

Disability Services Commission Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2011–2016



Director General Foreword

Currently it is estimated that 405,500 Western Australians have a disability (20.6 per cent of the population) (Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Disability Ageing and Carers (2003). People with disability face many challenges in accessing services, facilities and information and participating in community life.

In 2009–2010 the Disability Services Commission (the Commission) expended \$486.42 million to advance the rights and support the needs of Western Australians with disability and assisted 21,652 Western Australians with disability.



Disability Access and Inclusion Plans are a requirement under the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) to ensure that public authorities make their services, facilities and information accessible for people with disability. Having accessible and inclusive services, facilities and information, people with disability are enabled to lead lives of greater independence and participate and have choice in our community.

The Commission's Count Me In: Disability Future Directions is a long-term plan for disability with a vision that all people live in welcoming communities that facilitate citizenship, friendship, mutual support and a fair go for everyone. The Commission's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan provides a framework to assist in achieving this goal by setting strategies and developing initiatives to ensure Commission services, facilities and information are accessible and inclusive.

This is the Commission's fifth Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and I acknowledge the many significant initiatives put into place by Commission staff to ensure that our services, facilities and information are accessible and inclusive to all people with disability, their families and carers.

As we move into the future the Commission remains committed to meeting our vision that 'all people live in welcoming communities that facilitate citizenship, friendship, mutual support and a fair go for everyone'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Chalmers', written in a cursive style.

Dr Ron Chalmers
Director General
Disability Services Commission

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Disability Services Commission

Our Vision

All people live in welcoming communities that facilitate citizenship, friendship, mutual support and a fair go for everyone.

In achieving this vision the rights of people with disability are recognised, their families and carers supported, their involvement in all levels of decision-making is encouraged and their life choices are respected.

Count Me In: Disability Future Directions

The Count Me In: Disability Future Directions long term strategy for a better future for all Western Australians, including people with disability, was launched by the Premier Hon Colin Barnett, MLA, on 3 December 2009 (International Day of People with Disability). This strategy assists the Disability Services Commission (the Commission) to meet its vision and has become a catalyst for change and a vehicle for forging new partnerships to support a better future. Implementation of the 13 priority areas outlined in the Count Me In will continue to be a major focus for the Commission in 2011 and beyond. Along with the core activities associated with delivering personalised supports and services, the Commission will focus on partnering with other government agencies and the wider community to progress the vision of Count Me In.



Commission Structure

The Commission was established under the Disability Services Act (1993) and is the State Government agency in Western Australia responsible for advancing opportunities, community participation and quality of life for people with disability. The Commission provides a range of direct services and support and also funds disability sector organisations to provide services to people with disability, their families and carers.

People with Disability in Western Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Disability Ageing and Carers (SDAC, 2003) estimated 405,500 Western Australians have a disability (20.6 per cent of the population). Of the 405,500 Western Australians with disabilities, 115,800 people have profound or severe core activity limitation.

Core activities include:

- Self-care, such as bathing or showering; dressing; eating; toileting
- Mobility, such as moving around at home and in the community; getting into or out of a bed or chair; bending and picking up an object from the floor; and using public transport
- Communication — understanding and being understood by others, including strangers, family and friends.



Figure 1: Numbers of Western Australians with disabilities
(Australian Bureau of Statistics survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2003)

An estimated 246,800 Western Australians are carers for people with disabilities (12.6 per cent of the population).

Of the 246,800 carers in Western Australia:

- 38,800 carers (15.7 per cent of all carers) are primary carers, assuming the main responsibility for meeting the basic daily needs of a person with disabilities
- of these primary carers, 31,400 live in the same household as the recipient of care
- 17,300 primary carers (or 44.6 per cent of primary carers) have disabilities
- 208,000 carers (84.3 per cent of all carers) provide a range of assistance to meet the basic support needs of people with disabilities but are not primarily responsible for the person's day-to-day care.

Planning for better access

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) (the Act) that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) so that people with disability have the same opportunities as others to access services, facilities and information.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes:

- WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1993
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Our commitment to access and inclusion

The Commission is committed to continually improving access and inclusion for people with disability, their families and carers. It strives to achieve the highest standards in access and inclusion and to set an example for others to follow.

The DAIP provides a framework for the identification of areas where access and inclusion can be improved within the Commission. The Act outlines the seven outcome areas to be implemented by Commission staff and its agents and contractors:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunity as other people to access the buildings and facilities of a public authority.
3. People with disabilities 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 disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of the public authority.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Commission.

Significant achievements of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2006–2011

Since 1993 the Commission has developed and implemented plans to improve access and inclusion. The Commission's fourth DAIP included some of the following achievements:

- The development of the Commission's long term vision for people with disability in Western Australia, Count Me In: Disability Future Directions.
- The development of two information packs on available services for people with disability from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Getting Services Right for Aboriginal people and the Our voices, Our Journeys for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These provide information that is valuable to the staff to ensure culturally appropriate services.
- An access consultant was contracted by the Commission to undertake an audit of all offices and facilities, external and internal access and including consideration of a range of issues. The Accommodation Services Directorate assessed its facilities and identified those that require renovating to improve access for the residents and others that require relocation both to improve internal access and to also improve the opportunity for social inclusion.
- Local Area Coordination actively develops relationships with community groups to improve awareness of the needs of people with disability, their family and carers. Examples include: the development of a positive relationship with a local Imam in the northern suburbs and gaining his support to increase awareness among the Muslim community of the needs of people with disability, their family and carers and developing a dialogue with Aboriginal groups such as the Men's Shed in Armadale with the intention of increasing awareness of needs and services.
- The Commission has developed new funding streams to provide greater flexibility under a person-centred framework to meet individual needs and to further individual services. Examples include the Community Living and Family Living Initiatives.
- Development of the Accessible Information Training Package and training sessions to ensure Commission staff produces printed material in accessible format that meets the needs of a wide range of information access issues.
- Development, evaluation and extension of the Rural and Remote Strategy. This initiative is designed to ensure people living in rural and remote areas have access to supports and services that enable them to remain living in their local communities.



Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2011–2016

Review and consultation process

As required under the Act, in 2011, the Commission undertook to review its DAIP 2006–2011 and draft a new five year DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The review process included:

- examination of the 2006–2011 DAIP
- review of recent annual reports, strategic documents and significant program evaluations
- examination of the consultation undertaken in the development of Count Me In: Disability Future Directions
- consideration of good practice in other organisations

The DAIP consultation comprised a call for feedback on areas where the Commission could improve access and inclusion by:

- an advertisement in the West Australian newspaper
- an article in the staff newsletter Cheers and a broadcast email to all Commission staff
- articles in the news and events pages of the Commission's web site
- a link on the home page of the Commission's web site to a feedback form
- an invitation to the Board of the Commission and the Ministers Advisory Council on Disability for comment
- letters to disability sector organisations inviting them to provide comment.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

This DAIP will be effective for five years, from July 2011 to June 2016. Within the seven outcome areas, strategies have been identified where there is potential for improved access and inclusion. The broad strategies provide flexibility to respond to emerging access and inclusion needs. These strategies are outlined in full on page 9 and will be used to guide the identification of initiatives in the annual implementation plans, for the duration of this DAIP.



Implementation of the DAIP

Responsibility for Implementation

The Act requires staff and the agents and contractors of the Commission to conduct their business in a manner consistent with the Commission's DAIP. It requires agents and contractors to take all practicable measures to ensure that relevant outcomes are implemented.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all staff at the Commission. Some initiatives in annual implementation plans will apply to all areas of the Commission while others will apply to specific directorates. The annual implementation plans set out who is responsible for each initiative.

Communication of the DAIP

Copies of the Commission's DAIP will be communicated via:

- Commission's website
- a notice placed in the West Australian newspaper
- a notice on the intranet homepage
- a broadcast email for staff and during staff training sessions
- articles in the Commission's staff newsletter Cheers, and disAbility Update.

Copies of the DAIP will be available in alternative formats and languages upon request.

DAIP reviewing and reporting

The Commission will review progress against the strategies and undertake to develop a new DAIP every five years.

The Commission will annually:

- Review progress in implementing the initiatives of the annual implementation plan
- Develop a new implementation plan that will include outstanding actions from the previous implementation plan and new actions identified by directorates

The Commission will follow the requirements of the Act for minimum reporting requirements by:

- monitoring initiatives undertaken in the implementation plans
- report annually to the Commission's Corporate Executive on progress in implementing initiatives
- report by the 31 July annually to the Commission on progress in implementing strategies, progress made by agents and contractors and strategies used to inform agents and contractors of its DAIP
- report on progress of the DAIP in the Commission's Annual Report.



DISABILITY SERVICES COMMISSION

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Strategies 2011–2016

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

Strategy	Timeline
Develop and implement flexible strategies to improve access for people with disability, their families and carers.	Ongoing
Encourage and support disability sector organisations to improve access to their services for people with disability, their families and carers.	Ongoing
Ensure the agents and contractors of the Commission comply with the DAIP requirements.	Ongoing
Ensure events organised by the Commission are compliant with the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities and are widely promoted to staff using a variety of strategies.	Ongoing
Improved communication about the availability of Commission funds, funding processes and timelines.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all Commission facilities comply with access requirements and an access consultation is consulted where appropriate.	Ongoing
Ensure Commission facilities are located to maximise ease of access and to promote inclusion within the community.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure the provision of information for all people with disability complies with the guidelines as detailed in the State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities.	Ongoing
Improve community awareness that Commission information is available in alternative formats, upon request.	Ongoing
Redevelopment of the Commission's website to increase access to timely and accurate information.	2015

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Commission as other people receive from the staff of the Commission

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for people with disability, their families and carers.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Continue to raise awareness of the rights of consumers to make complaints and of the avenues available, particularly among new staff and consumers.	Ongoing
Ensure the Commission's complaints procedures are made available in flexible and accessible formats.	Ongoing

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Commission.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure consultations with the public are held in an accessible manner.	Ongoing
Ensure information detailing the nature of the consultation, is available in accessible formats for people with disability, their families and carers.	Ongoing
Increase opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers, to engage with the Commission in respect to significant issues affecting them.	Ongoing
Update the Consultation Policy to ensure that the needs of people with different communication needs are met by consultation strategies.	2013

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

Strategy	Timeline
Continue to develop innovative strategies to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of employees with disability.	Ongoing

Notes

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Resources

A range of DAIP resources can be found on the Commission's website in the access and universal design section. Visit:

www.disability.wa.gov.au

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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.