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Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2019

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Regional Development**

Department of Regional Development

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2019

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats

Message from the Director General

It is my pleasure to present to you the Department of Regional Development's inaugural Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

The department is a vibrant agency with a clear agenda: to develop thriving towns and communities in regional Western Australia.

As lead agency of the Royalties for Regions program, we are uniquely placed to make this happen and we need to make sure our information, services and facilities are inclusive and accessible to everyone in Western Australia.

This plan has been developed in consultation with stakeholders, staff and the community to ensure that our services and facilities are accessible and inclusive now and in the future. It reflects our commitment to raise awareness and put in place effective strategies to meet the needs of people with disability, their families and carers to ensure equal access to our information, services and facilities.

I encourage you to read and participate in the delivery and further development of the plan as we work towards achieving optimum access and inclusion.



RALPH ADDIS
Director General

Background

The Department of Regional Development was established on 1 July 2013 from the demerger of the Department of Regional Development and Lands.

The department administers the Royalties for Regions program and facilitates the development and diversification of sustainable regional communities.

The department's commitment is to be professional in everything we do, act with confidence and courage, connect with each other, our customers and the community and show value and appreciation.

Full details on the department, including our information, services and facilities, are available on our website at www.drd.wa.gov.au.

Disability Access Planning

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires all public authorities to develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that outlines the ways in which the authority ensures people with disability have equal access to its information, facilities and services.

The department's planning process involved reviewing the former Department of Regional Development and Lands' plan, with the primary objective of identifying ongoing access barriers needing to be addressed. The process also included the review of annual reports and strategic documents, as well as the consideration of good practice by other organisations.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement

Through continuous improvement, the Department of Regional Development is committed to ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access its information, services and facilities.

More specifically, the department is committed to:

- Ensuring that people with disability are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of regional WA through the department's existing community consultation processes.
- Developing feedback mechanisms to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed.
- Ensuring that all staff, agents and contractors work towards achieving the seven access and inclusion outcomes specified in the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

The Disability and Inclusion Plan identifies the strategies that will be used to ensure that people with disability:

1. Have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the department.
2. Have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the department.
3. Receive information from the department in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people.
4. Receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the department as other people.
5. Have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the department.
6. Have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the department.
7. Have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment at the department.

The department uses the definition of disability included in the *Disability Services Act 1993* and any guidance material provided by the Disability Services Commission in applying its Access and Inclusion Policy.

Development of the Plan

Responsibility for the planning process

The Corporate and External Services division led the development of the plan, with support from the department's Substantive Equality Committee. The Substantive Equality Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Summary of barriers to access and inclusion

A number of potential barriers to achieving the seven outcomes were identified when developing the plan. A summary of the access barriers requiring redress include:

- Departmental staff, including contractors and consultants, may not be fully aware or have confidence to provide the same level of service to people with disability.
- Some regional departmental offices may not be accessible to all customers and stakeholders.
- Departmental publications and other information, including forms, may not always be available in alternative formats.
- People with disability may not be aware of the department's consultation opportunities and feedback mechanisms.

- Departmental events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disability.
- People with disability may not have access to employment opportunities as some of our practices for attraction, recruitment and retention need to be improved to be more inclusive.

Consultation

The public consultation process for development of the plan involved:

- A public notice in The West Australian and regional newspapers.
- An article in the news section of the department's intranet.
- A link on the home page of the department's web site to a feedback form.
- Use of social media, via the department's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Three submissions were received via the public consultation process, one of which was unrelated to the department's plan. The other two submissions were considered by the Substantive Equality Committee and resulted in an amendment to the plan regarding the definition of disability. Other matters raised will be considered as part of the implementation of the plan.

Implementation

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires that the department take all practical measures to ensure its plan is implemented by its staff, agents and contractors. While implementation is the responsibility of all areas, some strategies apply to specific areas of the department. These areas are identified in the plan.

Communication of the Plan

Copies of the plan will be communicated via:

- The department's website.
- A public notice in The West Australian newspaper.
- A notice on the department's intranet homepage.

The plan will also be sent to all planning process contributors, including staff and community members who provided a submission during the public consultation period.



Review and Reporting

The department's Substantive Equality Committee will review progress against the strategies identified in the plan and prepare a report each year for the department's Corporate Executive.

The department will report on implementation of its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan through its Annual Report and by responding to the Disability Services Commission's reporting requirements regarding:

- The department's progress towards the desired outcomes of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
- Progress of the department's agents and contractors towards meeting the desired outcomes of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
- The strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

The plan will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

If the plan is amended, consultation processes will be followed as outlined in the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Strategies 2015-2019

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	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Ensure all events organised by the department are planned in accordance with the Disability Services Commission's <i>Creating Accessible Events Checklist</i> .	Corporate and External Services (Communications Manager)	Ongoing
2. Ensure equal access to services provided by the department and make alternative arrangements available when required.	All Managers	Ongoing

Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the department.		
Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
3. Audit departmental metropolitan buildings to ensure they are accessible to people with disability or make alternative arrangements available.	Corporate and External Services (Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator)	30 June 2015
4. Audit departmental regional buildings to ensure they are accessible to people with disability or make alternative arrangements available.	Corporate and External Services (Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator)	30 June 2016
5. Ensure any new departmental buildings and redevelopment works provide accommodation which is accessible to people with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator)	Ongoing
6. Ensure departmental fire wardens are trained in evacuation procedures for people with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator)	Ongoing

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.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
7. Meet the requirements of the Western Australian Government's Website Governance Framework, including meeting the standards set by Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 AA level.	Corporate and External Services (Web Content and Development Manager)	Ongoing
8. Improve accessibility of departmental communications mechanisms.	Corporate and External Services (Communications Manager; and Web Content and Development Manager)	Ongoing
9. Ensure all departmental publications, including forms, are available in alternative formats upon request.	Corporate and External Services (Communications Manager)	Ongoing

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the department as other people.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
10. Ensure the department's corporate induction process includes information on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager)	Ongoing
11. Continue to raise awareness amongst staff to ensure services offered by the department are accessible to people with disability.	All Managers	Ongoing
12. Ensure all consultants and contractors employed by the department are aware of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and the department's corporate responsibility to ensure equal access.	All Managers	Ongoing

Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to provide feedback to the department.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
13. Refer any complaints regarding accessibility of departmental buildings, services or facilities to Corporate and External Services to ensure the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is updated and issues are rectified.	All staff	Ongoing
14. Ensure DRD's grievance mechanism, feedback and complaint handling systems are accessible for people with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager; and Communications Manager)	30 June 2015 and ongoing

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

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
15. Ensure public consultations are held in an accessible manner and are inclusive of people with disability.	All Managers	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeframe
16. Identify strategies to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of employees with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager)	30 June 2015 and ongoing
17. Develop and use inclusive recruitment practices.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager)	30 June 2015 and ongoing
18. Provide support and access to training for staff with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager)	30 June 2015 and ongoing
19. Ensure development opportunities are available to employees with disability.	Corporate and External Services (Human Resources Manager)	30 June 2015 and ongoing