



Office of the
Environmental Protection Authority



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2015 – 2020

DRAFT

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Acknowledgements

The Office of the Environmental Protection Authority acknowledges the input received from staff, the department's Audit and Risk Management Committee and members of the community who have contributed to the development of this plan.

Further information

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is available in alternative formats upon request and includes in electronic format by email, in hard copy in both large and standard print, in audio on cassette or compact disc and on the website at (insert website details).

If you have any questions relating to disability access and inclusion please email registrar@epa.wa.gov.au.

Background

Office of the Environmental Protection Authority

Role of the department

The provision of quality advice to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and Minister for Environment (Minister) on significant proposals, compliance and environmental issues.

The Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA) was established in 2009 to provide services to the EPA to enable it to undertake its statutory functions, in accordance with s17A of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 (EP Act).

In this capacity – for the EPA – the OEPA conducts environmental impact assessment (EIA) of significant development proposals and planning schemes. It also develops statutory policies, guidelines and strategic advice to manage environmental impacts and protect the environment.

This support helps the EPA provide the Minister for Environment with EIA reports and recommendations on proposals and schemes, and with advice on environmental policy and environmental issues generally.

In line with s22(1), the OEPA is directly responsible for servicing the Minister in performance of his functions under the EP Act, particularly for granting and managing Ministerial approval statements for projects under Divisions 2 and 3 of Part IV of the EP Act.

The OEPA is also responsible for administering s48 of the EP Act in auditing compliance with conditions set under these Ministerial approval statements, reporting on non-compliance to the Minister, and undertaking enforcement action as necessary on behalf of the Minister.

Planning for better access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2012), 18 per cent of Australians, or more than one in five people, identify themselves as having some form of disability. Australia is also a culturally diverse community with many people who are non-English speakers or have English as a second language.

It is a requirement of the *WA 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 department will ensure that all people have equal access to its facilities and services.

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

Access and inclusion policy statement

Western Australia's unique environment is one of the community's most valued assets, and one that the OEPA is helping to protect for the benefit of current and

future Western Australians. To this end, the public is encouraged to contribute to the environmental impact assessment process and to environmental policy development, and the department will ensure that all people have the same opportunity to participate in consultation processes.

The department is committed to consulting with all people, their families and carers, and disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately. The department's policy on access and inclusion is to ensure that everyone in the community is able to enjoy access to facilities and services. This will be achieved by fulfilling the seven desired outcomes of the DAIP.

Progress

The department has drafted an initial 2015-2020 DAIP for OEPA as an entity separate from formally being part of the Department of Parks and Wildlife's 2012-2017 DAIP under a Corporate Services agreement.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife recently reviewed their plan and provided the following outcome information.

The review of the DAIP 2007–2012 has shown that strategies were successful in achieving improvements in access and inclusion. A notable achievement is that a significant number of recreation and tourism destinations throughout the State now have wheelchair accessible facilities such as parking areas, toilets and walkways. The department also audited all regional offices for accessibility from the ACROD parking to the reception area.

The department acknowledges the importance of the DAIP and will ensure that any outsourced services will fulfill the requirements of the DAIP. Prior to a contract being awarded all agents and contractors must acknowledge if they will be implementing outcomes of the DAIP. This information is contained in the tender documents and the Evaluation Reports and the data will be collected annually for DAIP reporting requirements.

The department's plan will focus on ensuring that the department continues to provide a high standard of access and inclusion. The broad strategies provide flexibility to respond to emerging access and inclusion needs.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2020

Responsibility for the planning process

The department's Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC) is responsible for the development, implementation and review of the DAIP.

Community consultation process

The following research and consultation will be undertaken on this draft plan for 2015-2020 to inform its finalisation:

- examination of other relevant departmental documents and strategies,
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice for access and inclusion,
- consultation with key staff,

- review of DAIPs developed by other agencies, and
- consultation with the community.

The following consultation and communication strategies will be used:

- the department's public website,
- advertisement in the Western Australian Newspaper,
- the Disability Services Commission,
- through the OEPA consultation hub, and
- staff advised via the intranet.

As and when the plan is formalised, both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of the updated plan via the department's website and through the Western Australian Newspaper.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all divisions of the department. The ARMC will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

The plan is presented to outline the:

- broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting,
- individual tasks being undertaken, and
- departmental area with responsibility for completing the individual tasks.

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 the Act. The DAIP 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 (DSC).

Reporting on the DAIP

Review and monitoring

- The ARMC will review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.
- The review of the department's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2020-2025, which will be submitted to the DSC in 2020. The report will outline what has been achieved under the department's previous DAIP 2015-2020.
- Each year the ARMC will prepare a report on the implementation of the DAIP that will be included in the Annual Report.

Evaluation

- On review of the DAIP, the department will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP by placing the updated plan on its website. Feedback will be requested from the community on the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented.
- 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 requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- The DAIP will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended Plan will be available to the community.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

Outcome 1 - People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any event organised by, OEPA.

Strategy

- Be flexible and adaptable in responding to barriers experienced by people due to various disability, including physical, sensory, cognitive and psychiatric disability.
- Be responsive to addressing the barriers experienced by the families and carers of people with disability.
- Ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of OEPA's services are consistent with the OEPA's policy on access.
- Ensure that all people have access to the services of the OEPA.

Actions

- Facilitate staff awareness training including values-based training.
- Review and modify relevant policies to include strategies under the DAIP.
- Facilitate translation services to support non-English speakers to have input to the environment impact assessment process.

Responsibility – Director Business Operations

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

Strategy

- Ensure that access to the OEPA's office premises is available to all people.
- Ensure there are toilet facilities accessible to all people including those with physical or mobility difficulties.
- Develop awareness and a culture within the OEPA that ensures there are no barriers to the OEPA's offices.

Actions

- Audit entry and exit points to the offices (The Atrium).
- Audit reception area and address any problems identified.
- Create a list of meeting rooms that are accessible to all people.

Responsibility – Director Business Operations.

Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from OEPA in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy

- Produce all information using clear and concise language.
- Advise the community that, upon request, information about the OEPA's information can be made in alternative formats.
- Ensure that the department's website continues to meet contemporary good practice and applicable legislative requirements for access for all people.

Actions

- Maintain a register of sources for alternative formats for information services, including Braille, TTY, Signing (Auslan), Commonwealth Care Link, and translation services.
- Develop awareness and a culture within the OEPA that ensures there are no barriers to the OEPA's information available from the OEPA.
- Maintain and promote the EPA website as an accessible source of information.

Responsibility – Director Business Operations/Director Strategic Policy and Planning.

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of OEPA.

Strategy

- Provide training to all staff to ensure that in relation to service provision and community consultation, they are aware of the key access needs of all people, their families and carers who use the OEPA's services.
- Work collaboratively with the Disability Services Commission and other government agencies on how to meet the access needs of people with various disability, including physical, sensory, cognitive and psychiatric disability.

Actions

- Include *Accessible Information Training Package* in the department's induction.
- Provide regular information on access and inclusion on the department's intranet and website.

Responsibility – All divisions, Directors, Managers and staff.

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

Strategy

- Accept complaints from all people in a variety of formats.

Actions

- Provide formats such as telephone, email, written and in person for the lodgement of complaints to the OEPA.

Responsibility – All divisions, Directors, Managers and staff.

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

Strategy

- Ensure that consultations with the public are held in an accessible manner.

Actions

- Information is available in clear and concise language on how customers can participate in decision-making processes, public consultations and grievance mechanisms.

Responsibility – All divisions, Directors, Managers and staff.

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

Strategy

- Enhance the employment of people with disability and medical conditions through the provision of employment practices and continuing staff disability awareness programs.
- Review guidelines for staff interviews and employment to ensure they meet Equal Employment Opportunity principles.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with reasonable accommodation to carry out the duties of their job, if required

Actions

- All job advertisements to encourage people with a disability to apply as an equal opportunity employer.
- Audit the needs of staff with disabilities to ensure their work accommodation and facilities are suited to their needs.

Responsibility – Directors and Managers.

Feedback on the DAIP

The Office of the Environmental Protection authority is open to feedback at any point in time on our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

The table below can be used to provide feedback by completing and sending to registrar@epa.wa.gov.au.

| FEEDBACK FORM | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| We welcome your feedback at any time and will be treated with the strictest confidence. | |
| Have you experienced any barriers to access that we have not identified? | |
| Situation | |
| Reason for difficulty | |
| | |
| Is there an initiative that you would like to compliment us on? | |
| Initiative | |
| What do you think is a good initiative? | |
| | |
| Do you have any other comments or suggestions? | |
| | |
| To help us analyse your comments, please indicate which category best describes your interest in our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2020 | |
| | Member of the public with disability |
| | Disability Service Provider |
| | Carer |
| | Other (please specify) |
| If you would like to be included in future consultations, please provide your name and contact details (preferably email). | |
| | |

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