



Disability Inclusion and Action Plan

2008 – 2012

October 2008

Other formats

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or e-mailed) or audio.

To obtain the plan in an another format please contact the Equal Opportunity Commission, or email eoc@wa.gov.au

Feedback

The Equal Opportunity Commission welcomes feedback on the plan or any other aspect of our services to people with disabilities or their carers.

Feedback can be sent in writing to:
Manager, Policy and Evaluation
Equal Opportunity Commission
PO Box 7370, Cloisters Square,
Perth, Western Australia 6850

Alternatively you can send feedback via our

website: <http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/feedback.html>

by emailing eoc@eoc.wa.gov.au or

by phoning 08 2163900, 1800 198 149 or TTY no. (08) 9216 3936.

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INTRODUCTION

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is being developed to ensure people with disabilities can access the services and facilities provided by the Equal Opportunity Commission.

The Plan will be reviewed and amended as required and will build on the achievements and obstacles identified.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan includes:

- information on the Equal Opportunity Commission's facilities and services;
- a policy statement about our commitment addressing the issue of access for people with disabilities, their families and carers;
- a description of the process used to consult with our customer service staff regarding services to people with disabilities and consultation with the Disability Services Commission;
- the identification of objectives and strategies to overcome barriers that people with disabilities might experience accessing the services of the Commission;
- expected timelines and persons responsible for the proposed strategies;
- a method of review and evaluation for the plan; and
- information about how the plan is being communicated to staff and people with disabilities.

The Equal Opportunity Commission

The Equal Opportunity Commission administers the Equal Opportunity Act 1984. It has two major roles.

The first is to encourage recognition and an understanding of the principles of equal opportunity. Laws alone do not end intolerance, prejudice and discrimination in our community - so education is a vital part of the Commission's function.

The second role of the Commission is to provide a means of redress to individuals who allege unlawful discrimination. Since the Equal Opportunity Act was proclaimed in 1985, the Equal Opportunity Commission has received more than 125,000 enquiries and handled 10,500 complaints.

The Commission is also committed to working across Government and the community to assist in removing systemic and covert discrimination where it exists.

You can find more information on the Commissions' website: www.eoc.wa.gov.au.

Functions, facilities and services of the Equal Opportunity Commission

- a. Functions
 - i. Promote recognition, awareness and acceptance of the principles of equal opportunity through a broad range of diverse activities including publications, education initiatives, training courses and events, and
 - ii. Provide accessible avenues of redress for unlawful discriminatory practices, policies and behaviour through handling complaints.
- b. Facilities

- i. In-house training and education facilities – seminar and conference rooms
 - ii. External training venues
 - iii. Conciliation facilities – meeting rooms
 - iv. Staff accommodation – offices, meeting rooms, staff amenities
- c. Services
 - i. Education and training courses
 - ii. Information provision
 - iii. Investigation and conciliation of complaints

More information about the Commission is available on the website: www.eoc.wa.gov.au

Planning for better access

A 2003 survey found that more than 1 in 5 people in Western Australia identify themselves as having some form of disability (ABS survey of Disability Ageing and Carers). That is 20.9% of the population or 405,500 people. Of these 115,800 people have profound or severe core activity limitation.

The number of Western Australians with disabilities is increasing. Between 2006 and 2026 the number of people with disabilities in Western Australia is expected to increase by more than 210,000, due mainly to our ageing population.

While the degree and type of disability varies with individual circumstances, people with disabilities frequently report that they experience difficulty being independently mobile, or being able to see, hear, or communicate.

Disability impacts not only on the person with the disability, but also on their family and carers.

The Impact of disability is also affected by other factors such as age, language, ethnicity and location.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993*, (as amended in 2004), that:

- a. all public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DIAP) that outlines the ways in which the Commission will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services, and
- b. these services facilitate increased independence, opportunities and inclusion for people with disabilities in the community.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

The Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers have the same opportunities, as others to access its services and facilities.

The EOC's *Disability and Inclusion Action Plan* addresses the barriers and finds solutions for people with disabilities who need the Commission's services and facilities.

People with a disability may face economic inequity, literacy problems, cultural isolation, and discrimination in education, employment and participation in a broad range of activities. The EOC can play a pivotal role in the lives of people with disabilities by providing redress for unlawful discrimination and community education and information to prevent discrimination and inform people of their rights.

The Commission is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in shaping the EOC's services and objectives through a consultative process.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan provides a framework for the identification of areas where access and inclusion can be improved and for the development of strategies to improve access and inclusion in the best way possible. These strategies work towards a number of access and inclusion outcomes, which are defined in the Act as the minimum standard for DAIPs.

There are six access and inclusion outcome areas specified in the Act.

Outcome 1

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

Outcome 2

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the Commission and its facilities;

Outcome 3

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

Outcome 4

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

Outcome 5

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Commission;

Outcome 6

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation the Commission undertakes;

In addition to these six prescribed minimum standards under the Act, the Commission has included an additional outcome stating that:

Outcome 7

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment at the Commission.

The DAIP will be implemented over five years, guided by an overarching set of strategies that drive individual tasks to support the achievement of each outcome area. Each year an Implementation Plan will be developed and activities undertaken to improve access to the Commission's services, buildings and information.

The Implementation Plan will outline the:

- individual tasks being undertaken;
- timeline for completion of the individual tasks;
- teams within the Commission with responsibility for completing the individual tasks; and the
- broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting.

Developing and implementing annual Implementation Plans throughout the lifespan of the DAIP provides the opportunity to manage strategies carefully across a five-year time span and respond to emerging access and inclusion barriers.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

Responsibility for the planning process

The development of the Commission's DAIP was undertaken by the Corporate Executive with consultation with staff from across the organisation.

To raise awareness of the Plan with staff it was made available through the Commission's Internal email system, and discussed at an organisation wide staff meeting and with Managers at their monthly meeting.

Consultation process

The final version of the DAIP, and the accompanying Implementation Plan, will be approved by the Corporate Executive, which will have responsibility for progressing the Implementation Plan, and will review and evaluate the Plan annually.

The DAIP will be made available on the Commission's website and advertised for public comment in the West Australian newspaper on Wednesday October 13, 2008 and registered on the State Government's consult WA

<http://www.citizenscape.wa.gov.au/index.cfm?event=consultWaView> website.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan sets out what the Commission will be undertaking in 2008 – 2012 to improve access to its services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

a. The implementation plan (detailed in Attachment A) outlines:

- i. Broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting
- ii. Individual tasks being undertaken
- iii. Timeline for completion of individual tasks
- iv. The officer or position responsible for completing the individual task.

b. What we have done so far:

Outcome 1:

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Equal Opportunity Commission.

- the Community education and training section has conducted sessions to the NICAN National Conference on Tourism and People With Disabilities
- The Commission refers enquirers and complainants to appropriate disability advocacy and support services, where required.

- Outcome 2:** People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Equal Opportunity Commission.
The EOC provides for access to public areas by ensuring:
- Doors to public areas are wide enough to allow wheelchair access
 - Wheelchair access is available to the building and office entrances via lift
 - Lifts have audio directions
 - Reception counter has been redesigned to allow improved access
 - Doors at the entrance to the office have been be modified to ensure adequate visibility of glass, and automatic opening
 - Accessible toilets are available for public use.
 - Meeting and conference rooms have been modified to improve lighting and accessibility
 - External venues for EOC events are assessed for disabled access and facilities.
- Outcome 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.
- The EOC website was reviewed and modified to improve access, including larger fonts, text versions of all documents. Audio versions of public documents are available on request
 - TTY service is utilised for clients as required.
 - Auslan interpreters are engaged for EOC events as required.
- Outcome 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 Equal Opportunity Commission.
- EOC is a Companion Card participant.
 - Conciliation officers use the Australian Human Rights Commission's video *Pathways to Resolution* with text to assist people with hearing impairments in the conciliation process.
 - The Commission refers enquirers and complainants to appropriate disability advocacy and support services where required.
 - The EOC uses the video *A Class Divided* in its Equal Opportunity Law training sessions. This video has been captioned to accommodate those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - When working with hearing impaired people conciliation officers follow the client's direction regarding their preferred choice or type of interpreter.

- Outcome 5:** People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Complaint information and forms are available in hard copy and on the website. Complaint forms can be completed and submitted electronically as well as in hard copy.
- Outcome 6:** People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Equal Opportunity Commission.
- In the 2007 review of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, information about the terms of reference and submissions was advertised in the press and on the website. An audio tape of the information was provided by request. Submissions were received in hard copy and electronic formats.
- Outcome 7:** People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment at the Commission.
- The Commission has sought applicants from appropriate job network agencies to fill vacancies.
 - Reception and other work areas are wheelchair accessible
 - Equipment for staff, such as headset, furniture is provided as required and recommended by ergonomic specialists.

MONITORING, REVIEWING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS

The Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The EOC's DAIP will be reviewed at least every 5 years, in accordance with the Act. The DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

c. Review and monitoring

- i. The Corporate Executive will review the progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP quarterly.
- ii. The Corporate Executive will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the disability access and inclusion plan. These reports will be formally endorsed by the Executive.

d. Evaluation

- i. The Commissioner will annually endorse any reports on the DAIP
- ii. On an annual basis feedback will be sought from the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented.

- iii. A notice about the consultation process will be posted on the EOC's website and circulated to key disability service providers.
- iv. In seeking feedback the Corporate Executive will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- v. The Corporate Executive will use some of the consultation processes used during the initial consultations including input from disability organisations
- vi. EOC staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- vii. Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended implementation plan will be available to the community in alternative formats once endorsed by the EOC.

e. Reporting on the DAIP

- i. The EOC will report on the DAIP through its Annual Report and directly to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:
 - 1. Progress towards the desired outcomes of its DSP and
 - 2. the progress towards meeting the six desired outcomes.

ATTACHMENT A

Implementation Plan 2008 - 2012

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

Barriers

Lack of shared understanding of what constitutes disability, the types of disability most commonly represented, the impact of particular types of disabilities, what people's individual needs are and what supports are required.

1. Lack of understanding of staff understanding and knowledge of the number and profile of the Commission's clients with disabilities.

Strategic priorities:

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Review data collection of clients to ascertain the types of disability.	June 2009	Policy
1.2 Review DAIP to include information about definitions, types of disability experienced by clients.	June 2009	Policy
1.3 Ensure all staff are provided with appropriate information regarding types of supports which are required.	Continuing	Corporate Services
1.4 Update induction manual and procedures for new staff	December 2008	Corporate Services

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

Barriers

1. Lack of information about the profile of clients attending the premises
2. Lack of information about the existing access to the building and offices
3. The EOC had limited capacity to provide access to the building.

Strategic priorities

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 ensure the needs of people with disabilities are considered prior to undertaking any accommodation changes	continuing	Corporate Services
1.2 Encourage staff to advise management of access barriers encountered by our clients and actively resolve these problems	December 2008	Corporate Services
1.3 Publish available disabled parking facilities on website	December 2008	Policy
1.4 Ensure the accessibility to all public areas is publicised through website, including availability of wheel chair ramps, lifts, wide access doorways and accessible toilet facilities	December 2008	Policy
1.5 Implement a 'message on hold' service to include information about disability access	December 2008	Corporate Services
1.6 Ensure all events run by the EOC address issues of accessibility in the forward planning	December 2008	Community education and training

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.

Barriers

1. Information in alternative formats is not readily available
2. staff are not aware of the range of alternative formats and how to obtain them
3. people with disabilities lack access to the resources required to assist them to participate n decision-making that affects them.

Strategic priorities

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Continue to work to ensure that all public information is available is available in alternative formats.	Continuing	Policy
1.2 Review the website to ensure compliance with the requirements Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web consortium W3) Guidelines www.w3.org/WA	June 2009	Policy
1.3 Include information on the staff intranet about availability of alternative formats	December 2008	Policy
1.4 include information on publications about the availability of alternative formats.	Continuing – as publications are reissued.	Policy

Outcome 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 Commission.

Barriers

1. Lack of awareness and skills training for staff, both at induction and continuing, about the resources and supports for people with disabilities.

Strategic priorities:

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Identify training resources available to staff	June 2009	Community Education and Training
1.2 Raise awareness of guardianship and advocacy services to support people with decision-making disabilities	June 2009	Policy
1.3 Amend staff induction material to include section on our commitment to our Disability Inclusion and Action Plan	June 2009	Corporate Services

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

Barriers

1. Lack of promotion to people with disabilities of their rights and the complaints mechanisms available.
2. Lack of promotion to people with disabilities to make complaints about the Commission's services.

Strategic priorities:

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Promote the availability of unfair discriminations complaints processes in alternative formats	June 2009	Conciliation
1.2 Promote the availability of feedback and complaints about the Commission's services in alternative formats	June 2009	Policy

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

Barriers

Lack of an agency approach for engaging people with disabilities in consultation.

Strategic priorities

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Develop guidelines to engage people with disabilities	June 2009	Policy

Outcome 7: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment at the Commission.

Barriers

1. Lack of knowledge of people with disabilities about employment opportunities at the Commission.
2. Lack of an agency approach to encourage applications for job vacancies at the Commission

Strategic priorities

Action	Date	Officer responsible
1.1 Develop guidelines to engage people with disabilities	June 2009	Corporate Services