



DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

2007- 2010

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THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN (DAIP) INCLUDES:

- information on the Office's facilities and services (both in-house and contracted);
- a policy statement about the Office's commitment to addressing the issue of access for people with disabilities, their families and carers;
- a description of the process used to consult with people with disabilities, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups;
- the identification of objectives and strategies to overcome barriers that people with disabilities identified or confirmed through the consultation process;
- 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Office acknowledges the input received from staff, individuals and groups within the community, which has been invaluable in the preparation of this DAIP.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

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

BACKGROUND

OFFICE OF ENERGY

The Office of Energy was established as a department on 1 January 1995 under Section 35 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

CHALLENGES OUR VISION

The energy sector underpins the economic, social, demographic and technological development of the State. To assist the continued development of the Western Australian energy sector there is a need to provide an energy policy framework that:

- positions the State for national and international developments in sustainable energy, climate change policy and new energy technology and ensures ongoing energy security;
- encourages the efficient development and expansion of sustainable, reliable and competitively priced energy resources, infrastructure and services;
- facilitates interaction and alignment between the Commonwealth and State Governments on complex policy issues;
- recognises consumer values and equity issues regarding energy quality and reliability, price, and sustainability; and
- assists industry in an environment of rapid economic and energy demand growth and changing social, demographic and technological circumstances.

OUR VISION

The Office of Energy is striving towards a Vision of:

...reliable, sustainable and competitively priced energy services for the benefit of all Western Australians.

The Office will achieve its' vision by ensuring that:

- householders, businesses, government and other organisations throughout Western Australia enjoy a choice of secure, reliable, sustainable, competitively priced energy products and services;
- the Western Australian energy sector is competitive and efficient with new entrants and energy services;
- efficient regulation applies where necessary and is well accepted and supported;
- there is a high level of knowledge, understanding and application of sustainable energy principles and practices by energy suppliers and consumers;
- stakeholders see the Office as being accessible, knowledgeable and helpful, and are keen to work with us;
- the Office is strategic, is proactive, and excels in developing and implementing policy to meet the State's energy needs; and
- the Office is an employer of choice by attracting, developing and retaining the best people for the job.

OUR PURPOSE

The Office of Energy leads and drives the development and delivery of policies and programs to achieve reliable, sustainable and competitively priced energy services for all Western Australians.

OUR VALUES

The Office of Energy's values describe what we believe in, and how we aspire to operate as an Office.

Integrity

Acting honestly, impartially and upholding high ethical standards.

Collaboration

Fostering strong supportive teams and constructive relationships with stakeholders.

Leadership

Empowering individuals and teams to embrace challenges and responsibility.

Excellence

Striving to achieve the best in ourselves, in each other and in all we do.

Respect

Cultivating a positive and supportive attitude which values staff and their contributions.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the Office are to:

1. encourage and facilitate the provision of secure, reliable and sustainable energy services, at competitive prices, to meet the needs of households, businesses, government and other organisations in Western Australia;
2. implement appropriate market and regulatory arrangements to achieve a competitive, dynamic and sustainable energy sector;
3. ensure the Government-owned Electricity Corporations participate in the energy industry in a competitively neutral manner while protecting the State's investment; balanced against the State's market development policies;
4. raise awareness and provide the information and tools by which consumers can make informed choices about the level, source and cost of their energy consumption; and
5. be credible and capable to shape and deliver the Government's energy policy.

FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE

The Office of Energy is a change agent that leads the development and implementation of policy to meet the State's energy needs. The Office is committed to driving change in a way that achieves improved economic, social and environmental outcomes for Western Australia.

The Office provides a range of services on energy matters to the Minister for Energy, Government, the energy sector and the Western Australian community. It:

- plans and develops energy policies and strategies for Western Australia;
- implements changes in Western Australian energy policy;
- develops and administers subsidies, rebates and grants for the Western Australian community and energy industry;
- monitors and evaluates Government policies;
- contributes to the achievement of Government's wider policy outcomes;
- researches, analyses and advises on energy sector developments, trends and issues;
- provides information and education materials for industry and consumers;
- consults and communicates with industry, consumers and other stakeholders; and
- monitors performance of the Government-owned Electricity Corporations;

The Coordinator of Energy advises the Minister on all aspects of energy policy including:

- the energy needs of the State;
- energy sources and methods of use, including renewable energy;
- ways of achieving greater efficiency in the use of energy;
- the introduction and encouragement of competition in the Western Australian energy market;
- promotion and achievement of open access to transmission and distribution systems, which is an important element in facilitating competition;
- energy policy as a means of helping to achieve other policy objectives of Government; and
- Government's ownership interest in the Electricity Corporations.

The Coordinator of Energy also sponsors and coordinates energy research development and demonstration, promotes the development of commercial applications of renewable energy, and provides support in the resolution of energy related disputes.

PLANNING FOR BETTER ACCESS

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6 per cent of Australians or more than 1 in 5 people, identify themselves as having some form of disability.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that all public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the public authority will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

The DAIP must outline the public authority's strategies to address each of the following desired outcomes:

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 opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other 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 that public authority;
5. people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority; and
6. people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the WA *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). A DAIP may also satisfy the Disability Discrimination Act's requirements for an Action Plan. While Action Plans are not compulsory under the *Disability Discrimination Act*, they can assist organisations to become more accessible and inclusive, and can provide some clarity during disability discrimination proceedings.

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

The Office is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the Office's services and facilities (both in house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community;
- ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of their community through the consultative process;
- 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 as listed below.

The DAIP provides a framework for the identification of areas where access and inclusion can be improved and for the development of strategies to best improve access and inclusion. These strategies work towards a number of access and inclusion outcomes, which are defined in the Act as the minimum standard for DAIPs. The six access and inclusion outcome areas specified in the Act aim to provide a means of ensuring that people with disabilities:

1. have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority;
2. have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority;
3. receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it;
4. receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority as other people receive from the staff of that authority;
5. have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority; and
6. have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

In addition to these six prescribed minimum standards for DAIPs under the Act, the Office has included an additional outcome in its DAIP that:

7. people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to seek employment with the Office.

PROGRESS SINCE 2001

The Office of Energy is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities. The Office adopted its' first Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 2001 to address the barriers for people with disabilities wanting to access the Office's services and facilities.

The DSP addressed both its statutory requirements under the *WA Disability Services Act (1993)* and its obligations under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Office has implemented a number of initiatives and made progress towards better access where relevant. With only limited services provided directly to the general public, and therefore people with disabilities, these improvements apply mainly to access to buildings we lease, the Office's internet sites and other general information. The achievements are listed hereunder:

Outcome 1: Existing services are adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

- Provided appropriate specifications in tender documents when outsourcing government services as per the State Supply Commission policies.

Outcome 2: Access to buildings and facilities is improved.

- Provided better access to people with disabilities at the Office reception and client contact areas.

Outcome 3: Information about facilities and services is provided in formats that enhance the communication needs of people with disabilities.

- Providing better access and improvement of accessible information to customers in alternative formats.
- Redesign of Office website within the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Reviewed and changed document templates for external and internal clients for improved readability.

Outcome 4: Advice and services are delivered by staff who are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities.

- General awareness has increases amongst our employees, by virtue of our human resource policies and availability on the Office Intranet.

Outcome 5: Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

- The office has developed a draft Feedback Management Policy and included a feedback mechanism on the Office's websites.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

PLANNING PROCESS

The Director Corporate Services attended a half-day training workshop in December 2005, hosted by the Disability Services Commission that proved invaluable in the development and implementation of our DAIP.

An internal reference group contributed to the development of the DAIP. The group included internal representatives from Divisions within the Office through the Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Disability Services Regulations 2004 outline the minimum requirements for public consultation in relation to a DAIP. The Regulations state that calls for submissions (either general or specific) must be by notice in a State-wide newspaper or on the Office website.

In 2007, the Office undertook to review its DSP, consult with stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DSP to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- examination of other relevant Office documents and strategies;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- consultation with key staff; and
- consideration of other documentation by agencies of consultation with the community.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DAIP

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

An Implementation Plan has been developed to outline the strategies and actions to be followed to achieve each of the outcomes of the DAIP. The Implementation Plan will also set out responsibilities for each action.

The implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of both the Corporate Executive and all Divisions of the Office. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Office while others will apply to a specific area.

COMMUNICATING THE PLAN TO STAFF AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The following strategies will be used to inform staff and people with disabilities of the development and implementation of the Office's DAIP:

- the Corporate Services Division will advise staff and the Corporate Executive at their respective meetings of the implementation of the DAIP;
- the DAIP will be made available to staff on the Office's Intranet;
- the DAIP will be promoted in the West Australian newspaper as well as on the Office's web site;
- through its web site, the Office will advise that copies of the DAIP are available to the community upon request and that, if required and where possible, the DAIP will be made available in alternative formats, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format and audio format; and
- as the DAIP will be reviewed and amended from time to time, both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updates to plans using the above methods.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The Office'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 that may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

The DAIP Committee will meet every six months in the first year, and as required thereafter, to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.

The review of the Office's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2011 - 2015 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2011. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Department's DAIP 2007 - 2010.

The DAIP Committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to the Office's Corporate Executive for formal endorsement.

EVALUATION

The Office will adopt the following evaluation mechanisms in respect of the implementation of the DAIP:

- once a year, prior to 31 July, the Office will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented. A notice about the consultation process will be posted on the Office's web site.
- in seeking feedback, the DAIP Committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- office staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe

the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.

- 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 upon request and where possible.
- the Corporate Executive will be provided with annual status reports on the DAIP implementation process.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS

Agents and contractors that provide services to the public on behalf of the Office are required to conduct their business in a manner that is consistent with this DAIP as specified in the *Disability Services Act 1993* (the Act). The Act requires the Office to take all practicable measures to ensure the plan is implemented by the public authority and its officers, employees, agents or contractors.

The *Disability Services Regulations 2004* also require the Office to include the following in a report about its DAIP:

- progress made by the Office and any agents and contractors of the Department in achieving the DAIP's outcomes; and
- the strategies implemented by the Office to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

The Department of Treasury and Finance and the State Solicitor's Office have developed a special condition clause that requires tenderers to indicate whether they meet the DAIP outcomes. This clause will only apply to new contracts or contract variations for services provided to the public and will be inserted into all relevant tender and contract documents.

Special Condition – Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

If the Contract involves the supply of services to the public, then the successful Respondent will:

- (i) to the extent practicable, implement the Customer's 'Disability Access and Inclusion Plan' prepared under the *Disability Services Act 1993*; and
- (ii) provide a report to the Customer by [insert date) in each year of the Contract Term reporting on the extent to which the successful Respondent has implemented the Customer's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (see Appendix 2).

The reporting process for the DAIP activities of agents and contractors will be introduced by the Disability Services Commission incrementally.

REPORTING ON THE DAIP

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

The Office will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed proforma to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- its progress towards the achievement of the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- the progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes of the DAIP; and
- the strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

It is proposed that the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan that the Office will undertake from 2007 to 2011 to achieve its six desired outcomes with the ultimate purpose of improving access to its services, premises and information.

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

Strategy	Timeline
Establish a DAIP Committee to guide the implementation of DAIP activities.	April 2007
Develop a DAIP to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities.	July 2007
Monitor the Office's Access and Inclusion Policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities throughout the various functions of the Office.	Ongoing
Ensure that any events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	Ongoing
Ensure that our employees and contractors of the Office are aware of their requirements under the DAIP.	Ongoing
Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into the Office's strategic business planning, budgeting processes and other relevant procedures and policies.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all Office accommodation and facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities where possible.	Ongoing
Ensure where possible, adequate parking to meet the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.	Ongoing
Ensure all future premises leased by the Office take into account the needs of people with disabilities.	Ongoing
Ensure that Office reception and client contact areas are accessible to people with disabilities.	Ongoing

Outcome 3: People with disabilities can access information from the Office of Energy as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Timeline
Ongoing development and maintenance of the Office's websites to improve information for people with disabilities.	Ongoing
Commit to making publications as accessible as possible (written in plain English and succinct).	Ongoing
Continue to explore opportunities for use of technology, including new & emerging technologies	Ongoing
Ensure all Office publications are readily available and able to be provided in alternative formats on request.	Ongoing
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Inform staff of their role in implementing and monitoring the plan to ensure its success.	Ongoing
Improve the awareness of new staff about disability and access issues through training and support in their work.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms/complaints handling system is accessible for people with disabilities.	Ongoing
Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative processes of the Office, including the capacity to accept verbal communications.	Ongoing
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Develop policies and strategies to recruit and retain people with disabilities employed by the Office.	Ongoing
Examine means of improving access to employment opportunities.	Ongoing

CONTRACTOR REPORT

Reporting sheet of accessible activities provided by contractors to contracting State Government agency.

Purpose

This reporting sheet assists contractors to record access activities in the desired outcome areas of their contracting State Government agency's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. If services are provided for a range of State Government agencies, this same reporting sheet can be provided to them all.

Once a year you should forward this reporting sheet to the contracting State Government agency indicating which outcomes have been progressed with a brief summary of activities undertaken. This sheet also serves as a quick reference for all contractor's staff about how to provide a more accessible service.

Name of Contracted Service:

Activities by contractors broadly consistent with DAIP outcome areas include:

DAIP Outcome	Activities
1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access services and events.	
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and other facilities.	
3. People with disabilities receive information in a format that will enable them to access information as readily as other people are able to access it.	
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from staff as other people receive.	
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints.	
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation.	

AGENCY PROGRESS REPORT

Please complete this progress reporting template about the previous financial year's DAIP implementation and forward it to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July.

1. Please indicate for each of the outcome areas in your DAIP:

- the number of strategies that were completed, partially completed or not commenced; and
- the number of current contracts that are working towards DAIP outcomes.

	Total number of planned strategies	Number of strategies completed	Number of strategies partially completed	Number of strategies not commenced	Number of contractors undertaking DAIP activity
Outcome 1					
Outcome 2					
Outcome 3					
Outcome 4					
Outcome 5					
Outcome 6					
Outcome 7					

2. Please indicate the number of your agents and contractors undertaking DAIP activities and the total number of your agents and contractors providing a service to the public:

Number of contractors providing a service to the public consistent with the DAIP.	
Total number of contractors providing a service to the public.	

3. How have you informed agents and contractors of your DAIP? (Tick relevant responses)

Provided a copy of your DAIP directly to agents and contractors upon awarding contract (including as a result of a contract variation).	
Identified your DAIP in tender and contract documents as an important document in terms of providing services to the public.	
Provided a hyper-link in tendering documentation to your DAIP.	
Provided a hyper-link in tendering documentation correspondence to the agent or contractor about your DAIP.	

WHAT IS A DISABILITY?

Disability is defined as a condition:

- a) which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- b) which is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- c) which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and
- d) which results in:
 - i) a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
 - ii) a need for continuing support services.

Disabilities can affect a person's capacity to communicate, interact with others, learn and get about independently. Disability is usually permanent but may be episodic. Disabilities can be:

Intellectual:	Affecting a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate.
Psychiatric:	Affecting a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and manic depression.
Cognitive:	Affecting a person's thought processes, personality and memory resulting, for example, from an injury to the brain.
Neurological:	Affecting a person's ability to control their movements, for example, epilepsy.
Sensory:	Affecting, for example, vision and/or hearing.
Physical:	Affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their upper or lower body.