



GEORGE TOWN COUNCIL
NO.17
DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

Adopted	25 July 2006	Minute Ref: 252/06
Amended		
Next Review Date		

In accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992),
Tasmanian Discrimination Act (1998),
Australian Standards 1428, 2001



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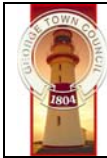
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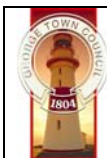
Introduction

George Town Council strives for fair and equal access for all within its community. Accessible Council buildings and infrastructure enhances access for people with disabilities, parents with children (strollers), older people, people with temporary injuries, and couriers, whilst also augmenting Occupational Health and Safety requirements.

Having a disability crosses social, economic, religious and racial boundaries. It does not discriminate. Everyone will at some time use accessible operations and infrastructure in their lifetime. At present approximately 110,000 people have a partial or total disability. Tasmania has the highest percentage of people (23% of people with a disability) with a disability people within Australia. The Australian average is 20% of people with a disability (ABS 2003).

The percentage of people with disabilities is increasing due to the ageing of the population and medical advances that are prolonging the average life span. It is important to Council that every new building to be constructed and those receiving upgrades or refurbishment must comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) provisions of independence, equality and functionality.

The development of the Disability Access Policy involved a number of individuals and representatives of organisations through the George Town Council Access Advisory Committee, and surveying of the Council staff and community.



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Disability Issues

The Context of Disability

A disability can affect a person's capacity to communicate, interact with others, learn or get about independently. It is usually permanent but may be episodic. People may have more than one disability. Disabilities can be:

Sensory: affecting, for example, vision and/or hearing.

Neurological: affecting a person's ability to control their movements, for example, epilepsy.

Physical: affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their body.

Intellectual: affecting a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate.

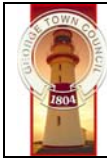
Cognitive: affecting a person's thought processes, personality and memory resulting, for example, from an injury to the brain.

Psychiatric: affecting a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and manic depression.

The benefit of improving access to the whole community

People with disabilities will benefit from improvements towards a more accessible municipality. An accessible community creates less disruption and difficulties for people with disabilities and for their friends and relatives moving around the municipality. However, people with disabilities and their relatives and friends are not just "other people". Everyone in the community has the possibility of developing or acquiring a disability, or of having a close relative or friend develop or acquire a disability.

Access is an issue that touches everyone's life at one time or another. Many people experience reduced mobility, need to address information and signage, attitudinal or sensory concerns in various situations. Parents pushing young children in strollers, young people with sporting injuries, older people who are becoming less agile, will all benefit from a more accessible built environment.



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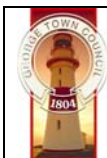
Terms

- ◆ **Disability** is defined by the Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 as:
 - total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
 - total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
 - the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
 - the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
 - the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
 - a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
 - a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

- ◆ **Access** is defined in terms of the ability of the residents and visitors to use the service or facility provided. Consequently, a service is accessible when:
 - it is easy to find out about
 - it is easily understood
 - it is easy to get to
 - it is easy to use
 - people who use it feel they are welcome
 - people know that they will get the right assistance when they need it
 - people are confident that every reasonable effort will be made to address the customer's requirements.

- ◆ "**Discrimination** means treating people with a disability less favourably than people without that disability would be treated under the same circumstances.

Discrimination also exists where there is a condition or requirement imposed, which may be the same for everyone but which unfairly excludes or disadvantages people with a disability (for example in



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employment, education, or access to goods or services). Different treatment of people with a disability is not unlawful discrimination where it is reasonably intended to ensure that they have equal opportunities or to meet their special needs.”

(Discrimination is defined by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992)

Methodology

About the Action Plan

Methodology

This Action Plan was formulated to include a wide range of consultative processes such as, community consultation (surveys), Council staff consultation (surveys), and a number of meetings with a Working Group, called the George Town Access Advisory Committee.

Communication

Following the extensive community consultation processes, a draft access policy and action plan was prepared for presentation to the George Town Access Advisory Committee, Councillors and the General Manager, for consideration. Upon adoption of this document by Council, it is envisaged that the plan will be successfully communicated to Council staff members and available for public comment, for a set period of time.



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Access Policy

The George Town Council is committed to maximising access to services and facilities for people with disabilities, older people, and people with mobility difficulties within all aspects of Council business. The Council access aims are as follows:

- To promote fair and inclusive opportunities enabling all people to have appropriate and obtainable access to facilities and services that enhances their independence and participation within the community.
- To promote positive images of people with disabilities as valuable contributing members of the community who expect and are entitled to safe movement and equitable access to services and facilities, without prejudice.
- To ensure that people with disabilities are treated with respect and dignity, and receive quality Council services.
- To raise awareness of the diverse needs of the community and enhance the skills and confidence of Council officers in meeting the individual access needs of people with disabilities, older people and people with mobility issues.
- To ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against directly or indirectly through the actions or inactions of the Council.
- To reduce and remove through the implementation of planned strategies the physical, communication, information and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully within the community.
- To promote an environment of continuous improvement and quality service when reviewing its services and facilities.
- To promote the rights of people with disabilities to equity in access, respect, opportunity and participation in all aspects of community life within the region, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).



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The Council will adopt and implement the Disability Access Action Plan 2006-2009 in accordance with this Policy (Schedule 1).

Schedule 1 – Disability Access Action Plan

In accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992),
Tasmanian Discrimination Act (1998),
Australian Standards 1428, 2001



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Access Action Plan

1. Improving access to Council Buildings Services and Facilities

GOAL: To ensure all new facilities owned and/or managed by Council are accessible to all.

Objectives	Strategies	Completion Date
To maximise access to Council facilities for all community members.	To develop a priority usage list of all Council owned buildings and facilities with a view to progressively upgrading the accessibility of these assets, according to available resources.	December 2006
	To review the accessible needs and equipment adaptation necessary for the George Town Pool such as accessible toilets, aqua lift, rails, and pathways systems.	June 2007
	To review all aspects of recreational parks based on usage with a particular emphasis on developing accessible adaptations and equipments such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible playground equipment, • pathway systems, • shade and urban design, • car parking, • directional signage, • kerb ramps, • accessible toilets and parent facilities, • seating and tables, and • rubbish bins. 	January 2008

Objectives	Strategies	Completion Date
	<p>To evaluate the existing footpaths, gutters and crossings and prioritise the schedule of maintenance improvements according to high and low usage, affordability, accessibility, and risk. Identified priority areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrack St, • Wellington St, • Macquarie St, • Sorell St, • Anne St, • Cimitiere St, • Jetty Road to Leam Rd, • York Cove footpath needs rails in high risk areas, • Elizabeth St, • Franklin St. 	June 2008
	To design all new works on footpaths, kerb ramps and streetscapes in accordance with the Australian Standard 1428.	Ongoing
	To inform the community of the establishment of a rubbish collection assistance system for residents who have difficulty with the movement of rubbish and recycling bins.	December 2006
	To undertake a review of the accessible needs of the Council offices such as ramps, front counter height, and door steps etc.	December 2007
	To review Council's Car Parks and Parking in accordance with the Australian Standard 1428, by improving parking in main township centres, improving parking markings in all main streets, and providing allocation of disability parking bays in the car parks and bays on the streetscape.	January 2009
	To develop a plan for provision of accessible public toilets across the municipality in areas of high use, especially considering circulation spaces and door widths within the design.	January 2008
	To review accessible street furniture and its design and positioning on main township streetscapes.	January 2009

2. Improve Community Participation, Consultation and Communication

GOAL: To ensure members of the community are able to participate in Council activities, have input into and are kept informed of Council's decisions and directions.

Objectives	Action Strategies	Completion Date
To ensure all communication issued by Council is accessible and "user friendly" for all members of the community.	To establish and maintain a database that keeps a record of people who require information in alternate formats.	June 2007
	To publish in various formats a list of Council contact officer positions and emergency contact numbers for various physical asset problems such as drainage, and sewerage etc.	June 2007
	To utilise community radio to provide regular information to the community on Council business.	Ongoing
	To undertake a review of all communication processes with a view to developing a communication plan for Council that includes topics such as accessible products, web based products, uses of various information formats and technologies to increase accessibility, written informational material in LARGE print etc.,	January 2007
	To publish guidelines for Accessible Festivals and Events to assist festival and event organisers to develop improvements in accordance with the appropriate standards and regulations.	January 2007

3. Improve Staff Training

GOAL: To ensure there is widespread understanding of the needs of people with disabilities and to ensure that Council staff have the skills to provide quality services to all customers.

Objectives	Strategies	Completion Date
To provide staff with disability customer relations training	<p>To incorporate a disability awareness training component as part of the induction program.</p> <p>To develop a disability awareness training session for relevant staff and seek to involve a person with a disability in the training program.</p> <p>To provide Council volunteers and employees with direct contact with the public with Manual Handling and First Aid Training, where appropriate.</p>	<p>June 2008</p> <p>January 2008</p> <p>December 2007</p>
To review the physical layout of the work environment as it can cause barriers for employees with a disability.	<p>To assess the Council workplace or work related premises, equipment or facilities and make reasonable adjustments for new or current employees with a disability.</p> <p>To make structural physical adjustments wherever necessary in the workplace in accordance with the Australian Standard 1428.</p>	<p>December 2008</p> <p>June 2009</p>

4. Improve Development and Approval Processes

GOAL: To encourage proponents of new building developments throughout the Council area to make their developments accessible for all.

Objectives	Strategies	Completion Date
To refer builders and developers to their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.	To inform builders, designers and developers on access issues.	December 2006
	To update Council information as developments occur in the relationship between the Disability Discrimination Act, Australian Standards, and the Building Codes of Australia.	Ongoing
	To work with the business community to establish Business Accessible Guidelines to improve access to the township centres.	December 2009

5. Promoting Leadership In Access

GOAL: To be a leader in the region by continually developing and changing services to be more inclusive and accessible for all.

Objectives	Strategies	Completion Date
To ensure Council as a leader on access issues is a driving force for improvements across the region.	To promote access requirements in all Council activities and functions.	Ongoing
To ensure Council considers access in all of its policies and procedures.	To review all Council policies or procedures and include access requirements, wherever necessary.	December 2009

**GEORGE TOWN COUNCIL DISABILITY ACCESS ACTION PLAN 2006-2009
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

COMPLETION DATE	ACTION	ONGOING ACTIONS
June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt Plan • Register with Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design all new works on footpaths, kerb ramps and streetscapes in accordance with Australian Standard 1428 • Utilise community radio to provide regular information to the community on Council business • Update Council information as development occur in the relationship between the Disability Discrimination Act, Australian Standards, and the Building Codes of Australia • Promote access requirements in all Council activities and functions.
December 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop priority list of buildings • Inform community of assistance with rubbish collection • Inform builders, designers and developers on access issues 	
January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review communication processes • Publish guidelines for accessible festivals and events 	
June 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accessibility of swimming pool • Establish database of residents requiring information in alternate formats. • Publish emergency and contact officer details in various formats. 	
December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accessibility of Council office for public • Provide Council volunteers with manual handling and first aid training where appropriate 	
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop disability awareness training session for staff • Review accessibility of parks • Develop a plan for provision of accessible toilets across the municipality in areas of high use 	
June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate disability awareness training in staff induction program • Evaluate footpaths, gutters and crossings to prioritise for making accessible 	
December 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess Council workplace areas, equipment and furniture and make reasonable adjustments for new or current employees with a disability 	
January 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review car parks and parking to provide to Australian standards • Review accessible street furniture, design and positioning on main streetscapes 	
June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make structural or physical adjustments to workplace environments where necessary to comply with Australian Standard 1428 	
December 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with business community to establish business accessible guidelines to improve access to the township centre • Review all Council policies or procedures and include access requirements wherever necessary 	