistance of the Shire of Esperance Access and Inclusion Reference Group. This plan will allow the Shire to monitor progress and actions within Shire of Esperance Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed and amended annually.

9.2. DAIP Reference Group

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Reference Group meet on a quarterly basis. As part of each meeting, the group will initially assist to develop and then review the progress of the annual implementation plan and any associated issues. The group will be comprised of the following Shire and community representatives:

- At least one (1) Councillor
- At least one (1) staff member from each Directorate.
- Up to three (3) Community members
- Up to three (3) Community Organisation members

9.3. Annual Reporting

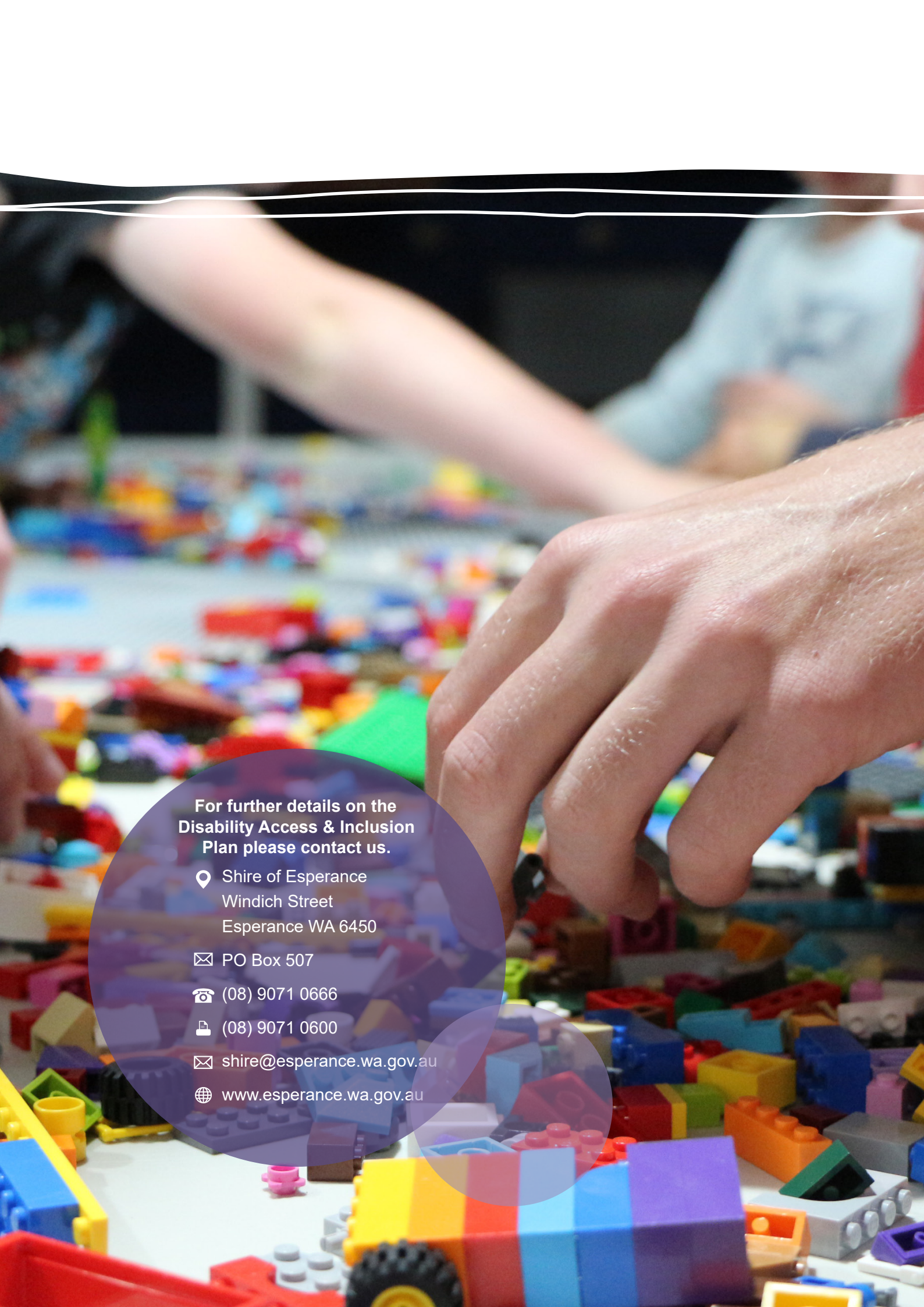
The Disability Services Act (1993) describes the minimal reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to the City's DAIPs as:

1. Submitting an annual progress report to the Department of Communities using the supplied template; and
2. Reporting on the implementation of the Shire's DAIP in the Shire's Annual Report.
3. The strategies used to advise agents and contractors, employed by the Shire of Esperance, is via email and reference in contracts.

9.4. Review Frequency

This plan will be reviewed in accordance with the DAIP requirements. At the end of each financial Year the progress of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is documented in each local government's Annual Report and this is forwarded to the state government. Legislation outlines that Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIP) will be reviewed at least every five years, a copy of the plan must be lodged with the Disability Services.

Once endorsed by Council, an advertisement will be put in the local newspaper advising the community, that a copy is available from the Shire's website and available in alternative formats upon request.



**For further details on the
Disability Access & Inclusion
Plan please contact us.**

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