



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Training**
and **Workforce Development**

Disability access and inclusion plan 2017–2021

This plan is available in alternative formats upon request including in large and standard print, electronically by email, in audio format on CD and on the Department's website.

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Foreword

The Department of Training and Workforce Development provides ongoing support to assist the State's workforce and vocational education and training sector to be more accessible, particularly for people with disability.

We will continue to work alongside other government agencies and community stakeholders to provide increased opportunities for people with disability, in both training and employment.

The commitments outlined in this plan will be reflected in our strategies and services. An action plan has been developed to support the implementation of our new disability access and inclusion plan. These actions will be reviewed annually to monitor and report our progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff and stakeholders for their contribution in developing this plan. Their knowledge and expertise has enabled the Department to develop a comprehensive plan for the next five years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Shean', with a stylized, cursive script.

DR RUTH SHEAN
DIRECTOR GENERAL

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires all Western Australian public authorities to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. This plan outlines how the Department of Training and Workforce Development will improve the accessibility of its facilities, services and information for people with disability.

The Department

Established in 2009, the Department's focus is to build the State's workforce, and deliver a high performance vocational education and training sector for all Western Australians.

The Department's functions are directly aligned to *Skilling WA* – a whole of government plan for the development of the State's workforce – of approximately 1.3 million people; and our *Strategic Plan 2014–2018*.

The Department is committed to ensuring all Western Australians can be part of a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the State. In all decisions, operations and relationships, the Department values:

- Innovation – in responding to the needs of clients and stakeholders.
- Integrity – in designing, directing, delivering and evaluating workforce development and training.
- Collaboration – through fostering strong relationships with stakeholders to balance diverse needs and achieve common goals.
- Quality – in planning and service delivery to achieve client centred outcomes.
- Inclusiveness – in funding and providing services that meet the needs of all Western Australians.

The Department provides the following services:

- workforce planning and development;
- development of vocational education and training policies and programs;
- career and workforce development services;
- skilled migration, including overseas qualification assessment;
- apprenticeship and traineeship administration and regulation;
- procurement of training;
- recruitment and management of international students;
- infrastructure management for TAFE colleges; and
- support services to TAFE colleges.

People with disability in training and employment

Training has a critical role to play in providing people with accessible learning pathways and training support to identify, enter into and maintain fulfilling careers and employment.

In Western Australia, across all providers, less than 3.5% of vocational education and training (VET) students reported having a disability in 2015². While this number is relatively low, it is based on voluntary disclosure of disability, and therefore may not be representative of the real number of people with disability in training.

Generally, disability is an indicator of long term, often lifelong unemployment. People with disability are more likely to be unemployed than people without disability. In 2012 people with disability represented around 8.0% of the State's total workforce and their unemployment rate was around 2.5% higher than for those without disability¹.

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics 4430.0.55.009, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2012*

²National Centre for Vocational Education Research VOCSTATS database

If barriers to participation are addressed, people who are under-employed or disengaged from the workforce are more likely to engage in training to further their employment opportunities. It is imperative that our training system is designed to reduce the barriers and provide the support necessary to ensure people with disability have access to and opportunities in training, and subsequently the workforce.

This plan builds on the Department of Training and Workforce's achievements to date and provides the commitment and direction for further progress in improving access and inclusion in training and employment.

Commitment to access and inclusion

The Department is committed to funding and providing services that meet the needs of all Western Australians, as outlined in:

- the Department's *Strategic Plan 2014–2018* – a key outcome is to increase participation by under-represented groups in the workforce, including people with disability; and
- *Skilling WA* – which has a focus on improving training participation and outcomes for priority target groups.

To enable these strategies, the Department has developed a range of policies and programs, and allocated funding to support training and workforce participation by disadvantaged people in the community, including people with disability.

To ensure access and inclusion principles are embedded in all areas and to demonstrate the Department's commitment to being an equal opportunity employer, the following policies have been developed:

- *Code of conduct*
- *Employment policy*
- *Equity and diversity policy*
- *Language services policy*
- *People management policy*
- *Staff conduct policy*
- *Substantive equality policy*
- *Workforce plan* (incorporates a disability employment strategy).

The Department is committed to achieving the seven DAIP outcomes prescribed by the Disability Services Commission:

- 1 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Department.
- 2 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Department.
- 3 People with disability receive information from the Department 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 the Department as other people receive from staff of the Department.
- 5 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department.
- 6 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation conducted by the Department.
- 7 People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment within the Department.

Progress to date

The Department made significant progress against its DAIP 2011–2016:

- access to facilities owned or leased by the Department was improved by installing additional handrails, automatic doors, voice activated lifts, remote controlled external doors, pedestrian access for Optima’s ACROD parking bays, and duress alarms in accessible toilets;
- contractor awareness about disability and inclusion was raised by including DAIP reporting requirements in relevant contracts, reviewing DAIP requirements at contract management meetings, developing an online reporting tool, and establishing a DAIP reference group to monitor contractor compliance;
- staff awareness was increased through disability awareness training and including DAIP requirements in staff inductions;
- equity impact assessments were included in the process to develop and review policies; and
- a comprehensive evaluation of TAFE college disability support services and funding arrangements was conducted.

Review of the DAIP 2011–2016

A review of the DAIP 2011–2016 was undertaken between June and October 2016. The process included both internal and external consultations.

Consultation process

Consultation was undertaken to:

- review the strategies and actions in the DAIP 2011-2016; and
- assist with developing the DAIP 2017–2021.

The process began with an internal review via:

- a cross-directorate DAIP working group which reviewed and updated actions under each outcome;
- internal online news articles inviting staff feedback;
- analysis of the Department’s DAIP 2011–2016; and
- analysis of relevant Department documents, strategies and policies.

The internal review was followed by external consultation, where feedback was sought via:

- an advertisement in *The West Australian* newspaper;
- the Department’s website inviting readers to “have your say”;
- a focus group with stakeholders with specific interest and expertise in the area of disability; and
- an email invitation to all TAFE colleges and Department-funded private registered training organisations.

Findings of the consultation

The consultations confirmed the proposed strategies for the new DAIP 2017–2021 were relevant and responsive to the needs of people with disability in the VET system. The process highlighted:

- the ongoing need to promote staff awareness of the DAIP as well as the needs of people with disability, both in terms of the Department’s workforce and in providing services to the community;
- accessibility of the Department’s online information and services could be improved;
- information provided by the Department should be available in alternative formats; and
- ongoing issues with collecting reliable statistics on people with disability due to reluctance to disclose.

Implementation and promotion

Communicating the plan

The DAIP 2017–2021 will be promoted to staff via:

- publication on the Department's intranet;
- direct emails to managers and directors;
- online newsletter articles to raise and maintain staff awareness; and
- continued inclusion of access and inclusion principles, including the DAIP in the Department's induction information.

The plan will be communicated to external stakeholders via:

- the Department's website;
- distributing the new DAIP to all agents and contractors who hold contracts which include DAIP requirements; and
- advising the public via an advertisement in *The West Australian* that the new DAIP is available on the Department's website.

The DAIP will be available in alternative formats on request, for example, hard copy, large print, electronic format, audio format or CD.

Implementing the plan

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* for public authorities to take all practical measures to ensure their DAIP is implemented by all officers, employees, agents and contractors. Staff will be made aware of their responsibilities through the internal communication strategies outlined above.

All relevant contracts and agreements will include the requirement for agents/contractors to report on their actions in relation to the Department's DAIP. In 2011 the Department developed an online DAIP reporting tool to collect information from agents and contractors for the annual DAIP reporting process.

The Department has developed strategies to address each of the seven prescribed outcomes – as outlined below. To assist the Department to implement these strategies, an action plan has been developed detailing specific actions, responsibilities and timelines. The action plan will be reviewed annually to check progress and maintain currency.

Review, monitoring and reporting

In accordance with the *Disability Services Act 1993*, the Department's DAIP will be formally reviewed every five years. This plan will be reviewed in 2021.

The Department will monitor its action plan annually to monitor progress. The annual review will allow for the action plan to be updated to incorporate additional issues/actions that arose during the previous year.

Agents and contractors are surveyed each April to monitor their progress against the Department's DAIP.

The Act also sets out the minimum DAIP reporting requirements for public authorities. To meet these requirements the Department will submit the prescribed progress report to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year. The report will include progress by:

- the Department towards achieving the strategies within the current DAIP; and
- agents and contractors in meeting the Department's DAIP outcomes and strategies.

Our access and inclusion strategies

As a result of the review, the Department will adopt the strategies outlined below to improve the accessibility of its services, facilities and information.

These **ongoing** outcomes and strategies are supported by an internal action plan which will be monitored annually to check progress and maintain currency.

Outcome 1

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

	Strategy
1.1	Promote inclusion and participation for people with disability in the Department's strategic documents and policies.
1.2	Provide opportunities for people with disability to participate in State funded training.
1.3	Include consideration of accessibility for people with disability in contracts and contract management activities.
1.4	Improve the validity and reliability of data relating to students with disability.
1.5	Encourage people with disability to access services and participate in events.

Outcome 2

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

	Strategy
2.1	Provide access to Department buildings and facilities for people with disability.
2.2	Provide funding to TAFE colleges to improve the accessibility of training facilities.

Outcome 3

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

	Strategy
3.1	Improve the accessibility of the Department's website.
3.2	Produce information and publications that are accessible.

Outcome 4

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

	Strategy
4.1	Support employees in providing quality services to people with disability.

Outcome 5

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

	Strategy
5.1	Enable people with disability to access the <i>Complaints Management Policy</i> and process.

Outcome 6

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

	Strategy
6.1	Promote accessible and inclusive stakeholder engagement to include people with disability.

Outcome 7

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment at the Department.

	Strategy
7.1	Foster a workplace where job opportunities are accessible to people with disability.
7.2	Support managers and employees in the development of inclusive workplaces.
7.3	Improve the validity and reliability of data relating to employees with disability.

Providing feedback

The Department welcomes your comments on this plan and your experience with the accessibility of our facilities, services and information. To provide feedback, please contact:

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