



**Department of Local Government
and Regional Development**
Government of **Western Australia**

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007- 2011

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hardcopy format (in both standard and large
print), audio cassette and compact disk.**

Endorsed By:

Cheryl Gwilliam, Director General

Adopted By DLGRD:

29 June 2007

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BACKGROUND

Overview of the Department of Local Government and Regional Development

Our Vision

To increase the capacity of our multicultural communities to develop good government, economic growth, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

Our Services

The Department of Local Government and Regional Development (The Department) comprises four divisions which undertake a range of different functions:

Strategies and Legislation

This division is primarily concerned with the review, development and implementation of policy and legislation. Its other responsibilities include research, strategic planning, management of the Department's grant programs, and administration of the *Animal Welfare Act 2002* (WA) and the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA).

Capacity Building

This division's key responsibilities include advice, support, and assistance to local governments and Western Australian communities. This division maintains satellite services to regional and remote communities and provides financial assistance and development support to the Western Australian Telecentre Network.

Governance and Statutory Support

This division is principally responsible for determining the distribution of Australian Government general-purpose financial assistance grants to local governments and the monitoring and review of local government compliance with the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA).

Corporate Business Services

This division provides a range of support services for the Department including:

- Personnel Services;
- Public Affairs and Media Management;
- Financial Services;
- Information Services; and
- Technology Services.

The Department's stakeholders

The Department's key stakeholders include:

- The Western Australian public
- Minister for Local Government
- Minister for Regional Development
- Local, State, and Commonwealth Governments
- Regional Development Commissions
- Community groups
- Business organisations

More detail regarding the Department is available on our website www.dlgrd.wa.gov.au.

Planning for better access

Disability affects one third of the Western Australian population.

An Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey in 2003 found that an estimated 20.6 per cent of the total population have a disability. The ABS reports that this figure is expected to increase by an estimated 115.7 per cent over the next 20 years.

Creating a community which is accessible and inclusive will minimise the effect of disability.

Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) outlines the ways in which the Department will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Progress since 2003

The Department's Disability Service Plan (DSP) covered the period from 2003-2006 to address the barriers for people with disabilities.

The Department has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access. Key initiatives which have been implemented by the Department include:

- Review of existing Departmental procedures for dealing with the general public to cater for people with disabilities.
- Consultation with the management of Dumas House to ensure that signage, the provision of parking facilities and access to the building are adequate for people with disabilities.
- Improving employee awareness regarding the availability of facilities and support services provided by other agencies to people with disabilities. This initiative is currently ongoing with respect to new employees and forms part of the Department's induction program.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

The Department is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to access the Department's services, facilities and information by providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community. The Department intends to achieve this by ensuring that:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access our services and any events organised by us.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access our office and other facilities.
3. People with disabilities receive information from us in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from our employees as other people.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to us.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation we may undertake.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN (DAIP)

Responsibility for the planning process

The Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee (DAIP Planning Committee) was established in February 2007 comprising of three officers from the Corporate Business Services Division to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Consultation Process

In 2007 we drafted a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The consultation, conducted in June 2007, included the following activities:

- The community was informed through our public website that we were developing a DAIP to address the barriers that people with disabilities and their families experience in accessing our functions, facilities and services. The community was invited to provide input and suggestions regarding our draft DAIP which was made available on the Department's public website.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Western Australian *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Department. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Department while others will apply only to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The DAIP Planning Committee will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

Subsequent to public consultation, the final version of the DAIP was reviewed and endorsed by the Director General. The endorsed DAIP was then submitted to the Disability Services Commission (the Commission) and was made available on the Intranet website and the Department's website.

We will advise the public of the availability of our DAIP by placing a notice in the *West Australian* newspaper on 14 July 2007.

Review and evaluative mechanisms

The Western Australian *Disability Services Act 1993* (the Act) sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

Review and monitoring

Our DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years.

Our DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect the progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise.

The DAIP Planning Committee (the Planning Committee) will meet every six months to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP. It will also prepare the DAIP progress report that is required to be submitted to the Commission every year. A status report will be provided to the Director General for formal endorsement.

Description of the Department's activities undertaken will be included each year in the Department's Annual Report.

Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy will be lodged with the Commission and will be made available on the Department's website and intranet.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the Department's DAIP will be undertaken through:

- Any reports on the DAI implementation process will be provided to the Director General.
- Once a year, prior to 31 July, the Department will seek feedback from the general public on the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented.
- A notice about the consultation process will be posted on the Department's website.
- In seeking feedback the Planning Committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- Departmental staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received.

Reporting on the DAIP

The Western Australian *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

The Department will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- its progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- the progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and
- the strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The six desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access our services and any events organised by us.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|---------------|
| Establish a Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee to guide the implementation of DAIP activities | February 2007 |
| Provide opportunities for people with disabilities to comment on access to services and information provided by the Department. | Ongoing |
| Develop a Departmental Access and Inclusion policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities | December 2007 |
| Ensure that any events organised by the Department are accessible to people with disabilities | Ongoing |
| Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into relevant plans and strategies of the Department | Ongoing |
| Ensure that our employees, contractors, and agents are aware of our DAIP | Ongoing |

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access our office and other facilities.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|----------|
| Ensure that our office is accessible and meets the legislative and access standards for accessibility | Ongoing |
| Ensure Department's employees are aware of facilities available to people with Disabilities, e.g. toilets, access ramps, etc. | Ongoing |
| Ensure that our signage is clear and easy to understand | Ongoing |

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from us that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|---------------|
| Improve community awareness that our information is available in alternative formats upon request | Ongoing |
| | |
| Improve our employees' awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats. | Ongoing |
| | |
| Ensure that our website meets the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines | December 2008 |
| | |
| Commit to making publications as accessible as possible (written in plain English, succinct, publicly available) | Ongoing |

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from our employees as other people receive.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|----------|
| Improve and maintain employee awareness of disability and access issues and relevant legislation | Ongoing |
| | |
| Improve employee skills to better our services to people with disabilities | Ongoing |
| | |
| Advance the awareness of new employees regarding disability and access issues. | Ongoing |
| | |
| Improve employees' knowledge and skills so they can receive complaints from people with a disability | Ongoing |

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to us.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|-----------|
| Ensure that our Complaints System and Policy are accessible for people with disabilities. | June 2008 |
| Ensure that our Complaints System and Policy are available in formats to meet the needs of people with disabilities. | June 2008 |

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation we may carry out.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|---------------|
| Commit to ongoing monitoring of our DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes. | February 2008 |
| Improve inclusive opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in any public consultation we may undertake | Ongoing |



FEEDBACK FORM

We welcome your feedback at any time. Your feedback will be treated as strictly confidential.

Have you experienced any barriers to access that we have not identified?

Situation

Reason for difficulty

Is there an initiative that you would like to compliment us on?

Initiative

Why do you think it is a good initiative?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions on how to improve access to our services, information, or facilities?

To help us analyse your comments, please tick which category best describes your interest in our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007-2011.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Customer with a disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | DLGRD employee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Carer | <input type="checkbox"/> | DLGRD contractor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability service provider | <input type="checkbox"/> | DLGRD service provider | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> |