



Department of
Parks and Wildlife



Department of Parks and Wildlife

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2015-2020

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Acknowledgements

The Department of Parks and Wildlife acknowledges the input received from staff, the department's Diversity and Access Committee and members of the community who have contributed to the development of this plan.

Accessibility

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the department's website.

Further information

If you have any questions relating to disability access and inclusion please email EmployeeRelations&Planning@dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Background

The Department of Parks and Wildlife

Role of the department

Working with the community to ensure that the nature of Western Australia is conserved, for its intrinsic values and to sustain and enrich people's lives.

The Department Parks and Wildlife is in the portfolio of the Minister for Environment; Heritage. The department is also part of a greater environmental community and has Government responsibility for implementing legislation and policy within that community. Protection and conservation of the environment is a collective role.

The department has primary responsibility for managing more than 27 million hectares of the State's national parks, marine parks, State forests and other reserves, for managing native animals and plants, and for managing access to and use of the State's wildlife and natural areas.

The department is also responsible for fire preparedness, and pest animal and weed control on 89 million hectares of unallocated Crown land and unmanaged reserves.

The department provides support or assists the following portfolio authorities and boards to carry out their functions, which are integral to the department achieving its vision and mission:

- Conservation Commission of Western Australia
- Marine Parks and Reserves Authority
- Swan River Trust.

Planning for better access

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

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 people with disability 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 has a beautiful, diverse, and supportive environment that provides material, aesthetic and spiritual benefits. These values should be regarded as an essential part of the livelihood and quality of life of all Western Australians, including people with disability. People with disability are among visitors to parks and recreation facilities managed by the department. They are among people seeking information from department public counters, and are included among departmental employees.

The department is one of the most decentralised State government agencies, with approximately half of its workforce employed in country areas. Besides its corporate and operations headquarters, the department operates from nine regional and 24 district and local centres, as well as from a number of other locations.

The department is also the major provider of outdoor recreation areas and facilities in natural areas in Western Australia. As such, it is responsible for the management of several hundred

recreation developments, ranging from day-use and camping areas to extensive bushwalking, horse riding and mountain bike riding and other trails. The department also organises and conducts various outdoor activity programs, and prepares and disseminates information to visitors and the general public in a range of formats.

The department is committed to consulting with people with disability, 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 access, use and enjoy our State's natural areas and the associated facilities, services and programs provided by the department. This will be achieved by fulfilling the six desired outcomes of the DAIP.

Progress

The department adopted its first Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the barriers for people with disability wanting to access the department's services and facilities. Over the years the agency has achieved some significant accessibility improvements such as the 'Access for More' track, which is a part of the Cape to Cape Track in the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park. The track is designed to ensure a wider variety of people can enjoy the experience. Accessible camp sites were developed at the popular Sue's Bridge, with hardened surfaces for easier use and access to toilets. The department surveyed most of the 169 recreational sites in the Swan Region that could provide accessibility for wheelchairs and collected data about the facilities and services at the sites. The width of doorways, heights of pedestals and sinks, manoeuvrability within toilet facilities, car parks and the steepness of ramps and firmness of surfaces were checked. The information is used to participate in the Disability Services Commission WA's 'You're Welcome' access initiative. With regard to employment, the department has undertaken surveys on the work experiences of staff with disability. This includes collating data on their work experiences and requirements, and the perceptions of managers on employing people with disability.

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 has ensured that any outsourced services must 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 for 'Works' and the data are collected annually for DAIP reporting requirements.

The department's new 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 Diversity and Access Committee (DAC) is responsible for the development, implementation and review of the DAIP. The committee was established in 1999 and is comprised of representatives from the department's various divisions.

Community consultation process

In 2015, the department undertook to review its DAIP 2012-2017 and draft a new five year DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the 2012-2017 DAIP, and subsequent review of reports to see what has been achieved and what is still in progress.
- inclusion of new strategies to achieve Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain employment with the department.
- 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
- consultation with the community.

The following consultation and communication strategies were used:

- the department's public website
- *The West Australian* newspaper
- copies of the plan emailed to community stakeholders
- staff advised via the intranet.

Promotion of the DAIP

Following consultation, the DAIP was finalised and submitted to the Disability Services Commission. The community was informed of the final DAIP through an advertisement in *The West Australian* newspaper and a copy of the DAIP is located on the department's website.

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.

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

The plan is presented using a table to outline the:

- broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting
- individual tasks being undertaken
- officer position or 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 DAC will meet twice a year to 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 2015-2020, which will be submitted to the DSC in 2015. The report will outline what has been achieved under the department's previous DAIP 2012-2017.
- Each year the DAC will prepare a report on the implementation of the DAIP that will be included in the Annual Report.

Evaluation

- Once a year 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 events organised by the department.

| Strategy | Task | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| 1.1 Staff are made aware of the DAIP and their responsibilities associated with the plan. | The plan is placed on the department's intranet and staff are advised via broadcast email. Annual reminder. Staff with responsibilities under the plan, are provided with a copy. New staff are made aware of the plan via the induction program. | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |
| 1.2 Ensure that any events organised are accessible to people with disability. | Continue to promote and raise awareness of the department's public participation fact sheets via annual broadcast email. Ensure that additional standard infrastructure such as audio loop is available upon request. | Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs Director Corporate Services |

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

| Strategy | Task | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|
| 2.1 Create a list of meeting rooms that are accessible to people with disability. | Complete access audit on all meeting rooms. Make available audio loop where required. Place list of meeting rooms on intranet and advise staff via broadcast email. | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |
| 2.2 Promote awareness of the department's participation in the <i>You're Welcome Access Initiative</i> . | The initiative is promoted via Parks and Wildlife News and other media sources/publications. Information provided for the <i>You're Welcome Access Initiative</i> is updated every six months. | Assistant Director Visitor Services |
| 2.3 Ensure that ACROD (new Australian Parking Permit) parking provisions meet the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location. | Audit ACROD bays at department locations and address any problems identified. | Chair Diversity and Access Committee |
| 2.4 Ensure that reception areas are accessible to people with disability. | Audit reception areas and address any problems identified. | Chair Diversity and Access Committee |
| 2.5 Where practical and appropriate all new recreation facilities are accessible to people with disability. | All site plans will be developed with universal access considerations and reasons for accessibility documented. | Coordinator Recreation and Landscape Unit |

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 | Task | Responsibility |
|--|---|---|
| 3.1 Ensure that the department's website continues to meet contemporary good practice and applicable legislative requirements for access for people with disability. | Review and update accordingly. | Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs |
| 3.2 Continue to provide information in alternative formats upon request. | Advise staff and community that information can be provided in alternative formats. | Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs |
| 3.3 Provide the use of interpreters to improve the availability of the department's services/information to people with hearing impairment. | Include the use of interpreters in community based activities such as Penguin Island Experience and cave tours. | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |
| 3.4 Ensure that information relating to bushfires is made available to people with disability. | Update Fire Management 'Information Services Unit's' checklist for community fire information to ensure that information is accessible to people with disability. | Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs. |

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 | Task | Responsibility |
|---|--|--|
| 4.1 Improve volunteer awareness of disability access issues. | Include disability awareness training for Campground Hosts. | Volunteer Coordinator |
| 4.2 Provide disability awareness training to staff who have direct contact with the public. | Include <i>Accessible Information Training Package</i> in the department's induction. Ensure existing staff who have direct contact with the public (reception/front counter) complete training. | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |
| 4.3 Further generate and sustain staff awareness of disability and access issues. | Provide regular information on access and inclusion in <i>naturenotes</i> and the department's intranet and website. Provide and promote to staff the availability of resources on the intranet such as Access Resource Kit and Guidelines for access formats | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |

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

| Strategy | Task | Responsibility |
|--|---|--|
| 5.1 Monitor and address complaints received about disability access. | Broadcast email to advise staff that any complaint relating to disability access should be addressed locally and to advise DAC of the complaint. | Chair Diversity and Access Committee |
| 5.2 Ensure current complaints policy and procedure is accessible for people with disability. | Review and revise current mechanisms for complaints handling. Ensure policy and procedure is available to the community via the department's website. | Manager Corporate Information Services |
| 5.3 Improve staff knowledge of complaint handling from people with disability. | Include <i>Accessible Information Training Package</i> in the department's induction. Ensure existing staff who have direct contact with the public (reception/front counter) complete training. | Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee |

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

| Strategy | Task | Responsibility |
|---|---|--|
| 6.1 Ensure that consultations with the public are held in an accessible manner. | Continue to promote the use of public participation fact sheets via annual broadcast email. | Manager Public Information and Corporate Affairs |
| 6.2 Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community. | DAC members to attend disability forums and workshops. | Chair Diversity and Access Committee |

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

| Strategy | Task | Responsibility |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| 7.1 Attract people with disability. | Employ people with disability on fee-for-service contracts through Australian Disability Enterprises. Promote and provide work experience for people with disability. Use disability recruitment specialists. Maintain register of recruitment agencies providing services to people with disability and continue to email all advertised positions. | Directors/Managers Manager Personnel Services |

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| 7.2 Simplify recruitment and selection processes. | Simplify the application process. | Manager Personnel Services |
| 7.3 Accommodate employee requests for flexible work arrangements. | <p>Support flexible working requests where possible.</p> <p>Raise awareness of flexible work practices for staff via appropriate methods.</p> <p>Develop and roll-out training for managers on flexible working arrangements.</p> <p>Formalise the process for application for flexible working arrangements, including a review process.</p> | <p>Directors/Managers</p> <p>Manager Employee Relations and Safety</p> |
| 7.4 Provide disability awareness training for all staff. | <p>Develop disability awareness training.</p> <p>Provide minimum of two training sessions per year.</p> | Manager Employee Relations and Safety |
| 7.5 Ensure a diverse range of employees are consulted and given the opportunity to participate in all significant forums and committees. | Employee consultation and participation checked and confirmed prior to approval. | Directors/Managers |
| 7.6 Measure equity and diversity outcomes. | <p>Submit data quarterly to PSC via the HR MOIR report.</p> <p>Provide demographic data to Corporate Executive showing distribution of diversity groups within each division.</p> <p>Provide quarterly performance reports to Corporate Executive.</p> <p>Conduct quarterly meetings of Diversity and Access Committee.</p> <p>Provide progress reports on the work of the Committee to Corporate Executive.</p> <p>Record and distribute minutes of committee meetings.</p> | <p>Director Corporate Services</p> <p>Manager Workforce Services</p> <p>Chair Diversity and Access Committee</p> <p>Executive Officer Diversity and Access Committee</p> |