



WAKEFIELD

REGIONAL COUNCIL



DISABILITY ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN 2020

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and respect the Kurna, Ngadjuri and Narungga people as the traditional custodians of the Wakefield Regional Council. We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and relationship of Aboriginal peoples to Country. We also pay respects to the cultural authority of Aboriginal peoples visiting our region or attending from other areas of Australia.



This artwork by Sam Gollan, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri woman, was designed and painted for Council as part of Reconciliation Week. The colours represent the Wakefield region (blue for the gulf, pink for the lakes and brown and ochre for the fertile farmlands). The story behind the designs is about community organisations coming together, working as one and making this great community unite. Wakefield is a place where knowledge and culture unite and where everyone comes together to discuss the best outcome for all.

Statement from our Mayor

This Disability Access & Inclusion Plan has been developed as Wakefield Regional Council undertakes a major review of its community strategic plan – Wakefield 2030. The two plans go hand in hand.

Through Council’s Wakefield 2030 engagement forums and feedback from our residents, businesses, industries and community groups, it is clear we are all striving for a more inclusive and accessible region, where there are opportunities for everyone to contribute and be supported.

This Disability Access & Inclusion Plan builds on some of the strategies emerging as part of Wakefield 2030, providing specific targets for us to achieve to ensure the services we provide, the spaces and places we look after, the events we deliver, the information we share and the opportunities we provide for people to participate in the decision making of Council are equitable and accessible.

Through this plan we aim to promote and protect the rights of people living with disability. We will actively seek opportunities for people living with disability to contribute to community decision-making. As the custodian of community assets, we will aim to ensure our environment and facilities are accessible and we will also work hard to ensure access to our services and information is accessible for all.

While the COVID-19 emergency delayed the start of our Disability Access & Inclusion Plan process and has limited our community engagement opportunities, we recognise this is an evolving plan and, as you will see, we have made an ongoing commitment to engage with key stakeholders to ensure we can keep up to date with the needs and desires of people in our community who are living with disability.

The actions in this plan are structured around the four themes of *Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023*:

- Inclusive communities for all
- Leadership and collaboration
- Accessible communities
- Learning and employment

Council Members, employees, volunteers and our broader community all have a role to play to ensure these actions are delivered in a meaningful way. We look forward to working together to bring these actions to life.



Mayor Rodney Reid

About Wakefield Regional Council

Wakefield Regional Council makes decisions and implements policies that impact our region, our community, our businesses and our built and natural environment. Like other local government authorities in South Australia we provide services and assets for a wide range of people, businesses and industries.

The Wakefield region stretches more than 80km from north to south and takes in many towns and settlements across 3,469km². We have a 2,700km road network – one of the largest in the state – and almost 200 Council-owned buildings and structures, many decades old. With a small population we have an ongoing challenge in funding assets and services to meet community expectations while managing financial impacts on our ratepayers.

Our community of almost 7,000 enjoys a country lifestyle relatively close to the Adelaide CBD and our region is the gateway to many of South Australia's tourist areas, including Yorke and Eyre Peninsulas, the Flinders Ranges and the Clare Valley. The Council region has a choice of public and private education, hospitals and health services and an active arts and music culture, along with a strong volunteer base.

Wakefield boasts some of the most productive farming land in the state. Grain and hay production, commercial fishing and intensive animal husbandry (poultry and pig farming) are all features, along with one of the state's largest wind farms at Snowtown and the largest Australian inland road/rail intermodal facility at Bowmans.

The Wakefield Regional Council came into effect on 1 July 1997, as a result of the amalgamation of the former District Council of Blyth-Snowtown and the former District Council of Wakefield Plains. Like all Councils, we have a number of key responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 1999* and other relevant legislation. These include:

- Setting rates, preparing annual budgets and setting longer-term plans for the area;
- Managing basic infrastructure including roads, footpaths, parks, public open space, street lighting and stormwater drainage;
- Collecting waste and street cleaning;
- Supporting the elected Council;
- Development planning and control, including safety assessments;
- Regulatory services, such as animal management and environmental health services.

In response to community needs, we provide a range additional services and programs.

- Business development;
- A community bus;
- Community grants;
- Community halls;
- Cycle and walking trails;
- Library services;
- Ovals, parks and reserves;
- Playgrounds;
- Public cemeteries;
- Swimming pools (community operated Council assets);
- Tree trimming (roadsides and other public places).

Our Workplace



Left: Wakefield Finance Manager Muhammad Jawad and Payroll Officer Liza Fuller.

Wakefield Regional Council has 72 employees, with most of those employees working in our field crews. We provide flexible work arrangements wherever possible and have a number of formal work from home arrangements, providing even greater scope for flexibility in the workplace.

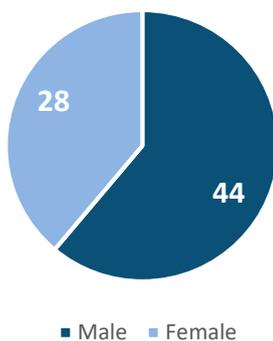
As at June 2020, most of our employees were aged over 45.

While we do not have statistics relating to employees identifying as having a disability, we strive to ensure our workplace is accessible and inclusive for all.

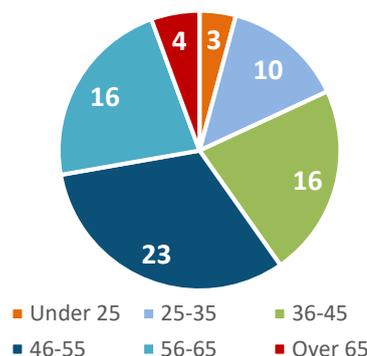
To support employees, external providers have undertaken voluntary annual employee health checks, the details of which are provided directly to participating staff. We also provide an Employee Assistance Program to support employees who are experiencing difficulties at work or at home and require confidential and discreet support.

We also recognise there is a range of ability when it comes to literacy and we are working to improve accessibility of information to staff across our teams.

Employees - Gender



Employees - Age



Disability Data

National¹

In 2018, there were 4.4 million Australians with disability (17.7% of the population) and 5.7% of all Australians had a profound or severe disability. Almost one-quarter (23.2%) of all people with disability reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition.

Of those with disability (living in households):

- 37.9% of those aged 15-64 years said their main source of personal income was a government pension or allowance;
- 9.6% aged 15 years and over had experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months because of their disability;
- Labour force participation for those aged 15-64 years was at 53.4%, in contrast to the rate for people without disability (84.1%)
- 11.4% of those with a profound or severe disability (aged 15-64 years) were working full-time.

Almost half (49.6%) of all older Australians had disability and 1.3 million older Australians living at home needed some assistance with everyday activities.

There were 2.65 million carers, representing 10.8% of all Australians. Females were more likely to be carers (12.3% of all females) than males (9.3%) and of the 3.5% of all Australians who were primary carers, seven in ten (71.8%) were women. Over one-third (37.4%) of primary carers had disability themselves, twice the rate of non-carers (15.3%).

South Australia

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* defines disability, in relation to a person, as including long-term: physical, psycho-social, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairment, or a combination of any of these impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Data from the ABS *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: South Australia, 2018* suggests about 332,500 South Australians had a disability in 2018, or about 19.4% of the population. Of those an estimated:

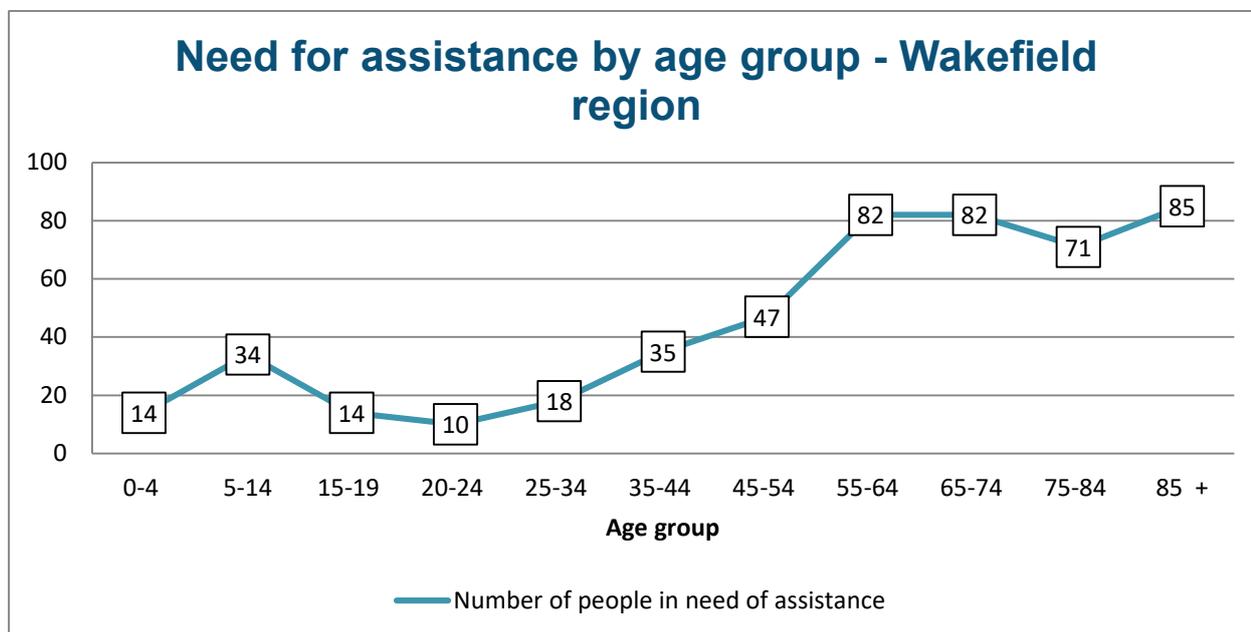
- 102,200 had profound or severe core activity limitation;
- 177,200 had moderate or mild core activity limitation;
- 128,700 had schooling or employment restrictions.

Wakefield region

The 2016 Census collected data on the need for assistance in one or more core activity areas – self-care, mobility and communication – because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age.

¹ Data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018*

The data showed 503 people in the Wakefield Regional Council area had a need for assistance – about 7.4% of the local population. While the need for assistance spans all age groups, those aged 55 and over accounted for about 63% of those needing assistance.



About 718 people aged 15 and over (about 13% of that age group in the region) stated they provided unpaid assistance. Most of those (447 or 62%) were female.

Council acknowledges the risks that relate to priority groups living with disability: women, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse people. According to the 2016 Census:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 2.3% of the Wakefield population (compared to 2% in South Australia). Of the 154 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Wakefield, 17 (11% of this group) required assistance with core activities;
- Women made up 49.1% of the Wakefield population (compared to 50.7% in South Australia). Of the 3,338 women in Wakefield, 252 (7.5% of this group) required assistance with core activities;
- Children aged 0-14 made up 19.6% of the Wakefield population (compared to 18.3% in South Australia). Of the 1,334 children in this age group in Wakefield, 48 (3.6% of this group) required assistance with core activities;
- The vast majority of our residents were born in Australia (82.8%, compared to 71.1% in South Australia);
- The vast majority of our residents spoke only English at home (90.4%, compared to 78.2% in South Australia).

While we do not have complete data in relation to disability within all of those groups, the principles and the actions within this plan – by seeking to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility for all – aim to address their particular needs.

Wakefield also has an ageing population, with an almost 25% increase in those aged 55 and over since the 2006 Census. This plan includes a number of actions that considers the needs of this age group, particularly in relation to mobility.

Legislative & Strategic Context

A Disability Access & Inclusion Plan must outline the practical steps South Australian authorities – including councils – will take to give effect to the objects and principles set out in the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* and the priority areas of *Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023*.

It must set out the measures we will take to ensure people with disability can access our support and services. Disability Access & Inclusion Plans are important for raising disability awareness in the community and promoting the social and economic benefits of a more inclusive State.

Alignment of Disability Access & Inclusion Plans:

International		
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities		
National		
National Disability Strategy 2010-20	National Disability Insurance Scheme	National Disability Agreement
South Australia		
Disability Inclusion Act 2018	Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019-2023	
Wakefield Region		
Disability Access & Inclusion Plan 2020		

Our Disability Access & Inclusion Plan has considered legislation which sets out the requirements for Council, both in terms of the development of this plan and in relation to disability discrimination, accessibility, inclusion and equity. It has also considered Australian standards around design and development.

The key legislation and guiding policies are summarised on the following page.

<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</p>	<p>The development of Disability Access & Inclusion Plans aligns with the Convention, which was ratified by Australia in 2008, and the ‘Optional Protocol’ signed by Australia in 2009. The UN 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.</p>
<p>National Disability Strategy (NDS) 2010–2020</p>	<p>The Council of Australian Governments endorsed the NDS which is a coordinated plan across all levels of government to improve the lives of people living with disability, their families and carers. The NDS is Australia’s response to the UN Convention and is designed to ensure the principles of the UN Convention are incorporated into policies and programs across Australia. Areas of policy action under the NDS are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive and accessible communities 2. Rights protection, justice and legislation 3. Economic security 4. Personal and community support 5. Learning and skills 6. Health and wellbeing
<p>Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)</p>	<p>Passed in 2018, the Act and Inclusive SA (see below) set out the South Australian Government’s commitment to building an accessible and inclusive community for people with disability. The Act supports the UN Convention, acknowledging that people living with disability have the same human rights as other members of the community and that the State and the community have responsibility to facilitate the exercise of those rights. The Act directs councils to develop and implement Disability Access & Inclusion Plans in consultation with people with disability.</p>
<p>Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019 – 2023 (the State Plan)</p>	<p>Inclusive SA – the State Plan – was released on 31 October 2019 following community and sector consultation. The State Plan is a requirement of the Act and sets a framework to support State authorities – including councils – to implement the NDS. Annual reporting against Inclusive SA will align the State’s achievements against the NDS policy areas. The actions set out in Inclusive SA are the first steps to improving access and inclusion for people living with disability.</p>
<p>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Equal Opportunity Act 1984</p>	<p>The Commonwealth’s <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> and South Australia’s <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> make disability discrimination unlawful and promote equal rights, opportunities and access for people living with disability. Disability discrimination happens when people living with disability are treated less fairly than people without disability and the discriminator fails to make reasonable adjustments to rectify the situation. It also occurs when people are treated less fairly because they are relatives, friends, carers, co-workers or associates of a person with disability.</p>

Our Vision

The State vision is '***an accessible and inclusive South Australia based on fairness and respect***'. At Wakefield Regional Council we intend to bring these themes to life through local actions, supported by appropriate levels of consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders.

At the time of drafting this plan, Council was developing Wakefield 2030 – the community's strategic plan for the coming 10 years. Although yet to be adopted, the strong themes emerging are:

- **Liveable communities:** where spaces and places enhance quality of life. People wanted to feel safe, connected and included, supported by appropriate community assets and to live in a healthy region.
- **Thriving region:** where there is growth and prosperity, with a diverse, strong and sustainable economic future, a growing population and new opportunities for current and future residents, industries and businesses.
- **Sustainable future:** where we all tread lightly on the environment, protect our natural treasures and show environmental leadership that considers the generations to come.

Through community forums for Wakefield 2030, the community expressed a desire for events and activities that would be inclusive and promote a strong sense of pride and connectedness. Feedback also highlighted community expectations around quality infrastructure provision across the Council area, including roads, buildings and facilities.

The Wakefield 2030 feedback reflects the State vision and, as the plan is finalised, there will be alignment with the actions within this Disability Access & Inclusion Plan.

Relationship to other Council policies, strategies, frameworks

How this plan fits within Council's planning framework:



Our Disability Access & Inclusion Actions

Wakefield Regional Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is structured around the themes and priority areas of the ***Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023***. These themes and priority areas are shown on the following pages.

This plan provides a whole-of-Council approach to ensure equitable access and inclusion in relation to services, assets, information and decision making. It also seeks to guide Council decision making in relation to investment in infrastructure, facilities and services.

Our draft actions were finalised after consultation with the Wakefield community, as described on page 22. The community feedback was used to plot actions over a five-year horizon within the following timeframes:

- Short term – first year of the plan to end of 2021;
- Medium term – 2022 and 2023;
- Long term – 2024 and 2025.

The COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of drafting this plan meant Council was limited in its ability to undertake best practice public consultation, including face to face forums with those living with disability, carers and the disability sector. For that reason, one of the first steps outlined in this plan is the establishment of an advisory group to help review the plan and assist Council with implementation of a number of the actions.

This is just the start: as we continue to work with our community and stakeholders to deliver the actions described, we will seek to make continuous improvements to our plan. Also, after our Wakefield 2030 community strategic plan is adopted by Council, we will modify these actions, as required, to ensure alignment across all of our plans.

Our Regional Health Plan – another complementary operational plan – is also under review. The existing 2014-2020 Regional Health Plan provides an overview of actions to be taken by the Wakefield, Yorke Peninsula, Barunga West and Copper Coast councils in a range of health-related areas.

That plan indicated Wakefield Regional Council had identified the need to establish and implement a Disability Discrimination Plan as part of its strategic planning processes. However, to date, no such plan has been produced



Felicity Riches is one of our volunteer bus drivers.

1: Inclusive communities for all

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023.

Social inclusion is a priority for people living with disability as it affects all aspects of their lives. It is our aim that the contributions and rights of people living with disability are valued and understood by all South Australians and that their rights are promoted, upheld and protected. We also want to ensure that people living with disability are supported to advocate for their own rights.

Priority 1: Involvement in the community

Priority 2: Improving community understanding and awareness

Priority 3: Promoting the rights of people living with disability

Our role

As the tier of government closest to the community, local councils have a major role to play in advancing quality of life for their residents. This can be through advocating or lobbying for services, or through planning, developing or implementing services at levels expected by the community.

As a priority, Council has undertaken a community survey to better understand current barriers for people with disability and gather ideas for improvement. That survey feedback, although limited, has helped inform this Disability Access & Inclusion Plan.

Once the plan has been adopted by Council, it will be broadly communicated to assist with raising community awareness and understanding of disability in the Wakefield region.

Recent actions undertaken by Wakefield Regional Council:

- **Community survey to understand gaps in terms of disability access and inclusion**
- **New Balaklava community garden designed to allow participation by all**

Our actions for the next five years:

	Action	State Plan Theme & Priority	Responsibility	Timing	Measurable Target
1.	Provide the adopted DAIP internally and externally in a range of accessible formats and promote the content and actions broadly to the community.	1.2	Community Development Officer	Short term	DAIP available via range of accessible formats
2.	Ensure Wakefield 2030 community strategic plan aligns to principles of inclusive/accessible communities and incorporate DAIP into strategies/actions.	1.2	Director Community & Corporate Services	Short term	DAIP references within Wakefield 2030
3.	Create an inclusive and accessible events checklist for Council-managed community events, consultation forums and for groups holding community events in public spaces.	1.1	Governance Officer	Short term	Checklist in place
4.	Establish and promote web pages dedicated to disability matters and providing links to resources and services for people living with disability, including an up-to-date listing of disability advocacy and complaints services accessible to the local community.	1.2	Team Leader Community & Economic Development	Medium term	Web page 'live'
5.	Review lease documentation and tighten provisions where required to ensure needs of people with disability are considered by those leasing Council-owned property.	1.1	Director Community & Corporate Services	Medium term	Lease templates updated

2: Leadership and collaboration

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023.

People living with disability want to have a greater role in leading and contributing to government and community decision-making. It is our aim that the perspectives of people living with disability are actively sought and that they are supported to participate meaningfully in government and community consultation and engagement activities.

Priority 4: Participation in decision-making

Priority 5: Leadership and raising profile

Priority 6: Engagement and consultation

Our role

Wakefield Regional Council recognises the contributions of those living with disability within the community and their right to participate fully in community decision-making, consultation and engagement activities.

Council acknowledges there is work to do to engage more fully with vulnerable groups, including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people with disability, women with disability, children with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability. This plan seeks to review and update our current policies and procedures around community engagement to ensure everyone has the ability to have a say.

Forums undertaken as part of the development of our Wakefield 2030 community strategic plan showed a strong community desire for Wakefield to be a supportive, inclusive and healthy community.

Our recent Disability Access & Inclusion survey also highlighted a desire for disability inclusion and accessibility considerations to become an ingrained part of the Council culture.

Recent actions undertaken by Wakefield Regional Council:

- **Wakefield 2030 community forums**

Our actions for the next five years:

	Action	State Plan Theme & Priority	Responsibility	Timing	Measurable Target
6.	<p>Establish a DAIP Advisory Group to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support decision making by acting as a reference group on issues of access and inclusion Review ongoing implementation of the DAIP Review policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive; Help measure our performance against the DAIP 	2.5	Director Community & Corporate Services	Short term	People living with disability represented on advisory group
7.	Review and update Council's Consultation Policy and procedures to ensure they are inclusive and provide the best opportunities to engage people living with disability, including face to face contact.	2.6	Governance Officer	Medium term	Policy updated and tested with DAIP Advisory Group
8.	Review Council complaints processes to ensure they provide appropriate information and guidance for those who may require assistance through the process.	2.4	Governance Officer	Medium term	Complaints processes reviewed and modified as required
9.	Work with the Local Government Association to encourage people with disability to participate in local government elections as candidates and voters in 2022.	2.5	Governance Officer	Medium term	Council promotions and communications encourage participation
10.	Work with Regional Development Australia to investigate opportunities to support leadership development for people living with disability in the Wakefield region.	2.5	Team Leader Community & Economic Development	Long term	Leadership program in place

3: Accessible communities

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023.

The accessibility of the built environment, quality services and information is key to ensuring people living with disability are included and have the opportunity to equally participate in all aspects of community life. It is our aim to increase accessibility to public and community infrastructure, transport, services, information, sport and recreation and the greater community.

Priority 7: Universal Design across South Australia

Priority 8: Accessible and available information

Priority 9: Access to services

Our role

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* and associated Regulations do not require immediate expenditure on capital works to make built environs accessible. Councils are required to: apply principles of universal design in all new builds; and, where possible and affordable, improve existing accessibility using universal design principles.

Wakefield Regional Council owns almost 200 buildings and structures, while more than 150 other buildings and structures are insured by Council due to their community use. While our Buildings & Structures Asset Management Plan highlights the need to provide greater accessibility to these assets, it would be cost prohibitive for Council to retrofit all buildings within the life of this Disability Access & Inclusion Plan.

This plan, therefore, focuses on reviewing our existing built assets, understanding where there may be greater use or access requirements and then scheduling priority works as part of any revision of the Buildings & Structures Asset Management Plan, due later in 2020.

Council is also mindful that accessibility relates to more than built structures. The services and information we provide to our community also needs to be accessible. For instance, we recently overhauled the processes for our community bus operation to allow assistance dog access for one of our regular users, undertaking direct consultation with the client, the dog trainer and bus driver to find the best solution.

Recent actions undertaken by Wakefield Regional Council:

- **Playground audit**
- **Caravan park disability cabins**
- **New accessible toilets at Lochiel, Port Wakefield and Snowtown**
- **Community bus redesign of procedures to allow assistance dog**
- **New ramps at Owen and Balaklava**

Our actions for the next five years:

	Action	State Plan Theme & Priority	Responsibility	Timing	Measurable Target
11.	Consider accessibility features (including signage, seating, pathways) in final designs for Balaklava and Hamley Bridge Main Street rejuvenation projects.	3.7	Chief Executive Officer	Short term	Projects incorporate disability features
12.	Audit physical access of Council buildings and incorporate a schedule of accessibility modifications in the Buildings & Structures asset management plan (including for new works depot).	3.7	Group Team Leader Public Assets	Short term	Audit undertaken and outcomes included in asset plan
13.	Undertake audit of footpaths as part of the development of the Transport Asset Management Plan and schedule upgrades and maintenance (including accessibility features such as ramps)	3.7	Director Infrastructure Services	Short term	Accessibility standards in footpath upgrades
14.	Review outcomes of 2020 playground audit and develop a plan to progressively improve accessibility for high use playgrounds and options for inclusive play equipment.	3.7	Group Team Leader Public Assets	Long term	Increase in accessible playground equipment
15.	Review suite of communication (including website, intranet etc) to ensure accessibility in line with standards and progressively update website information with audio format.	3.8	Team Leader Community & Economic Development	Long term	All communication compliant with guidelines

4: Learning and employment

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023.

Workforce participation is fundamental to social inclusion. It provides economic independence and choice, social connections and friendships, value, identity and belonging. It is our aim that people living with disability have access to inclusive places of study and that education and training provides pathways to meaningful and inclusive employment and volunteering opportunities.

Priority 10: Better supports within educational and training settings

Priority 11: Skill development through volunteering and support in navigating the pathway between learning and earning

Priority 12: Improved access to employment opportunities and better support within workplaces

Our role

Wakefield Regional Council provides flexible work arrangements, including part-time roles where possible and we strive to ensure our workplace is accessible and inclusive.

However, we recognise there are more steps we can take to ensure current and future employees living with disability are fully supported and our actions seek to formalise arrangements across a range of areas, including: recruitment, training and retention, disability awareness and access to the workplace.

We also believe there is greater opportunity to work with schools, businesses, community groups and other agencies to expand workforce and volunteering opportunities for people with disability.

Recent actions undertaken by Wakefield Regional Council:

- **Flexible work arrangements**
- **Working from home options – including Working from Home Policy and Work Health & Safety checklists**

Our actions for the next five years:

	Action	State Plan Theme & Priority	Responsibility	Timing	Measurable Target
16.	Leveraging new DAIP, provide disability awareness training for all staff, volunteers and Council Members to promote greater understanding and awareness of disability access and inclusion issues.	1.2	People & Culture Adviser	Short term	100% Council Members, staff and volunteers attend training
17.	Update recruitment and selection procedure to highlight options for support during interviews (e.g. provision of a sign language interpreter) for applicants with disability.	4.12	People & Culture Adviser	Short term	Procedure includes clear options
18.	Identify opportunities to promote Council as inclusive employer (in recruitment/interviewing, volunteering and work experience opportunities for people living with disability).	4.12	People & Culture Adviser	Medium term	Job notices, job descriptions etc updated
19.	Work with local high schools to develop and offer work experience opportunities for students living with disability.	4.12	People & Culture Adviser	Medium term	Increase in places offered to students with disability
20.	Implement an elective mentoring and career development program for employees with disability entering the workplace.	4.12	People & Culture Adviser	Long term	Mentoring program in place

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Development

Initially, Council was intending to engage external support and work with other councils on a regional Disability Access & Inclusion Plan, supported by local actions. There were a number of benefits with this approach, in particular being able to pool resources and enlist external specialists to drive the process. After careful consideration, Council changed its approach.

To ensure greater ownership of the plan, it was felt Wakefield Regional Council employees should develop the plan, consulting with stakeholders and enlisting the support of the Local Government Association and State agencies as required.

We also felt the issues for Wakefield may not be reflected across all of the other councils in the wider region.

Most importantly, as we were also developing our Wakefield 2030 community plan we wanted to ensure alignment between the two plans.

This is our first Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and employees have embraced the opportunity to be involved, undertake the consultation, research our region's information and recommend a way forward for Council.

A Disability Access & Inclusion Plan Internal Working Group was established to develop the draft plan in consultation with the community and key stakeholders. This group included representatives from all parts of Council administration:

- Director Community & Corporate Services (Coordinator)
- Team Leader Community & Economic Development
- Community Development Officer
- Community Liaison Officer
- Marketing & Communications Officer
- Planning Officer
- Group Team Leader Public Assets
- People & Culture Advisor

Council had some constraints in developing this plan due to the COVID-19 restrictions, in particular in its ability to undertake best practice community engagement within the legislative timeframe. Recognising this, one of the actions within the plan is to establish an external Disability Access & Inclusion Plan Advisory Group to undertake annual reviews of the plan and to recommend to Council any further actions that should be considered.

Consultation

Our consultation process for this plan is in two parts:

Part 1 – Initial survey

To help inform the contents of the plan, we undertook a survey to seek views on how accessible and inclusive the Wakefield region is now and ideas for making the area more accessible and inclusive into the future.

While the survey was promoted broadly to our community, we were particularly keen to hear from people with a personal, family or professional experience of disability. The survey was distributed in a variety of formats to both key stakeholders and the broader community.

Of the 22 who responded to the survey:

- 1 had mobility issues
- 1 was a carer of a person with disability
- 3 were disability service providers
- 3 were family members of a person with disability
- 5 were friends of a person with disability
- 9 had no lived experience with disability

Most of the respondents (13) were in the 25-54 age group, 6 were in the 55-74 age group and 1 was aged over 75.

Of those who had attended events, 4 respondents stated the events had posed challenges, while 8 felt they were not inclusive of people with disability. Key issues identified were:

- Lack of pathways or bituminised footpaths
- Limited wheelchair/disability access toilets at some sporting grounds and events
- Difficulty moving through dark areas
- Lack of safe places with 'boundaries'
- Need for more access ramps

Three respondents felt some Council services were not inclusive for people with disability. Key comments included:

- Disability or accessibility should become part of the Council culture
- Ease of access and transitions onto and from footpaths should be considered
- There should be greater attention to building accessibility, parking, seating etc

Footpaths and playgrounds dominated feedback. All respondents had accessed a Council-owned building and 8 of them stated the buildings posed a challenge. Specific comments and ideas for improvement were:

- Pathways and paving access needs to improve
- Better wheelchair/walker access to playgrounds required
- Disability toilet facilities should be expanded
- More inclusive play spaces
- Wider and more accessible car parks
- More accommodation for people with disability should be considered

In terms of Council information and feedback, 3 found information was not easily accessible and 4 did not consider it easy to provide feedback to Council. Specific comments and ideas for improvement in communication were:

- Do not rely on website and Facebook.
- Offer service for different languages
- Verbal updates - not just written
- Councillors to be more involved in a diverse range of activities
- Direct communication for people with disability
- More availability to information at local towns

When asked about how easy it was to have their voice heard in council decision making, there were mixed comments, with several stating it was difficult to be heard. *'There needs to be a region big picture plan that is what communities want so when [Council] staff change the plans don't.'*

A number of other ideas for making Wakefield more accessible and inclusive included:

- Improved signage for disabled car parking
- Provision of more accessible public toilets
- Pathway upgrades
- More information from local councillors
- Inclusive transport across the region
- Disability friendly access to main street shops
- Inclusive equipment at playgrounds
- More seating in main streets
- Services that support those with disabilities e.g. a heated indoor pool for rehab or body movement
- Strengthening of accessibility to health, welfare and interagency services
- Visiting services to existing medical facilities
- Greater support services, information provision etc
- Establishing a key Council contact

A number of specific venues across Wakefield were also highlighted as needing upgrades to support access and inclusion.

Part 2 - Consultation on the draft plan

Once the draft plan is endorsed by Council, it will be made available in a range of formats and further feedback will be sought from:

- Those who had responded to our initial survey;
- Key stakeholders;
- The broader community.

A minimum 21-day consultation period will be advertised in local media, on our website, by direct mail to key stakeholders and through social media. However, picking up on the survey feedback and the low survey response rate, more face-to-face consultation will occur, subject to COVID-19 restrictions.

All feedback will be provided to the Council before the final plan is adopted.

Implementation process

Once adopted by Council, the Disability Access & Inclusion Plan will be:

- Communicated to the community and key stakeholders through a variety of formats;
- Communicated to employees, in particular to those responsible for implementing actions, through team meetings, staff bulletins and newsletters;
- Included quarterly on the Leadership Team agenda for progress tracking;
- Subject to milestone and annual reporting to Council and the community;
- Subject to ongoing review by the Disability Access & Inclusion Plan Advisory Group.

Responsibilities for the actions:

DAIP Internal Working Group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of statutory requirements for developing DAIP • Review of existing policies, procedures, practices to ensure the needs of people living with disability have been addressed and to recommend any changes • Develop the draft DAIP and undertake consultation • Recommend actions based on subject matter expertise • Ongoing review of DAIP implementation
Council:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse DAIP for consultation • Adopt DAIP for Council • Ensure own awareness of the DAIP and disability issues • Review implementation and progress • Allocate budget for DAIP implementation • Uphold the vision and principles of the DAIP • Highlight areas of community feedback in relation to disability
Senior Leadership Team (CEO and Directors):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure own awareness of the DAIP and disability issues • Promote the DAIP to staff • Ensure progress remains on track across teams • Allocate appropriate team resources • Ensure budget allocation is proposed • Ensure relevant training is undertaken • Report on achievement of actions • Ensure strategic, business and workforce planning incorporates goals and outcomes associated with the DAIP
DAIP Advisory Group:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support decision making by acting as a reference group for Council on issues of access and inclusion • Review ongoing implementation of the DAIP • Review Council's policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive • Assist in measuring Council's performance against the DAIP
Council employees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand roles and responsibilities • Undertake required training • Deliver actions relevant to their roles • Liaise with external stakeholders as required

A Note of Thanks

Council would like to sincerely thank all of the groups and individuals who contributed to the development of this Disability Access & Inclusion Plan, including those who took time to complete our survey.

Glossary and Definitions

For ease of reading we have avoided the use of acronyms and abbreviations throughout this plan, other than within the action tables. However, there are some terms which warrant further explanation.

Access

Access refers to the removal or reduction of barriers (physical and social) to participation in the activities and functions of a community. A person's ability to access Council information, services and facilities will vary due to a number of factors, including the type of disability and individual may have.

Built Environs

Built environs are the structures, buildings, features and facilities that form part of the environment in which people live, work and play.

Disability

Disability may include any physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual, cognitive or psychiatric condition that can impact on a person's lifestyle and/or everyday function. There are many types of disabilities and these can affect a person's mobility, hearing, vision, learning or communication.

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the right of every person to participate fully in all aspects of a community activities or services in the same way as any other member of the community.

Universal Design

Universal Design involves creating facilities, built environments, products and services that can be used by people of all abilities to the greatest extent possible without adaptations.

Contact us

Wakefield Regional Council welcomes feedback at any time in relation to its plans, activities and services.

You can contact us or provide feedback in a number of ways:

In person	By visiting our Balaklava office – Scotland Place, Balaklava <i>Wheelchair access is available</i>
By mail	PO Box 167 Balaklava SA 5461
By email	admin@wrc.sa.gov.au
By online form	Visit our website www.wrc.sa.gov.au and submit online comment form
By phone	8862 0800
Council Members	Our Council Member names, email addresses and contact numbers are all available from our website – go to: www.wrc.sa.gov.au/ourcouncil/electedmembers or call us to find out their contact details



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