

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2017-2021

This document is available in alternative on request including in large and standard print, in electronic format by email, in audio format on CD and on our website.

Contents

Introduction	3
Background.....	4
Access and Inclusion Policy Statement.....	5
The seven desired outcomes are:	5
Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion.....	6
Feedback Form.....	8
Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Development	9
Principles Applicable to People with Disability.....	11
What is a disability?	12
Trends in Disability.....	13

Introduction

This plan aims to ensure that people with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access our services and facilities; the same levels of customer service; the same opportunity to consult and complain; and the same opportunity for employment.

The Office of the Auditor General invites interested persons to forward details of their suggestions to help make our plan a success.

For enquiries and submissions please email hr@audit.wa.gov.au.

If you would like to comment on our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), make suggestions to improve access or compliment us on an initiative, please use the feedback form provided at Attachment 1. Alternatively, you are welcome to contact us by one of the following methods:



Phone (08) 6557 7500



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Auslan Interpreters

Australian Sign Language (Auslan) interpreters can be booked through the WA Deaf Society. The Society can also be contacted for information about telephone typewriters (TTYs). Contact details:

Western Australian Deaf Society Inc
Suite 46, 5 Aberdeen Street
PERTH WA 6000
Phone: 9441 2677
Fax: 9441 2655
Website: www.wadeaf.org.au

Background

Our Vision

Serving the public interest by an informed Parliament.

Our Mission

To help improve public sector performance and accountability by reporting independently to Parliament.

Who We Are

We are an audit office of around 130 employees responsible to the Auditor General for Western Australia for auditing the Western Australian Public Sector.

Our Values

Our operations and professional relationships are built on the foundation of independence exercised with integrity and objectivity. In achieving our purpose of serving the public interest, we will always act in a way that values:

Integrity – we conduct our business in an independent, professional and ethical manner. We apply an open, honest and fair approach to our stakeholders.

Quality – we provide credible work that makes a difference. We take pride in our work and strive to deliver above expectations, using continuous improvement opportunities to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.

Respect – we value the contribution of our people, our clients and the community, and encourage a collaborative approach to our work.

What Guides Us in Our Audit Work?

To achieve our vision and objectives we adhere to the following principles when conducting audits:

- all audits are conducted in accordance with professional standards and international best practice
- the highest standards of ethical and personal behaviour are demonstrated
- all audits are approached in a fair and constructive way
- audits are conducted and reported in an impartial manner
- matters of significance arising from audits are reported to Parliament.

Our Operating Environment

The Western Australian Public Sector comprises approximately 200 government departments, statutory authorities and other bodies with agencies varying in size from those employing a few people to those employing thousands. Together these agencies employ about 110,000 people and generate a combined revenue and expenditure in excess of \$50 billion annually in providing a range of services to the citizens of Western Australia.

Our Clients

Our clients are the Parliament of Western Australia, Western Australian Public Sector agencies and the community of Western Australia. In its widest context the Office serves the

public interest – since the Auditor General is a key provider of independent and impartial information on public sector accountability and performance to the Parliament.

The Auditor General

The Auditor General scrutinises the public sector for waste of taxpayers' resources and to ensure that government agencies deliver services in an equitable, efficient and effective manner to the benefit of all Western Australians. The Auditor General must act, and be seen to be acting, independently in carrying out all of her powers and duties. This independence is the cornerstone of public sector audit and therefore to properly discharge her responsibilities the Auditor General must be free from pressure, influence or interference from any source that may erode that independence.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Office of the Auditor General is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access our services and facilities, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community
- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately
- achieving the seven desired outcomes of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

The seven desired outcomes are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Office.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Office.
3. People with disability receive information from the Office in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from our employees as other people.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Office.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation we may carry out.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Strategies to Improve Access and Inclusion

The following overarching strategies will guide us toward improving access to our services, buildings, information and practices. The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability.

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Office.

Strategy	Outcome	Timeline
Ensure people with disability have an opportunity to comment on access to services.	Plan advertised Website publication	August 2016
Monitor and redevelop an Access and Inclusion Policy to support equitable access to services.	Rolling Biennial Review Program	Ongoing
Incorporate DAIP objectives in strategic business planning, budgeting processes, procedures and policies.	Incorporated in Workforce and PD Plans	Ongoing
Ensure employee awareness of our DAIP, relevant policies and strategies.	Cyclic review, republication of policies	Ongoing
Ensure accessibility to events conducted by, or on behalf of, the OAG.		As required

Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Office.

Strategy	Outcome	Timeline
Ensure office accessibility is maintained to meet legislative and access standards.	BCA (AS1428) standard compliance	Ongoing
Ensure signage is clear and easy to read.	Completed	Ongoing
Information access options are available.	Completed	Ongoing
Parking - close to public transport, parking and taxi stands	CBD location	Ongoing

Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from the Office in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Outcome	Timeline
Community awareness of information availability in alternative formats upon request.	W3C Standard Website DAIP public notice	Ongoing August 2016
Improve employee awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accessible information needs obtaining information in other formats. 	Plain English Reports PD Days	Ongoing Ongoing
Ensure specialist support is available at meetings when requested.	Forms part of audit planning practice	Ongoing
Ensure web page design incorporates W3C Web Content Accessibility guidelines.	W3C Standard Website	Ongoing
Office Receptionists are adequately trained in client service for people with disability	Specialist Training	Ongoing
Ensure printed information accessibility for people with disability.	Electronic reports Alternative formats available	Ongoing As requested

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

Strategy	Outcomes	Timeline
Employee awareness raising of disability, access issues and relevant legislation through regular professional development.	Updates via induction, intranet and PD Days	Ongoing
Ensure client service skills for people with disability.	Awareness training Updates via intranet and PD Days	Ongoing
Raise new employee awareness of disability, access issues and relevant legislation.	Induction Process for New Starters	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Outcomes	Timelines
Ensure accessibility of OAG's Referral System and Policy.	Information available on W3C website	Ongoing
Ensure employee capability to support complaints from people with disability.	Specialist training	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Outcomes	Timelines
Ensure public consultation processes are available to people with disability, their families and carers.	Information available on W3C website Targeted topic processes	Ongoing As required

Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Strategy	Outcomes	Timelines
Employment processes are open, transparent and free from bias.	Quality assured processes	Ongoing
Employee needs are assessed and met for episodic and long-term disability.	Reasonable work practice changes assessed and implemented	Ongoing

Attachment 1

Feedback Form

We welcome your feedback at any time.

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

What do you think is a good initiative?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

To help us analyse your comments, please tick which category best describes your interest in our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021.

Member of the public with a disability

Carer

Disability Service Provider

Other (please specify) _____

If you would like to be included in future consultations, please provide your name and contact details.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Appendix A

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Development

Consultation Process

In August 2016 the community was informed through the West Australian newspaper and the OAG website of the opportunity for comment and feedback on our DAIP. As a result we reviewed our existing Plan and drafted a new Plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The consultation was designed to ensure that any barriers faced by the public in relation to access and inclusion were identified.

Achievements in previous DAIP

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Office.

- the Office has incorporated its DAIP objectives into all business planning, budgeting processes, procedures and policies to ensure opportunity equity for people with disability.

Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Office.

- Albert Facey House is located within the CBD with proximity to public transport and meets the BCA (AS1428) standard for access to our building and facilities.

Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from the Office in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

- all OAG reports are published electronically on a W3C Standard website, they are written in plain English and their web design and content incorporates W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- reports are also available in alternative formats as requested
- employees dealing with public enquiries or complaints are trained appropriately.

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

- through induction training, regular awareness raising of policy and procedure updates, customer service and specialist training for appropriate employees, the Office maintains the same level and quality of service for all clients.

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

- the OAG offers a range of media for making complaints, comments and topic suggestions
- our W3C Standard website allows electronic access
- employees dealing with public enquiries or complaints are trained appropriately.

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

- all work-in-progress is published on our W3C Standard website for comment
- relevant special interest groups are consulted directly on performance audit topics.

Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

- recruitment processes are regularly reviewed to ensure they are open, transparent and free from bias
- processes are in place to assess and meet employees' episodic and long-term disability needs.

Appendix A

Findings of the 2016 Consultation and Review

The review and consultation found that most of the objectives of our previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) had been achieved. The 2017 Plan now addresses identified access barriers and reflects contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and meeting more than minimum compliance with access standards. It also addresses relevant legislative and regulatory changes.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Leadership for achieving outcomes of the DAIP is the responsibility of the Executive Management Group. Some strategies in the Plan will apply to all areas of the Office while others will apply to specific business units. The Assistant Auditor General-Business Services will guide the overall implementation of the Plan.

Communicating the plan

The 2017 Plan is available on the Office's Intranet and Internet sites. The new Plan will be advised to employees through Office Professional Development and Forum activities and events; and the community through the Public Notices in the local newspaper and on our website.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

Our DAIP will be reviewed every five years, or as required to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended Plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission (DSC). The next scheduled review of our DAIP will be in 2021 and the new Plan will be submitted to the Commission at that time.

Monitoring and reporting on the DAIP

Monitoring of outcome achievement is provided to the Executive Management Group on an annual basis. We will report on the implementation of our DAIP which will outline progress made towards the seven desired outcomes of our Plan through our Annual Report and in compliance with legislation, to the DSC.

The Office of the Auditor General does not ordinarily provide services to the public and therefore does not use agents or contractors for that purpose.

Evaluation

Executive will consider reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process and outcomes.

The Office Consultative Committee (OCC) will have the opportunity to review outcomes and advise any additional barriers that may not have been identified in the consultation phase.

Our employees are also being encouraged to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.

Appendix B

Principles Applicable to People with Disability¹

Schedule 1 – Principles applicable to people with disability²

1. People with disability are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity without discrimination and with equality of opportunity.
2. People with disability, whatever the origin, nature, type or degree of disability, have the same human rights as other members of society and should be enabled to exercise those human rights.
3. People with disability have the same rights as other members of society to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional, intellectual, cultural and spiritual development.
4. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to access services that will support their choices, assist them to be as independent as possible and enable them to participate in all aspects of life.
5. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to participate in, direct and implement the decisions that affect their lives.
6. People with disability have the same right as other members of society to receive services in a manner that respects and protects their rights and opportunities and is the least restrictive option in the circumstances.
7. People with disability have the right to pursue any grievance concerning services.
8. People with disability have the right to access the type of services and supports that they believe are most appropriate to meet their needs.
9. People with disability who reside in country areas have a right, as far as is reasonable to expect, to have access to similar services provided to people with disability who reside in the metropolitan area.
10. People with disability have a right to an environment free from neglect, abuse, violence, intimidation and exploitation.

¹ Disability Services Act 1993

² *ibid*

Appendix C

What is a disability?

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities. Disabilities can affect a person's capacity to communicate, interact with others, learn and get about independently.

Disability³ is defined as a condition which:

- a) is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments
- b) is permanent or likely to be permanent
- c) may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature
- d) results in:
 - i. a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility and
 - ii. a need for continuing support services.

Profound limitation refers to when a person is unable to do, or always needs help with, a core activity task.

Severe limitation refers to when a person:

- sometimes needs help with a core activity task
- has difficulty understanding or being understood by family or friends
- can communicate more easily using sign language or other non-spoken forms of communication.

Moderate - the person needs no help, but has difficulty with a core activity task.

Mild - the person needs no help and has no difficulty with any of the core activity tasks, but:

- uses aids and equipment
- cannot easily walk 200 metres
- cannot walk up and down stairs without a handrail
- cannot easily bend to pick up an object from the floor
- cannot use public transport
- can use public transport, but needs help or supervision
- needs no help or supervision, but has difficulty using public transport.

Most people with disability experience some form of limitation or restriction due to their disability.

Some disability such as epilepsy is not observable. Others such as cerebral palsy may be visible. Physical disability is the most common (73 %), with intellectual/psychiatric (17 %) and sensory (10 %). Many people with disability have multiple disabilities.

Physical disability generally relates to disorders of the musculoskeletal, circulatory, respiratory and nervous systems affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their upper or lower body.

Neurological disabilities are caused by damage to the nervous system (including the brain and spinal cord) resulting in the loss of some bodily or mental functions affecting a person's ability to control their movements, for example, cerebral palsy. Heart attacks, infections, genetic disorders and lack of oxygen to the brain may also result in a neurological disability.

Sensory disability involves impairments in hearing and vision commonly associated with ageing.

Intellectual/psychiatric disorders relate to difficulties with thought processes, learning, communicating, remembering information and using it appropriately, making judgements and problem solving, they also include anxiety disorders, phobias or depression.

People may have more than one disability and may experience additional disadvantages due to factors such as being from a non-English speaking background or because they live in remote areas.

³ 'Disability Access and Inclusion Plans – Resource Manual for State Government' published by Western Australia's Disability Services Commission.

Appendix D

Trends in Disability

Disability affects one sixth of the Western Australian population. The 2012 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers⁴ conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found:

- an estimated 389,800 people reported having a disability
- 236,200 people are carers of people with disability
- over one sixth of the WA population, 16.2%, have a disability
- more than 50% of people aged 60 years are reported to have a disability
- around 2.7% or 57,000 people under the age of 65 are reported to have severe or profound disability.

The number of Western Australians with disability is increasing, partly due to population growth in the state but also because the incidence of disability increases with age.

Between 2006 and 2026 the number of people with disabilities in WA is expected to increase by around 190,000 due mainly to our ageing population.

People may have a disability at any age but the likelihood increases as people get older. According to the ABS survey, by the age of 60 half of all men and women will have acquired some form of disability.

Carers

In 2012, although disability affected less than one in five people directly, around one third of Australian households contained a person with disability (36% or 3.1 million households). One in two of those households contained a carer (17% of all households), of which just under half contained a primary carer (7.6% of all households).

A primary carer is the main provider of care to someone in the core activities of daily living such as dressing, eating or moving around the house. Just under one in three carers was a primary carer.

Overall the 2012 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that primary carers were more likely to be the partner of their main recipient, compared with any other relationship (43%).

One in five (20%) primary carers were aged 65 years or more and caring for a partner. Of those primary carers whose main recipient was a parent, most were aged 45 to 64 years (14%), whereas those who were caring for their child were most likely to be aged 25 to 44 years (13%).

In addition, female primary carers were four times more likely than their male counterparts to be the parent of their main recipient of care (32.5% and 7.0%, respectively).

Current Disability figures

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts regular surveys to report the extent of disability in Australia, the need for support and the adequacy of support and the contribution of informal care.

The ABS reports that for disability in Western Australia:

- age-specific rates show no significant differences over the five year period from 1998 to 2003.
- the increases in numbers are entirely a result of population increase and population ageing.

For Western Australians of all ages:

- the estimated number of people with disabilities has increased from 355,500 in 1998 to 405,500 in 2003.
- the estimated number of people with profound or severe core activity limitation has increased from 101,400 in 1998 to 115,800 in 2003.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Disability, Australia, 2009 (cat. no. 4446.0) and Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings, Australia, 2009 (cat. no. 4430.0).

Appendix D

For Western Australians aged under 65 years:

- the estimated number of people with disabilities has increased from 249,000 in 1998 to 283,200 in 2003
- the estimated number of people with profound or severe core activity limitation has increased from 62,400 in 1998 to 71,600 in 2003.

The prevalence of disability in Australia has fallen 1.5 percentage points from 20.0% in 2003 to 18.5% in 2009.

The prevalence of disability in the Major cities and Outer Regional and Remote areas of Australia has decreased by 2 percentage points in the 6 years between surveys, while the prevalence in Inner Regional Australia has increased marginally (by 0.6 percentage points).

Of the people living in Inner Regional Australia, 22% reported having a disability, compared to 17% of those living in Major Cities and 20% of those living in Outer Regional and Remote Australia.

Disability Projections: 2006-2026

Disability projections can be accurately forecast by applying current ABS reported age-specific disability rates to ABS population projections.

Table 1: All persons with disability in Western Australia, 2006 and 2026

Age Group	2006	2026	Overall % Increase	Annual Rate of Increase
Aged < 65 years	297,600	351,200	18.0	0.8
Aged ≥ 65 years	136,700	294,800	115.7	3.9
State population	2,032,800	2,522,300	24.0	1.1

Over the 20 year period from 2006-2026 most of the increase in the numbers of Western Australians with disabilities will be a result of population ageing.

The number of older Western Australians with disabilities will increase substantially as the 'baby boomers' move into age groups in which disability is more prevalent. There will be an overall increase of 115.7% from 136,700 in 2006 to 294,800 in 2026.

The overall increase for those aged under 65 years is only 18.0%, representing an annual increase of 0.8%, slightly less than the total population increase of 1.1%.

The Disability Services Commission regularly updates statistics on their website: www.dsc.wa.gov.au