



**Wattle Range Council
Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
2020 - 2024**



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

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Message from our Mayor



Welcome to the Wattle Range Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2020 - 2024.

Wattle Range Council is committed to building strong communities which have friendly and welcoming places. Communities where everyone can enjoy our comprehensive range of environments and experiences and also feel like they belong and want to contribute.

The aim of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is to provide equity of access and inclusion to all services, facilities, functions, events and information provided by our Council.

People with disability have the right to inclusion and equality by accessing and participating in all aspects of community life. Over many years, we have undertaken a range of initiatives to create opportunities for people with disability and their carers. The DAIP process, which involved comprehensive community consultation, and talking to relevant stakeholders, has shown us we have more to do.

I fully support this plan as part of the Council's commitment to accessibility and inclusion and I encourage all staff, community members and visitors to embrace and participate in the implementation and further development of our dynamic and ever evolving plan.

Des Noll
Mayor
Wattle Range Council

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1) Brief DAIP Overview

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) demonstrates Wattle Range Council's strategic commitment to improving the participation of people with disability and their carers across a range of areas so they can enjoy the rights and opportunities provided to all citizens and reach their full potential.

It provides Council with a systematic approach to identify and address barriers to access and inclusion and develop strategies that meet the participation and service needs of people with disabilities. The plan is a dynamic document that recognises community and cultural diversity and acknowledges the valuable contribution of everyone to the social and economic fabric of our society.

The plan was prepared in collaboration with the community, and utilises the South Australian Government's DAIP reporting template. It also lists the six key policy outcome areas of the South Australian DAIP strategy and explains the actions which will be addressed under each of the six outcomes.

This plan is available in alternative formats including large and standard print, electronically by email, in audio format on USB upon request and on Council's website.

2) Wattle Range Council Snapshot

Wattle Range Council is made up of 13 communities located in the Limestone Coast Region of South Australia. It spans from the Victorian border at its eastern boundary to the Southern Ocean in the west. The area has a proud and rich Aboriginal history. The first people to inhabit the region were the Bunganditj people, Bunganditj is historically also known as Boandik. The name Bunganditj is derived from Bung-an-diti "people of the reeds". The Boandik people have lived in the region for at least 30,000 years.

European settlers first moved into the area in the late 1840s, and by the 1860s opened up tracts of land for farming cereal crops. The first local government areas were set up around the three towns of Millicent, Penola and Beachport in the late 19th century, with each operating independently of each other until 1997.

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The Wattle Range Council was formed in 1997 following the amalgamation of the District Councils of Beachport, Millicent and Penola.

The local economy incorporates agriculture, including cereal cropping, sheep, cattle and dairy farming, fishing, forestry, viticulture and tourism. It also encompasses South Australia's premier wine growing region, the Coonawarra.

Tourism is a diverse, growing aspect of the economy, with seaside towns and pristine coastal waters, the wine growing industry, famous cave diving and unique fossil caves.

Council provides a wide range of services and facilities across the entire community, and this plan, with prioritised actions and resources, will ensure these will be accessible and inclusive for all.

3) Disability Access and Inclusion Statement of Commitment

The Wattle Range Council is committed to:

- Establishing a dynamic culture that promotes its DAIP to ensure disability access and inclusion awareness information and education is communicated to its officers, key stakeholders, contractors and volunteers, and ensures that this information is regularly updated and;
- Continuously reviewing its DAIP, to identify, and implement opportunities and improvements, enabling the same opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers to access its services, information and facilities, without any discrimination;
- Ensuring people with disability can participate in shaping its services and objectives through a consultative process;
- Mitigating any disability discrimination by complying with all relevant legislative and statutory requirements, standards and codes.

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4) South Australian Disability Statistics

The Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015* defines a person with disability as someone who has a functional limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

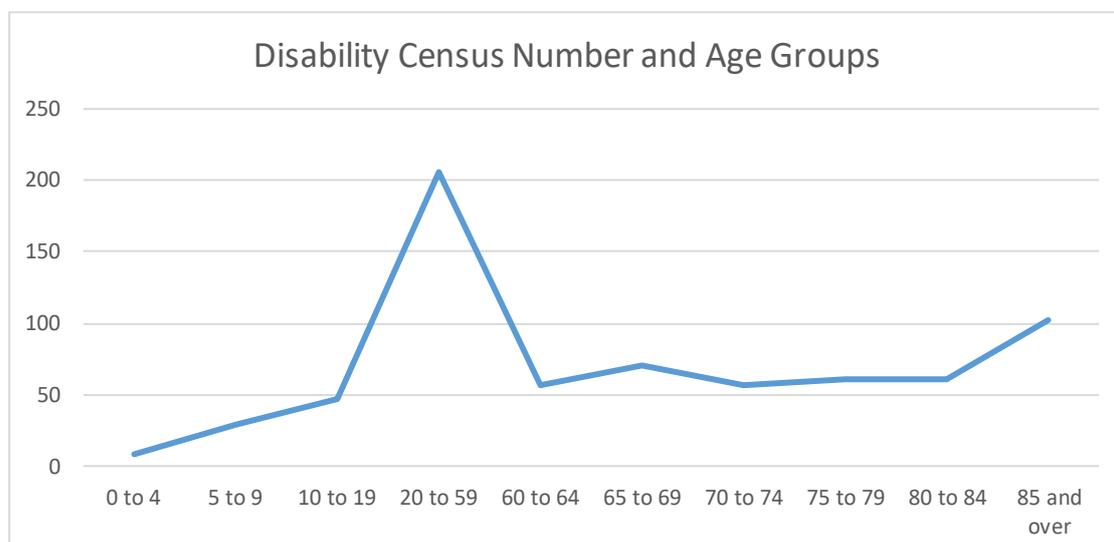
In South Australia, over one in five people (363,800 or 22%) reported having a disability in 2015. Of these, nearly 87.5% had a specific limitation or restriction that meant they were limited in the core activities of self-care, mobility or communication, or restricted in schooling or employment.

Around 28.3% of people with disability had a profound or severe limitation in one or more of the core activity areas with a further 52.3% having a moderate or mild limitation in core activity areas.

ABS findings indicate that in SA, there were 242,400 people providing informal assistance to people with disability (14.7% of population). Of these, 74,800 people identified themselves as being primary carers (4.5% of the population).

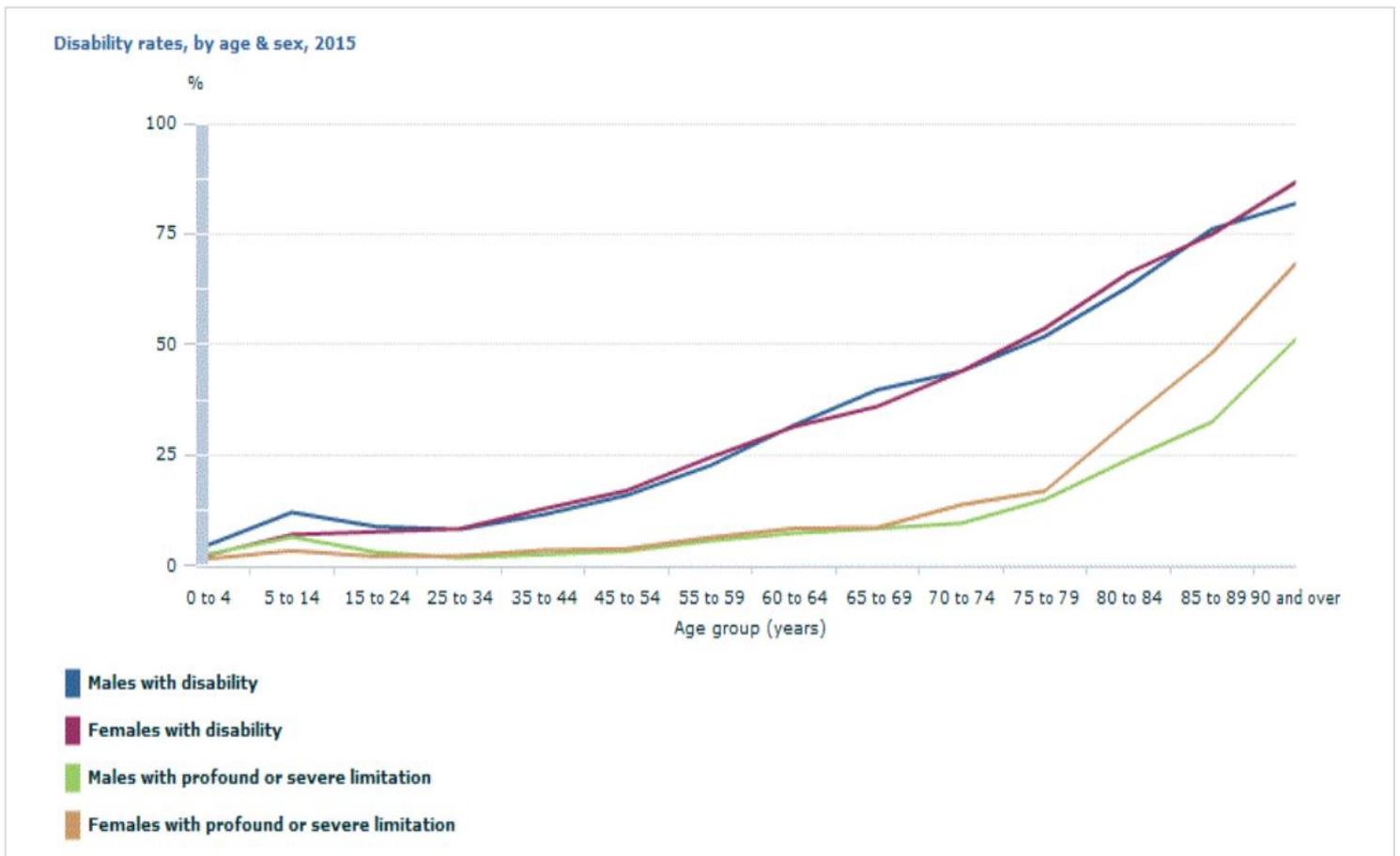
5) Wattle Range Council Disability Statistics

The Census *usual resident population* of Wattle Range Council area in 2016 was 11,677. Of these, 18.5% of the population identified as either directly needing assistance due to a severe or profound disability, or as being primary carers (the 2011 Census showed 17.3% of the population).



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The Council's graph differs from the national statistical graph below, as it shows a higher number of people with a disability in the 20 to 59 age group compared to the national average. This may suggest a higher level of independent living, as well as aged care. The reasons for this can vary from housing affordability, lifestyle, family support, service availability and environmental conditions.



PART 2 DAIP LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION

There are a number of legislative and statutory requirements which relate to disability discrimination, accessibility, inclusion and equity and the items in this section provide a brief overview of the key items which establish the foundation for a DAIP.

6) Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* defines "disability" as meaning:

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
 - b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
 - c) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or capable of causing disease or illness; or
 - d) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
 - e) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
 - f) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
- and includes a disability that:
- g) presently exists; or
 - h) previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - i) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
 - j) is imputed to a person.

It also outlines what an action plan must include (Part 3, Sections 59 to 64); and the function of the Australian Human Rights Commission with regard discrimination and a complaints process along with outlining offences for disability discrimination.

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7) **Disability Inclusion Act 2018**

This Act ensures mainstream services are accessible to South Australians with disability, enabling them to fully participate in their community without barriers to equal access and inclusion.

Under the Act, local government is required to develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans, in full consultation with people with disability.

8) **The Disability Services (Rights, Protection and Inclusion) Amendment Act 2013**

Important provisions introduced through this Act are:

- Referencing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities;
- Enshrining the right of people with disability to exercise choice and control in relation to decision-making in their lives;
- Accessible and well publicised complaints and grievance procedures;
- Protecting those who complain;
- Referencing state and national discrimination legislation;
- Mandating safeguarding policies in all government and government-funded disability service providers;
- New powers to make regulations requiring the sector to report on outcomes for clients;

9) **Equal Opportunity Act 1984**

The purpose of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA) is to promote equality of opportunity for all South Australians. It aims to prevent discrimination against people and to give them a fair chance to take part in economic and community life.

10) **Development Act 1993**

Part 1 Sec 3 (f) (g) to regulate the design and construction of buildings. This invokes the Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010, which refers to the AS1428 Standards.

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11) United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The development of DAIPs also align with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) ratified by Australia in 2008, and the Optional Protocol signed by Australia in 2009. The convention acknowledges the value of existing and potential contributions made by people with disabilities to the overall wellbeing of their communities. It is underpinned by eight guiding principles based on respect, equality and non-discrimination.

The UNCRPD, defines persons with disabilities as including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which interact with various barriers to hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

This broader understanding recognises disability may also be a product of the environment in which a person lives. Social, attitudinal, economic and cultural barriers can limit participation as can a person's individual circumstances (i.e. the nature and degree of impairment, capacities and skills).

The UNCRPD defines 'discrimination' on the basis of disability to mean "any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

12) National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 (NDS). The Australian Local Government Association also assisted in the development of the NDS, which provides a shared policy framework that enables people with disability to achieve their full potential as equal citizens.

PART 3 DEVELOPING AN ACCESS AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

13) DAIP Project Group

The Council project group included executive and support staff.

The services of a qualified and experienced “Action Planner” (Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Part 3, Section 59) consultant were sought through a competitive tender process.

Consultant to Council was Environ Arc Pty Ltd, with Team Leader - Michael Galea (ACI, ACAA, GAATES Internationally Certified Access Consultant and DAIP Action Planner), David Stewart (ACAA Certified Access Consultant).

14) Aim of our Access and Inclusion Action Plan

The aim of this plan is to assist Council identify and remove barriers in policies, programs and services which exclude people with a disability, and to meet its obligations under relevant disability statutes, including both South Australian and Federal legislation and building standards.

In addition to this, the plan process shall:

- Promote and improve access for all;
- Build an inclusive community for all people which respects the dignity and values the diversity of individuals;
- Strengthen our community;
- Ensure the protection of equal rights, the right to participate in all aspects of community life and to ensure the right of equal access to services, resources and facilities provided by Council, in their roles as purchaser, service provider, policy adviser, planner, regulator and responsible employer.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

15) Objectives of our Access and Inclusion Action Plan

The objectives of this plan are to:

- Assist Council to better meet the needs of people with a disability who live, work and visit the area;
- Assist Council to meet its statutory requirements under relevant disability legislation, both South Australian and Federal;
- Foster a region where people with a disability are afforded the same opportunities as the broader community;
- Improve access for people with a disability to Council's services and facilities;
- Encourage participation by people, regardless of ability, in Council's activities;
- Promote positive and inclusive images of people with a disability within Council and the community;
- Further strengthen the relationship between Council and people with disabilities in the area;
- Promote and increase awareness of Council staff and the broader community of the rights and needs of people with disabilities;
- Focus on practical, achievable and deliverable initiatives to enhance access to services, physical infrastructure and public places.

16) Establishing an Access and Inclusion Action Plan

Local Government in South Australia has many key roles, which encompass a varied range of service provision and infrastructure, environmental, economic civic and recreational facilities.

The development of a Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan represents a commitment by the Council which will help ensure social inclusion and access for all our residents and visitors.

This can provide many benefits including increased opportunities for social inclusion, improved physical access to facilities and buildings, enhanced community and individual wellbeing and a greater recognition of the diversity of the residents and visitors.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

In developing this Plan, the following was included, but not limited to:

A Review of Current Activities:

- Collection of Council documentation and information;
- The development and promotion of a survey throughout the Council area;
- Interviewing Council Managers;
- Interviewing selected people who have a disability and their carers;
- The range of potential service users and employees in the Council area;
- The changing profile of the local community;
- Numbers of people and their types of disabilities.

Identify Physical Barriers:

- All the areas to which service users and employees should be entitled to have access;
- Physical structures which may act as barriers to people with limited mobility;
- Structures designed to deliver services, such as customer information counters and display units;
- Décor which may be confusing or disorientating to people with a disability affecting their vision;
- Nonvisual guides to assist people with a disability in using Council premises;
- Ways of assisting people with a disability to move through a space in times of emergency and evacuation, including such things as visual fire alarms for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Communication Barriers:

- Alternatives for the advertising of Council services in ways that ensure accessibility to people with disabilities;
- Alternative presentation of standard Council forms;
- Access to computer technology in ways which can be used by people with disabilities;
- Use of current technology to ensure that groups who attend Council meetings and functions have access to the visual and audio enhancements.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Attitudinal Barriers:

- Commit to a process for the understanding by all staff and elected members, of the implications of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Action Plan;
- Ensure all relevant Council Policies are DAIP inclusive;
- Set realistic, measurable goals and targets with achievable timelines based on collected data and allocate responsibility in liaison with the DAIP Project Team.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the Policy and Action Plan will also be placed on the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), DAIP Register.

17) Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Outcomes

Ensuring the rights of people living with disability are upheld, is the responsibility of the whole community. Most people take the ability to go about their daily life for granted. People with disability should also be able to access and participate in all aspects of our society, including using 'mainstream' services and programs. Social inclusion is fundamental to one's quality of life and critical to achieving positive life outcomes across all domains.

The South Australia DAIP initiative aligns with the National Disability Strategy in specifying the following outcome areas:

Outcome 1. Inclusive and accessible communities

People with disability live in accessible and well-designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

Outcome 2. Economic security and employment

People with disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

Outcome 3. Rights protection, justice and legislation

People with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Outcome 4. Personal and community support

People with disability, their families and carers have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

Outcome 5. Learning and skills

People with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high-quality education system that is responsive to their needs. People with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

Outcome 6. Health and wellbeing

People with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

18) Achievements to date:

The Wattle Range Council is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive community for all community members regardless of ability. Council had made considerable progress to achieve this goal. Achievements to date include but are not limited to:

- Nangwarry public toilet upgrade
- Installation of new public toilets in close proximity to the Domain playground
- Wheelchair swing at the Domain playground
- Beachport Museum disability upgrades
- Reorganising shelves in Millicent Library to be wheelchair accessible
- Auslan large books and audio books available at the Millicent Library
- Beach access upgrade at Beachport Surf Beach
- Footpath upgrades
- Donation of Red Cross vehicle
- Public consultation conducted using multiple formats
- Staff and elected member disability awareness training



Wide shelves for wheelchair access

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

19) Community and Stakeholder Consultation

Interactive workshops were held for Council staff, managers, elected members, and people with disability, their carers and local community disability service organisations, together with interested members of the public.

A community survey was developed to complement the Council area. During the consultation period community members and agencies had their say by:

- Completing an online survey or hard copy survey
- Attending an interactive workshop

Staff and elected members could have their say by:

- Completing an online survey
- Completing a hard copy survey
- Attending an internal workshop

The promotion of the consultation and survey included:

- Media release – Survey to assist disability access and inclusion planning 29 January 2019
- Newspaper article in The South Eastern Times on 31 January 2019
- Newspaper article in The Border Watch on 1 February 2019
- Council Communications column published in the Penola Pennant on 6 February 2019
- Council Communications column published in The South Eastern Times on 7 February 2019
- Local radio news bulletin
- Wattle Range Council Website
- Wattle Range Council's Facebook Page on 29 January 2019 reaching 5,338 users and on 14 February 2019 reaching 1,069 users
- Email to all staff and Elected Members
- Hard copies available at Council Depot for outdoor staff without email access
- Directly to key stakeholders identified by Wattle Range Council including service providers from government and non-government agencies, disability and aged care via email
- Hard copies of the survey were available at Wattle Range Council main office front counter, Penola, Beachport and Millicent Visitor information centres and the Millicent Public Library
- Hard copies were provided to local aged care facilities and government and non-government agencies
- Hard copies were also sent by post to community members who requested a hard copy.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan



The Survey asked:

- 1) In which township do you reside?
- 2) With regard to this survey, how best would you describe yourself?
- 3) What is your gender?
- 4) What age group are you in?
- 5) If associated with Council, please specify your role?
- 6) What is the nature of your disability or that of the person you care for?
- 7) Have you ever experienced unresolved difficulties or barriers having access to any of the following?
 - Council Facilities
 - Council Infrastructure
 - Council Communications
 - Council Services
- 8) Did you know Council has advocated for people with a disability in a range of listed areas?
- 9) Please provide specific examples of how you feel other Council services or facilities may be made more accessible and inclusive.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

- 10) How would you rate your Council's implementation of programs and activities that aim to improve access for people with a disability?
- 11) Please briefly describe any services that you would like to access from your Council that are currently not available.

Conclusion: Each area raised issues requiring prioritising, however it should be noted the majority of respondents had not generally experienced unresolved difficulties or barriers. That said, many suggestions were received, which will be incorporated into Council's DAIP.

This community consultation process was undertaken in accordance with LGA guidelines and provided the basis for the required actions and timelines incorporated in this DAIP.

The survey results showed the top five towns responding to the survey were:

- Millicent (39.85%)
- Penola (28.57%)
- Glencoe (5.26%)
- Beachport (3.76%) and Coonawarra (3.76%)

It should be noted that 9.77% of respondents resided outside the Council area.

Community members who contributed to the consultation identified as:

- Person with disability (20.30%)
- Carers of an adult who has disability (11.28%)
- Carers of child who has disability (5.26%)
- An interested member of the public (39.10%)

Community members identifying as having a disability or caring for a person with disability described the disability as:

- Physical disability (37.40%)
- Multiple disabilities (16.03%)
- Intellectual disability (10.69%)
- Neurological impairment (9.16%)

The Survey was open to the public for four weeks and was well responded to with 133 submissions. Many actions were noted, which Council could prioritise, program and resource in future budgets.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

20) Implementation of Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Following Councils' adoption of the plan it will be:

- Distributed to elected members, and the Executive leadership team (ELT) and the DAIP Advisory Committee for action;
- Registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission;
- Notified to the public and made available online, hard copies will be available for collection at Wattle Range Council main office, George street, Millicent.

Responsibilities of implementation

The Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring all Elected Members and staff are aware of the plan
- Overseeing the development and implementation of the plan;
- Ensuring there is an equitable allocation of resources;
- Ensuring all Council decisions reflect the plan's principles and priorities.

Directors and Managers are responsible for:

- Facilitating the provision of information about the plan and its implementation;
- Ensuring the plan is implemented across all Council's activities and that goals are achieved;
- Coordinating the implementation within their areas of responsibilities;
- Nominating and releasing relevant officers to attend disability awareness and training programs;
- Ensuring people with disabilities are consulted effectively;
- Ensuring budgets are allocated equitably through needs-based planning;
- Reporting annually on achievement of goals.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Advisory Committee responsible for:

- Facilitating the development of the plan;
- Liaising with people with a disability in the community and their carers;
- Monitoring the implementation of the plan;
- Endorsing the plan;
- Advising Council and commenting on the implementation of the plan as required
- Assisting in the evaluation of the plan.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

21) Evaluation and Review

The plan will be evaluated through the following processes:

- The opportunity for the community to provide feedback in relation to the progress of the plan will be given by open invitation to a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Advisory Committee Meetings convened for evaluation and review purposes;
- Community members throughout the term of the plan can lodge comments to the Council about its progress. Council's response will be made according to Correspondence and Customer Services Guidelines.

An annual report of the plans progress will be provided as required by Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PCO13, 6.2.

The font used in this document is Arial, which is the preferred font of Vision Australia and the Australian Royal Society for the Blind to assist some people who have a visual impairment. This report is set at their recommended minimum size of 12pt. Their recommended ideal is 18pt; however, this is subject to the preferences of each individual.