Part 2

Using the checklists

Access and Inclusion Resource Kit

Disability access and inclusion plans

Steps in using the checklists
Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

Public authorities in Western Australia were required to have Disability Service Plans (DSPs) as part of the Disability Services Act (1993). This Act was amended in 2004 and requires that public authorities develop and implement Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). The requirements of DAIPs build on those of DSPs, towards ensuring that people with disabilities can access services, facilities and information in a way that promotes independence, opportunities and inclusion within the community.

A key aspect of the amended legislation is the listing of seven desired outcomes of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans. These are that:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and any events organised by a public authority.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.
3. People with disability receive information from a public authority 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 the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultations by a public authority.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.
The access checklists contained in this Kit address each of the seven desired outcomes of DAIPs. They were developed through consultation with a wide range of State Government agencies, Local Governments and people with disability, and will be useful for:

- obtaining baseline information about the current accessibility of information, services and facilities
- measuring improvements in access to information, services and facilities.

By using these access checklists, government service providers can systematically identify barriers which may be preventing people with disability from using their services, or making it difficult for them to do so. The checklists will also be useful when identifying the actions required to improve access to these services.

The checklists can be used to identify access to a wide range of services including information services, building approval and planning services, parking services, hospital services and legal services.

Although the checklists can be used separately, it is strongly recommended that they are all used to systematically identify the many common barriers to access. When used together, the checklists provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the accessibility of a service.
Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

The package includes the following checklists:

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

- Creating accessible events

  This checklist will assist people with disabilities to access public events such as functions, consultation, festivals, education sessions and public meetings.

Outcome 2
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.

- Access to buildings and facilities

  This checklist is made up of a number of sections that will assist with the evaluation of access to existing buildings and facilities provided by public authorities. The sections consider common access issues such as internal and external access, lifts, entrances, signage, toilets, car-parking, public open space, and other specific facilities.

  There are mandatory and recommended requirements concerning access provision in new building works. These are contained in the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards. State Government agencies and Local Governments involved in new building works should refer directly to these documents, as it is important that new building works comply with the current requirements of these documents. For more information refer to Part 4 of this kit.

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

- Access to information

  This checklist is aimed at evaluating the level of access to information provided by public authorities, and considers use of language, alternative formats and other communication strategies.

Outcome 4
People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.

- Staff access awareness
Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

This checklist has two complementary sections. The first is a sample survey that could be issued to any staff member to determine levels of staff awareness with regard to access for people with disabilities. The second is a checklist provided to assist with the compilation of the results of the staff access awareness survey.

Outcome 5
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.

- Public participation

This checklist will assist in evaluating the extent of access to and opportunity to participate in decision-making or consultation processes, grievance mechanisms and quality assurance processes.

- Adapting services

This checklist will assist users to gauge the extent to which their services are relevant and appropriate and to ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not exclude people with disability.

Outcome 6
People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.

- Public participation

This checklist will assist in evaluating the extent of access to and opportunity to participate in decision-making or consultation processes, grievance mechanisms and quality assurance processes.

- Adapting services

This checklist will assist users to gauge the extent to which their services are relevant and appropriate and to ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not exclude people with disability.

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

- Access to buildings and facilities

This checklist is made up of a number of sections that will assist with the evaluation of access to existing buildings and facilities provided by public authorities. The sections consider common access issues such as internal and external access, lifts, entrances, signage, toilets, car-parking, public open space, and other specific facilities.
There are mandatory and recommended requirements concerning access provision in new building works. These are contained in the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards. State Government agencies and Local Governments involved in new building works should refer directly to these documents, as it is important that new building works comply with the current requirements of these documents. For more information refer to Part 4 of this Kit.

- **Access to information**

  This checklist is aimed at evaluating the level of access to information provided by public authorities, and considers use of language, alternative formats and other communication strategies.

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  This checklist has two complementary sections. The first is a sample survey that could be issued to any staff member to determine levels of staff awareness with regard to access for people with disabilities. The second is a checklist provided to assist with the compilation of the results of the staff access awareness survey.

- **Adapting services**

  This checklist will assist users to gauge the extent to which their services are relevant and appropriate and to ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not exclude people with disability.
Steps in using the checklists

When completing the checklists for any service it is helpful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent is the service provided to the public?
- Who are the users of the service?
- To what extent are people with disabilities, their families and carers, users or potential users of the service?

Each public authority will decide how often it wishes to assess the accessibility of services. It is recommended, however, that high public usage services are audited on a regular basis. Access assessments can be conducted in conjunction with existing reviews of services and facilities, such as annual inspections.

The major results from the checklists can be incorporated into the planning documents and annual reports that are prepared by public authorities.

The following steps are suggested when assessing services:

**Step 1: Nominate coordinator**

Ideally the access assessment should be co-ordinated by the committee or individual who has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of your Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

**Step 2: List services**

List all in-house and contracted services provided by your organisation. The list of services identified in your DAIP will provide a useful resource when identifying services.

**Step 3: Select services**

Rank the services identified in Step 2 according to the level of public involvement. Services that are most frequently used by the public or that significantly impact on people with disabilities should be given the highest priority.

**Step 4: Identify resources**

Identify the staff and financial resources that will be required for administering the checklists. Identify a proposed timeline for the access assessment.

The checklists may be administered by one or more members of staff. Before commencing assessment, it is recommended that all staff administering the checklists are given copies of the sections: People with disabilities; Planning for access; and Using the access checklists.

**Step 5: Planning access assessment**

In conducting an assessment of access, services may be assessed individually, by groups of services, or by programs.
Steps in using the checklists

**Step 6: Identify checklists**

It is important to identify the components of the service to be assessed so that the relevant checklists are used.

**Step 7: Complete the checklists**

During this step the person(s) responsible for assessing the accessibility of the nominated service category will need to complete the relevant checklists. It is recommended that the checklists be completed in the following order:

1. buildings and facilities
2. access to information
3. staff access awareness
4. public participation
5. accessible events
6. adapting services

**Step 8: Summarise actions**

Following completion of each checklist, a summary of identified issues can be prepared using the ‘Issues and Actions’ sheets provided at the end of each checklist.

As much as possible, rank the issues in order of priority and identify the required actions. Priorities for action should be developed according to the level of use of the services by the public.

Often there can be more than one way of overcoming a particular barrier. It is important to seek appropriate advice on the best and most economical way of removing barriers, especially in the area of physical access.

**Step 9: Report to management**

Report the results of the assessment of services and the recommended actions to management.

**Step 10: Amend DAIP Implementation Plan**

Once management has approved the committee’s recommendations, the DAIP Implementation Plan should be amended to incorporate the barriers, strategies, timelines and person responsible. Remember to seek endorsement of the amended DAIP Implementation Plan by corporate executive/Council.
Steps in using the checklists

In summary
The access checklists have been designed to address the majority of access needs that people with disabilities have in relation to the services provided by State Government agencies and Local Governments.

In some cases, there may be specific access issues that have not been addressed by the checklist, given the nature of the service provided by a public authority and the particular needs of the people with disabilities who use that service.

Through your customer feedback or quality assurance mechanisms, it will be important to provide opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers and organisations to comment on access issues.

As a result of this process, additional access issues might be identified. Public authorities might wish to develop questions to be added to the checklist to better reflect the needs of their customers with disabilities.

It is recommended that public authorities seek guidance from the Access and Inclusion branch of the Disability Services Commission prior to developing additional questions.