



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **the Registrar, Western Australian**
Industrial Relations Commission

**Department of the Registrar,
Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission**

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013-2018

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille

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Acknowledgements

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BACKGROUND

The Department of the Registrar

The Department of the Registrar, Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (the Department) is a public sector department established under section 35 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* (WA), responsible to the Minister for Commerce. The Department is accountable to the Government to ensure ethical and transparent decisions are made in performing the primary function of supporting the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission (the Commission) in its role as an independent statutory tribunal.

Functions, Facilities and Services Provided by the Department

The Department's mission is "to support the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission to provide our community with a means of preventing and resolving conflict in respect to industrial matters." It therefore exists to ensure the Commission has the necessary resources to effectively prevent and resolve industrial disputes by providing services for the lodgement, registration, processing, and management of all applications to the Commission, the Occupational Safety and Health Tribunal, the Road Freight Transport Industry Tribunal, the Public Service Appeal Board, the Industrial Magistrates Court and the Industrial Appeal Court.

Planning for Better Access

In 2003, more than one in five people in Australia (20%) identified themselves as having some form of disability (ABS, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers). By 2009, four million people in Australia (18.5%) reported having a disability (ABS, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers).

Even though the prevalence of disability in Australia has fallen 1.5% since 2003, the rate of disability was identified to increase with age and almost nine in ten people aged 90 and over (88%) identified as having a disability. Males and females were reportedly similarly affected by disability (18% and 19% respectively).

The Department of the Registrar is committed to supporting people with disability by providing easier access to its information, services and facilities. The Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (the DAIP) addresses barriers to access and inclusion by identifying potential solutions for people with disability, their families and carers.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (WA) (the Disability Services Act) that public authorities develop and implement a DAIP that outlines the ways in which the Department will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its information, facilities and services.

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

Progress since 2006

The Department's DAIP is reviewed and amended in accordance with the Department's statutory obligations and as new issues arise or better solutions become available. Following the Department's initial Disability Service Plan, the Department's second disability plan was adopted in 2006 (the DAIP 2006-2010). This plan continued to address the access barriers faced by people with disability who accessed Departmental information, services and facilities. Progress achievements since 2006 are highlighted in Appendix 1.

The review of the Department's DAIP 2006-2010 has shown that strategies were successful in achieving improvements to access and inclusion. A notable achievement was the installation of audio induction hearing loops in the courts and at the Registry's public counter. This assistive listening system helps Department and Commission clients' with hearing impairments, to better access and communicate with the Commission. The system enables sound to be delivered directly from the source to a hearing impaired person through their hearing aid. The hearing aid in effect, acts as a wireless, customised loudspeaker providing quality and non-distorted sound to the hearing impaired person.

This new DAIP focuses on ensuring that scheduled accommodation refits and website improvements are in accordance with the Department's standards of access and inclusion.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

In developing appropriate solutions, the Department is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of departmental services and facilities, providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community
- consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP, and
- achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The six desired outcomes are:

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

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

Outcome 3: People with disability receive the same information from the Department and the Commission 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 staff of the Department and the Commission, as other people receive.

Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities to make complaints to the Department and the Commission.

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

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIP

Responsibility for the Planning Process

The CEO is responsible for the Department's DAIP. The DAIP has a whole of agency approach and is prepared after consultation with representatives from all sections within the Department.

A Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee (the Committee) was established in 2007 and comprises representatives from across the Department. The responsibility of the Committee is to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the DAIP.

Community Consultation Process

In 2012, the Department reviewed its DAIP 2006-2010 and developed a new five year plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The consultation process included:

- Examination of the DAIP 2006-2010 and subsequent review of progress reports to identify achievements and what is still in progress.
- Examination of other relevant departmental documents and strategies.
- Investigation of contemporary trends and good practice for access and inclusion.
- Consultation with key staff across the Department and the Commission.
- Review of plans developed by other State Government agencies.
- Consultation with the public.

The Disability Services Regulations 2004 set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. State government authorities must call for submissions (either general or specific) by notice in a state wide newspaper or on any website maintained by or on behalf of the state government Department. Other mechanisms may also be used.

The following strategies were used by the Department during the consultation process:

- An advertisement inviting submissions from the public was placed in *The West Australian* newspaper on Saturday, 13 October 2012.
- The DAIP, a feedback survey and a general invitation to comment was available on the Department and Commission websites from 15 October 2012.
- The DAIP, a feedback survey and a general invitation to comment (via email) was available on the staff intranet from Monday, 22 October 2012.
- Notices inviting feedback were placed in public access areas of the Department and the Commission from Friday, 26 October 2012.

Responsibility for Implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that public authorities must 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. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The Committee will guide the overall implementation of the DAIP.

Communicating the DAIP to Staff and People with Disability

In December 2012, the Department's DAIP 2013-2018 was finalised and formally endorsed by the CEO. The Department advised via an advertisement in the West Australian that the DAIP had been revised and was now available on the website and in alternative formats upon request (this includes hard copy in standard or large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the Department's website).

As the Department's DAIPs are reviewed and new DAIPs are endorsed in future years, both staff and the public will be advised of the availability of updated DAIPs, using the same methods.

Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Department's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with that Act. The Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise throughout the life of the DAIP. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended DAIP will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and Monitoring

The review of the expired DAIP is included in the Department's new DAIP 2013-2018 which was submitted to the Disability Services Commission in December 2012. The Committee will meet quarterly in the first year and bi-annually thereafter to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.

The Committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the Department's DAIP 2013-2018, which will form the basis for what will be included in the Department's Annual Reporting requirements under the *Financial Management Act 2006* (WA). A status report will also be provided to the Department's Corporate Executive for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

The CEO will annually endorse reports provided by the Committee regarding the progress of the DAIP's implementation.

Once a year, after 31 July, the Department will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of its DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented. A notice about the consultation process will be posted on the Department's website. In seeking feedback the Committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.

Department staff will also be formally notified via email once a year, after 31 July requesting feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and invited to make suggestions for improvement. It should be noted however, that staff are encouraged to identify issues for improvement at any time during the year. Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received. Copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by the Department, will be available to the public in alternative formats (such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille).

REPORTING

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Department will report on the implementation of its DAIP 2013-2018 through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress reports to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year.

These reports will outline:

- progress towards the desired outcomes of the DAIP 2013-2018
- progress of agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes, and
- the strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of the DAIP 2013-2018.

At the completion of the period of the DAIP, the Department will report to the Disability Services Commission on the review of the DAIP 2013-2018 (including any amendments).

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The following strategies will guide activities that the Department will undertake from 2013-2018 to improve access to its information, services and facilities for people with disability, their families and carers. The six desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

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

Strategies		Timeframe
1.1	Reinvigorate and maintain the Disability Committee to guide the implementation of strategies over the period of the plan and monitor progress in accordance with internal reporting requirements and legislative obligations	Mar 2013 and Ongoing
1.2	Ensure that Departmental staff, agents and contractors are aware of this plan	Ongoing
1.3	Ensure that all events conducted by, or on behalf of the Department or Commission, are in accordance with the Events Checklist and accessible to people with disability	Jun 2013 and Ongoing
1.4	Ensure all public services and resources are accessible for staff and visitors with a disability	Ongoing

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

Strategies		Timeframe
2.1	Ensure that all buildings providing services and facilities to the public are accessible to persons with disability and act on issues in a timely and appropriate manner	Mar 2013 (survey/launch) and Ongoing
2.2	Ensure that issues of accessibility are considered as part of any future decisions about Department or Commission facilities and premises	Ongoing
2.3	Make available, maintain and regularly update "Accessibility" information via Departmental facilities	Dec 2013 and Ongoing
2.4	Ensure that signage is clear and easy to read	Ongoing

2.5	Promote awareness of <i>You're Welcome Access</i> website and utilise some of their resources in assisting people with disability to access Department and Commission premises	Dec 2013 and Ongoing
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Outcome 3: People with disability receive the same information from the Department and the Commission in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it

Strategies		Timeframe
3.1	Ensure that public information is made available in alternative formats upon request and promote these options	Dec 2013 and Ongoing
3.2	Raise awareness amongst staff of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats to make it available to people with disability	Mar 2013 and Ongoing
3.3	Provide access to text phone and Australian Sign Language services to improve the availability of the Department's services and the information available to hearing impaired persons	Dec 2013 and Ongoing
3.4	Examine further ways to assist the public and staff with hearing impairments to better access and communicate with the Department and the Commission	Ongoing
3.5	Ensure websites and content comply with the <i>Public Sector Commissioner's Circular 2011-03</i> and associated <i>WA Government Website Accessibility Policy</i>	Dec 2013

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

Strategies		Timeframe
4.1	Provide disability awareness information to new staff as part of their induction	Apr 2013 and Ongoing
4.2	Make available information regarding access and inclusion for people with disability on the staff intranet	Jun 2013
4.3	Access external training providers for staff where appropriate	Ongoing
4.4	Ensure that delivery of services by staff, agents and contractors of the Department and the Commission take into account the full range of disability types (including cognitive, intellectual, sensory and psychological) in addition to mobility and disability and access requirements	Ongoing

Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities to make complaints to the Department and the Commission

Strategies		Timeframe
5.1	Provide an accessible complaints process	Dec 2013
5.2	Extend Annual Survey to include a section pertaining to services and any barriers restricting access for people with disability	Jun 2013
5.3	Monitor and respond to complaints received about disability access in a timely manner	Ongoing
5.4	Ensure staff are sufficiently informed in disability and access issues to provide appropriate assistance to people with disability making complaints	Ongoing

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

Strategies		Timeframe
6.1	Ensure people with disability, appropriate community and disability groups are targeted as part of any ongoing consultations in disability planning	Ongoing
6.2	Make available in alternative formats on the website, the opportunity for all members of the public to comment on the provision of services offered by the Department	Ongoing

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress to date

The Department has improved access to its information, services and facilities in the following ways:

- ✓ Progress has been made regarding the development of the website and its accessibility to ensure compliance with state government policies by December 2013.
- ✓ Work has been undertaken to improve accessibility to Departmental information and the Department is committed to ongoing improvements in this area. Accessibility information for the Department and the Commission was updated under the [“Contacts”](#) page of the website. This included information relating to:
 - accessing the Accessibility Officer
 - links to City of Perth accessible parking
 - links to City of Perth disabled toilet facilities, and
 - accessing specialised services such as Auslan interpreters and TTY.
- ✓ The Department’s public library services and facilities have made available to people with disability, audio versions of the transcripts of court proceedings and the public computer was fitted with a large lettered keyboard. These facilities are maintained to ensure ongoing accessibility.
- ✓ A notable achievement was the installation of audio induction hearing loops in some of the courts and at the Registry’s public counter. This assistive listening system helps Department and Commission clients’ with hearing impairments, to better access and communicate with Departmental staff and the Commission. The system enables sound to be delivered directly from the source to a hearing impaired person through their hearing aid. The hearing aid in effect, acts as a wireless, customised loudspeaker providing quality and non-distorted sound to the hearing impaired person.
- ✓ Events organised by the Department were done so by addressing issues of accessibility during the planning and implementation stages.
- ✓ In 2009 a consultant was engaged to undertake an audit of the premises to determine compliance with access and mobility standards. The consultant’s report identified the majority of shortfalls as structural in nature. Therefore they were to be taken into account as part of the major works and refurbishment programme. Other changes were made in accordance with the report’s recommendations.

- ✓ Building owners were lobbied with a view to enhancing the overall accessibility of the premises. This lobbying has resulted in a raft of improvements being made in relation to compliance with current standards and building codes, and the completion of a new elevator system which has a range of accessibility features including using voice and light signals to assist hearing or visually impaired passengers.
- ✓ A major works and refurbishment programme commenced planning stages in June 2012. The programme will see the Commission's court room and conference room facilities become state of the art with particular emphasis on improving access and even more easily accessible for people with disability, their carers and families.
- ✓ General awareness training has been provided to staff to provide an insight into the difficulties experienced by people with disability and the strategies staff could adopt to alleviate these barriers.
- ✓ A Disability Access and Inclusion page has been created on the Department's intranet with information and links to valuable disability information. Staff have been encouraged to familiarise themselves with the DAIP and the information provided. During inductions, this material also forms the basis for new staff to start to identify what disability access and inclusion means in the workplace.
- ✓ Staff input was sought throughout the life of the DAIP. As an example, the following issues were identified and improved because of staff engagement:
 - barriers to assisting hearing impaired clients at the Registry counter, and
 - the need for improved signage and assistive hearing equipment.
- ✓ A satisfaction feedback questionnaire was developed for ongoing use by staff and the public to report on access and inclusion barriers.
- ✓ Investigations to extend the Department's Annual Agency Survey to collect disability statistics have commenced.

Appendix 2 - References

Legislation

A copy of applicable legislation is available via the ComLaw or State Law Publisher websites.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

- <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2012C00110>

Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)

- http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_267_homepage.html

Disability Services Regulations 2004 (WA)

- http://www.slp.wa.gov.au/legislation/statutes.nsf/main_mrtitle_267_subsidary.html

Government Policy

Current website accessibility information (and links to associated Public Sector Commissioner's Circulars) is found on the Department of Finance's website.

- <http://www.finance.wa.gov.au/cms/content.aspx?id=16129>

Disability Access and Inclusion Information

Additional information on Disability Access and Inclusion Plans or associated information is available on the Disability Services Commission's website.

- <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/>

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about services, facilities and functions of the Department, or to request further information regarding this DAIP, please contact us by one of the following methods:



Phone: (08) 9420 4444



Fax: (08) 9420 4500



Mail: Accessibility Officer
Department of the Registrar
Western Australian Industrial Relations
Commission
Level 16, 111 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000



Email: daip@wairc.wa.gov.au



Internet: www.wairc.wa.gov.au/DOTR



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Australian Sign Language (Auslan) interpreters can be booked through the WA Deaf Society or the Department can book them with sufficient advanced notice. The Department is committed to meeting reasonable costs associated with utilising the Auslan service.