



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013-2018

Accompanies the Disability Services policy



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Background

The Department

Our Purpose

The Department of the Attorney General provides high quality and accessible justice, legal, registry, guardianship and trustee services which meet the needs of the community and government.

This supports justice outcomes and opportunities for current and future generations.

In particular, the Department directly contributes to a greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all Western Australians.

Our Future

We are valued as leaders in developing and delivering justice services, policy and reforms that are significant and sustainable.

Our Roles and Services

The Department supports the community, Western Australian Government, judiciary and Parliament through the provision of access to high quality justice and legal services, information and products.

The Department is the agency principally responsible for assisting the Attorney General in developing and implementing Government policy and the administration and compliance with approximately 200 Acts.

The Department has a diverse range of services, which include:

- court and tribunal services
- advocacy, guardianship and administration services
- trustee services
- birth, death, change of name and marriage registrations
- services to Government, including policy, legal and Parliamentary drafting

Key Result Areas

Service Delivery – improving the quality of our services and the ability of our clients and the community to access them.

Investing in people – developing and sustaining our organisational capacity by recognising and developing the skills and expertise of our people.

Strategic policy development and advice – providing strategic policy analysis and advice to Government on key reforms in the justice system.

DAIP Achievements

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

The Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), endorsed in March 2010, covered the period from 2010 – 2013. Many initiatives were implemented and significant progress made towards better access for clients with disability, their carers and families.

Key initiatives which have been implemented by the Department include:

- Improved physical access to Court and Tribunal Services facilities such as wider passage width and lowered reception counters. The premises leased by the Public Trustee have been completely redesigned and refurbished to enhance access requirements and to meet the particular needs of the clients that use their facilities.
- Development of targeted disability awareness training publications for general staff and customer service staff.
- Successfully organised community events that considered the needs of persons with disability, their families and carers. Events and information sessions included topics such as:
 - Enduring Powers of Attorney
 - Enduring Powers of Guardianship
 - Advance Health Directives
 - Private Administrator Training
 - Seniors Week
 - Law Week
 - Will Week
 - Policy and Aboriginal Services - Open Days
- Office of the Public Advocate won the Disability Services Commission Count Me In awards in 2010 for their community guardianship program and the Cerebral Palsy Community Excellence awards in 2011 for 'going the extra mile'.

Planning For Better Access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 17.4% of Western Australians have a disability (compared to the 2003 rate of 20.6%), and 11.5% are carers.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (the Act) that public authorities develop and implement a DAIP that outlines the ways in which the Department will ensure that people with disability, their carers and families have equal access to its information, services and facilities. The Act identifies specific outcomes to be achieved by agencies in providing services to clients with disability. The Department's DAIP meets the requirements for agency planning, as detailed in the Act.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes *the WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cmwth)*.

The Act also requires agencies to report on the implementation of the Plan's access and inclusion initiatives each year in their annual report and in a progress report to the Disability Services Commission.

This DAIP details the Department's disability services priorities for the period 2013 - 2018. It should be read in conjunction with the Department's Disability Services Policy and related plans within business areas.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

The Department is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disability, 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;
- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and peak organisations representing the interests of people with disability, to ensure barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately;
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in this DAIP; and
- achieving the desired outcomes of this DAIP.

DAIP Outcomes

Outcome 1:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Department of the Attorney General.

Outcome 2:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and facilities of the Department of the Attorney General.

Outcome 3:

People with disability receive information from the Department of the Attorney General in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Outcome 4:

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the Department of the Attorney General's staff as other people receive.

Outcome 5:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department of the Attorney General.

Outcome 6:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Department of the Attorney General.

Outcome 7:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access employment to the Department of the Attorney General.

Development of the DAIP

Responsibility for the Planning Process

The Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Committee commenced the review of its DAIP 2010 – 2013 in January 2012. This committee comprises two officers from the Corporate Services Executive to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the Plan and key representatives from across the Department. The review process included:

- examination of the achievements and barriers of the 2010 - 2013 DAIP
- review of Department and Divisional strategic plans and other significant publications

- examination of the Disability Services Commission 2010 DAIP survey
- evaluation of other organisations' DAIP to assess best practice

Internal Consultation

In 2012, consultations with departmental representatives were conducted to review the existing disability services strategies and to assist with the formulation of new strategies for the revised Plan. An article was placed on Department news inviting feedback from departmental staff on 10 May 2012. Following this feedback, the draft DAIP 2013 – 2018 was published on the Department's intranet on 27 December 2012 for comment.

Public Consultation

The Department sought feedback from the community in a number of ways to further guide improvement to access and inclusion for people with disability, their carers and their families.

This was achieved through the following methods:

- the previous Plan was available for feedback on the Department's website www.dotag.wa.gov.au via a link on the home page between 10 May and 7 June 2012;
- an advertisement inviting feedback from the public was placed in *The West Australian* newspaper's Public Notice Board on 5 May 2012;
- key disability services organisations were identified and contacted directly and notified of the consultation process; and
- a draft DAIP 2013 – 2018 was publicised for comment in a second round of community consultations in *The West Australian* and on the Department's website over December 2012 – January 2013.

Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that most of the strategies in the previous DAIP had been achieved and that a new plan was required to ensure currency and relevance. The new plan is designed to address current access barriers and aims to meet more than the minimum in compliance and standards.

The consultation also identified some barriers to access and inclusion which are addressed in the DAIP Implementation Plan.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

This DAIP will operate for five years from July 2013 to June 2018. There are broad strategies identified within the seven outcome areas for potential improvements to access and inclusion. These strategies provide flexibility to

respond to the diverse needs of people with disability and potential adjustments to business demands within the Department. They are outlined in full from page ten (10) and will be used to guide the identification of initiatives in the annual implementation plans for the duration of this DAIP.

Implementing the DAIP

Responsibility for Implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Act that public authorities take all practical measures to ensure the DAIP is implemented by all staff, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all service areas of the Department. Some strategies in the Plan will apply to all service areas, whilst others will apply only to a specific area. The DAIP Committee and Corporate Services Executive will guide the overall implementation of the Plan.

Communicating the DAIP to Staff and the Community

The final version of the Plan was reviewed and endorsed by the Director General. The endorsed DAIP was then submitted to the Disability Services Commission and made available on the Department's intranet and external website. Copies of the DAIP were sent to all those who contributed to the planning process for feedback. The Plan was presented to the Department's Corporate Executive Committee (CEC).

Copies of the Plan are available to staff via the Department's intranet. The Department has also advised, through *The West Australian* newspaper, that copies of the Plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hardcopy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format, by email and on the Department's website www.dotag.wa.gov.au.

Review, Evaluation and Reporting

Review

The Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to the DAIP which have been addressed by the following scheduled actions.

- The Department will conduct a full review of the Plan at least every five (5) years.
- The DAIP may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect the progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise.
- The DAIP Committee will meet every six (6) months to review progress on the implementation of the strategies outlined in the DAIP. The

Committee will prepare the DAIP progress report required for submission to the Commission each July and a status report will be provided to the Director General for formal endorsement.

- Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission (DSC) and will be made available on the Department's website and intranet.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the DAIP will be undertaken as follows:

- DAIP Committee reports on the implementation progress to be provided to the Director General on a six monthly basis.
- Once a year, prior to 31 July, the Department will seek feedback through the DAIP Committee on the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented.
- In seeking feedback the Committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- Where significant barriers have been identified the Committee may, as part of the consulting process, consider calling for input through the Department's website and/or directly from key disability service providers.
- Departmental staff will be asked to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement. The DAIP will be amended based on the feedback received.
- New or amended strategies will be included in the DAIP and submitted to the Department's Corporate Executive Committee for approval.
- Copies of the amended DAIP, once endorsed, will be available to the staff and community, and in alternative formats as requested.
- New or amended DAIPs will be forwarded to DSC, as required.

Reporting

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

- Progress towards the desired outcomes of DAIP.
- Progress of departmental agents and contractors towards meeting the desired outcomes.
- Strategies used to inform agents and contractors of the Department's DAIP.

Department of the Attorney General Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 – 2018

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

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
1.1	Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into the Department's Strategic Framework and other relevant plans and strategies.	Ongoing
1.2	Improve awareness of our employees, contractors and service providers who deal with the public of their responsibilities under the DAIP.	Ongoing
1.3	Ensure events organised and/or promoted by DotAG are accessible for people with disability.	Ongoing
1.4	Develop and implement flexible strategies to improve access for people with disability, their families and carers.	Annually

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

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
2.1	Ensure the needs of people with disability are considered prior to undertaking any accommodation changes.	Ongoing
2.2	Ensure that all buildings providing services and facilities to the public are accessible, wherever possible.	Ongoing
2.3	Consider and identify where enhanced access measurements can be added to new buildings.	Ongoing

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

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
3.1	Ensure all new and updated communications are based on the <i>State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities</i> .	Ongoing
3.2	Ensure the Department's website meets contemporary good practice for the provision of information to people with disability.	Ongoing
3.3	Ensure staff are informed about the alternative formats that they can use to provide information to the public.	Ongoing

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the Department of the Attorney General's staff as other people receive.

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
4.1	Improve staff and volunteer awareness of disability access issues and improve their skills to provide better services to people with disability.	Ongoing

Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department of the Attorney General.

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
5.1	Continue to raise awareness of the rights of consumers to make complaints and of the avenues available, particularly among new staff and consumers.	Ongoing
5.2	Ensure complaints procedures are compliant and made available in accessible formats.	Ongoing

Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Department of the Attorney General.

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
6.1	Improve departmental consultation guidelines to ensure people with disability are engaged.	Ongoing
6.2	Ensure consultations with the public are held in accessible venues and in an accessible manner.	Ongoing

Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Department of the Attorney General.

STRATEGY		TIMELINE
7.1	Continue to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of employees with disability.	Ongoing
7.2	Continue to accommodate, where possible, the needs of people with disability.	Ongoing