



SOUTHERN MALLEE DISABILITY ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN

2020 - 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Southern Mallee District Council acknowledges the Ngarkat people as the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We respect their culture and we extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Inspire Engage Connect



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1.1. Executive summary

Local government authorities have a key role in providing supportive and accessible environments for their communities.

This plan will guide our municipality for the next four years and beyond. It outlines our long-term, shared goals and our aspiration for the future regarding the inclusion of all our residents.

Southern Mallee District Council is committed to providing a connected community that is accessible and inclusive of everyone. Council is commitment to improving the access and participation of people of the entire community including those with a disability. Council sees it as a right of all citizens to be able to access a range of opportunities provided by Council across our district.

This plan aims to ensure that all members of the community living with a disability are able to feel welcome, contribute and have access to every day services and activities within the region.

1. Strategic themes

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) brings all levels of government together in a unified national approach. The NDS aims to improve the lives of people living with disability, their families as well as carers and allow them to be fully integrated into their community. In 2018, the South Government recognised that a strong commitment to Disability access Inclusion was required and passed the Disability Inclusion Act 2018.

1 November 2019 the state's first Disability Inclusion Plan 'Inclusive SA' was released. This sets a framework to support State authorities to implement the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (NDS).

Inclusive SA's vision is to ensure an accessible and inclusive South Australia based on fairness and respect. To achieve this vision, Inclusive SA focuses on the following themes:

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

2. Snapshot of Southern Mallee District Council

Southern Mallee District Council is a diverse municipality with rural and township based communities and vast agricultural and horticultural enterprises. It is located 200 kilometres to the east of Adelaide and covers 6,000 km². Southern Mallee is central to the greater Mallee Region.

Southern Mallee is located within the south east of the administrative region of the Murraylands and Riverland. However, Southern Mallee residents see themselves as proudly part of the Mallee. The Mallee is a broad region spanning parts of South Australia and Victoria. Lameroo and Pinnaroo are key Mallee towns and represent a key economic zone on the Mallee Highway between Adelaide and Sydney.

Council was formed in 1997 and comprises the former Lameroo and Pinnaroo District Councils. At the time of the 2016 census the population was 2,027. The total population has been stable in recent years. Southern Mallee District Council has a highly engaged and active community and has strengths in volunteerism, arts and culture, sport and a growing reputation for innovative farming practices. The people of Southern Mallee value their ability to interact with each other through a range of community groups and settings. There is a high level of formal and informal interaction between residents and Council.

The demographic profile is changing with an increasing number of older adults. In 2016, 30% of the Southern Mallee population was aged 60 years or older compared to 24.3% for South Australia. The number of residents aged over 75 years is 10.4%. The number of young people, those aged 15 to 29 years, makes up 13.2% compared to 18.8% of South Australia's population. However, in recent years the number of children under 5 appears to have increased substantially.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) index of disadvantage shows that Southern Mallee District Council has a SEIFA score of 990 whilst the region overall is more disadvantaged with a SEIFA score of 919.3. By way of comparison, the SEIFA score for regional South Australia is 944. The census also shows that median household weekly income in Southern Mallee is \$1,155 compared to \$1,206 for South Australia, and indicates that 5.8% of residents require assistance to complete core activities which is higher than the Australia average of 5.1% of the community.

Community facilities are located in the two major towns and the larger settlements. There are libraries and schools in Geranium, Lameroo and Pinnaroo. Most sport and recreation facilities are located in Lameroo and Pinnaroo with a small number of facilities in Geranium, Parilla, Parrakie, and Wilkawatt. Public swimming pools are located in Lameroo and Pinnaroo. The Geranium community has access to the Geranium School pool. Council seeks to provide improved facilities, infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the community.

The local economy is largely dependent upon agricultural and horticultural production.

3. Aims and priorities

This plan seeks to recognise the importance of ensuring that the Council area is inclusive and accessible to everyone, has a welcoming attitude, and employs well informed staff who are aware of the needs of people with disability.

The aim of this plan is to assist the Council to meet the needs of people with disability who live, work, volunteer and visit the area.

To achieve that objective, the Council will seek to:

1.2. Creating Accessible Communities

Improve Council services and facilities to ensure access for people with disability through focusing on practical and achievable initiatives that enhance access to services, infrastructure and public places;

1.3. Creating Inclusive Communities

Increase awareness in Council staff of the needs of people with disability through internal training and information sessions, and, where appropriate, through the engagement of external training providers;

1.4. Encouraging Leadership and Collaboration

Encourage the participation of our entire community regardless of their ability, in Council activities and ensuring that people living with a disability have an active voice within community decision making.

1.5. Improving Training and Development

Encourage training and employment opportunities for people with a disability allowing them to participate within the workforce across the region.

4. Action plan

1.6. Creating Accessible Communities

- 1.6.1. Undertake an access audit of Council's Buildings as part of Buildings, Condition Assessment, Utilisation and Functionality Review.
- 1.6.2. Develop within council facility management plans projects to improve access on all council facilities and buildings for people living with a disability.
- 1.6.3. Review Council footpaths to determine whether they are wheelchair friendly and upgrade these facilities during renewal processes to assist those persons within the community that are either living with a disability or are providing assistance as a carer to a person with a disability.
- 1.6.4. Collaborate with our community libraries to encourage the development of digital collections, audio books and large print books to support access and provide resources to all members of our community

1.7. Creating Inclusive Communities

- 1.7.1. Provide disability access and inclusion training for all Elected Members and staff, including training options that promote respect and understanding.
- 1.7.2. Ensure that the induction of all new Elected Members, Management, Staff and Volunteers to include an understanding of the DAIP
- 1.7.3. Collaborate with our community libraries to encourage accessible and inclusive library programs that are responsive to the needs of people with a disability.

1.8. Encouraging Leadership and Collaboration

- 1.8.1. Seek expert advice on access and inclusion when developing projects in our built environment, e.g. parks, footpaths and unisex toilets designed for left-handed and right-handed people etc.
- 1.8.2. Consider representation and participation from community members with a relevant background in disability access and inclusion on Council committees that have community representation.
- 1.8.3. Provide opportunities for people with disabilities, carers and service providers to have input into the 2024 DAIP review.
- 1.8.4. Regularly promote the DAIP and its completed actions in Council's reporting.

- 1.8.5. Promote Disability access inclusion within the local business community to build awareness of how inclusive facilities will improve business and positive customer experience.

1.9. Improving Training and Development

- 1.9.1. Investigate grant funding to allow free training or workshops to be held within our region to help build knowledge, confidence and capacity.
- 1.9.2. Review Council's volunteer policy to encourage inclusive volunteerism and ensure council's processes allow for accessible workplaces and flexible job design.
- 1.9.3. Investigate grant funding opportunities which would support the employment of people with a disability.

5. Community consultation

The Council will publish a draft Plan on its website and will seek public feedback via written submission and targeted surveying of identified groups in a form that is accessible to people with a disability.

The Council proposes to achieve this by working with community groups and organisations to identify stakeholders who identify as having a disability and, where appropriate, create a fit for purpose communication on an ad hoc basis.

The Council will conduct its public consultation in accordance with its Public Consultation Policy.

6. Review and reporting

Southern Mallee District Council will annually monitor progress in regard to the regional actions. A yearly progress report will be delivered to the SA Department of Human Services on 31 October.

A copy of the report will also be presented to Council. This plan is a working document and can be reviewed at any time. The Plan may be reviewed in line with changing legislation. The timeframe for evaluation and review of the Plan is four years unless otherwise legislated.

Southern Mallee District Council

Day Street, Pinnaroo SA 5304

Postal Address:

PO Box 49 Pinnaroo, South Australia 5304

Telephone: (08) 8577 8002

Email: council@southernmallee.sa.gov.au

Website: www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au