DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2007 - 2010

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

BACKGROUND

The Department of Environment and Conservation

Working with the community, we will ensure that Western Australia's environment is valued, protected and conserved, for its intrinsic value, and for the appreciation and benefit of present and future generations.

The Department of Environment and Conservation is in the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment. The department is also part of a greater environmental community and has a distinct Government responsibilities for implementing Government policy within that community. Protection and conservation of the environment is a collective role.

The department has the lead responsibility for protecting and conserving the State's environment on behalf of the people in Western Australia. This includes managing the State's national parks, conservation parks, State forests and timber reserves, nature reserves, marine nature reserves and marine management areas.

Its key responsibilities include broad roles in conserving biodiversity and protecting, managing, regulating and assessing many aspects of the use of the State's natural resources. The department contributes to the development of environmental protection policies, managing the environmental impact assessment process and carrying out regulatory functions to achieve improved environmental outcomes. It is also responsible for management of contaminated sites and coordination of pollution incident responses.

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 Environmental portfolio authorities and boards to carry out their functions:

- Environmental Protection Authority;
- Conservation Commission of WA;
- Keep Australia Beautiful Council;
- Marine Parks and Reserves Authority;
- Swan River Trust; and
- Waste Management Board.

It employs people with world-class scientific, regulatory, evaluation, policy, land and marine management, visitor services and education skills.

The department's seven key objectives are:

- Conserving biodiversity Protect, conserve and, where necessary and possible, restore Western Australia's biodiversity.
- Managing natural resources and promoting environmentally sustainable practices

 Protect, manage and, where necessary and possible, restore Western Australia's natural resources, including land, water and air, and promote the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices in the community, industry and government.
- 3. Creating a "World Class Parks System" Generate environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits through the further development of a "World Class Parks System" in terms of ecosystem management and visitor facilities and services.
- Implementing sustainable forest management Generate social, economic and cultural benefits from forest while sustaining their biodiversity, health, vitality and productive capacity.

- Preventing pollution and remediating contamination Protect the environment, and people's health and amenity, by ensuring discharges meet approved criteria and contaminated sites are appropriately remediated.
- Maintaining community involvement and support develop community awareness
 and appreciation of the State's natural environment and biodiversity and promote
 community involvement in and support for its protection and conservation.
- Improving the way we do business Foster a positive work culture of trust, continuous improvement and anticipation of environment and conservation issues and customer needs, and deliver core business activities in the most effective and efficient manner.

Functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) provided by the Department of Environment and Conservation

The Department of Environment and Conservation:

The Department provides broad conservation and land management services to the WA community, and a range of customer services directly to the public. Services provided by the Department on a Statewide basis include:

- conservation of ecosystems and species; management of native plants and animals; production and implementation of land and wildlife management plans; production and implementation of recovery programs for threatened species of plants and animals;
- protection of WA's wildlife by preventing illegal taking of native plants and animals;
 emergency actions, such as rescues of stranded marine mammals;
- protection of natural ecosystems from degradation by fire; protection of people and facilities on Department-managed and adjacent lands from fire; protection of forest resources from fire and disease; protection of native plants and animals from disease, feral predators and pests; and
- management of national, marine, regional and conservation parks for conservation and recreation; management of nature reserves for conservation; management of hardwood State forests for conservation, tourism and recreation, water catchment protection and timber production.

Customer services provided by the Department directly to the public include:

- recreational services and facilities in national, conservation, regional and marine parks, reserves and State forests; guided tours and activities programs by trained staff;
- a range of free and saleable information, interpretation and education materials, programs, displays and talks; responses to enquiries; access to database services;
- licensing of wildlife-based industries and activities, such as whale watching, wildflower picking, emu farming and aviculture;
- licensing and lease management of commercial tourism and recreation activities on Department-managed lands and waters; and
- Environmental works approvals, pollution licensing and management, incident response, contaminated sites investigation and regulation and compliance auditing, and waste management

Planning for better access

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

It is a requirement of the WA Disability Services Act 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 disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

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

Progress

The Department of Environment and Conservation has endeavoured to improve public access and upgrade or provide new visitor facilities and services suitable for use by all members of the community including people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Because of the size, remoteness and ruggedness of many of our national parks, State forest areas and other land, this has not been an easy undertaking. Nevertheless, the Department has made considerable progress and a significant number of recreation and tourism destinations throughout the State now have wheelchair accessible facilities such as parking areas, toilets and walkways. The NatureBase ParkFinder is an invaluable aid to finding out about some of the parks with universally accessible facilities.

DEC has also actively sought to provide job opportunities for people with disabilities and employs people with a range of disabilities at all levels of the organisation. As an equal opportunity employer, the Department is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are considered on merit in applications for employment, training and promotion, and that jobs and facilities are redesigned as required to remove any remaining barriers to employment and promotion.

DEC is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its facilities and services. Towards this goal the Department adopted its first Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the barriers for people with disabilities wanting to access the Department'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). The DSP has undergone three internal reviews since 1995.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, the Department has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access.

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

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 disabilities. People with disabilities are among the visitors to parks and recreation facilities managed by the DEC. They are among people seeking information from Department public counters and are included among departmental employees.

The Department is among the most decentralised State Government agencies, with approximately three-quarters 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.

DEC 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 kilometres of 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.

DEC is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately. DEC'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 seven desired outcomes of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIP

Responsibility for the planning process

DEC's Disability Services Planning Committee is responsible for the development, implementation and review of the DAIP. The committee was established in 1999 and is currently comprised of representatives from Parks and Visitor Services, Regional Services, Corporate Services, Environmental Services and Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs divisions.

Community Consultation Process

In 2006 DEC undertook to review its Disability Services Plan, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DSP and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- · examination of other relevant Department documents and strategies;
- investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion;
- · consultation with key staff; and
- · consultation with the community;

The following strategies were used in the consultation:

- The community was advised of the draft DAIP through the department's website. Feedback through written submission, email or phone was required by 20 April 2007.
- Key community stakeholders were mailed hard copies of the plan. Feedback through written submission, email or phone was required by 20 April 2007.
- DEC staff were advised of the draft DAIP via broadcast email. Feedback through written submission, email or phone was required by 20 April 2007.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Department. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Department while others will apply to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

- In xxxx the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by the Executive.
- Copies of the plan were sent to key community stakeholders.
- Hard copies of the plan were sent to all DEC managers and to staff with responsibilities in the plan.
- The department advised, through it's website that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request.
- As the plan is amended both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plan via the department's website.

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 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.

Review and monitoring

- The Disability Services Planning Committee will meet three times a year to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the disability access and inclusion plan.
- The review of the Department'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 2006-2010.
- The committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the disability access and inclusion plan to be included in the Annual Report.

Evaluation

- Once a year the Department will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of 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 Implementation Plan will be available to the community.

Last amended 23 March 2007

Department of Environment and Conservation

DRAFT Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

2007 - 2010

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan itemises what the Department will be undertaking in 2007-20010 to improve access to its services, information and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Implementation Plan is presented using a table to outline the:

- individual tasks being undertaken;
- timeline for completion of the individual tasks;
- officer position or part of the Department with responsibility for completing the individual tasks; and the
- broad strategy that the individual tasks are supporting.

Outcome One:

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised, by the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
DEC staff are made aware of the DAIP and their responsibilities associated with the Plan.	 The Plan is placed on DEC's intranet. Staff are advised about the Plan via Broadcast email. All Managers receive a hard copy of the Plan. Staff with responsibilities in the Plan are provided with a hard copy of the Plan. New staff are made aware of the Plan via the induction program. 	April 2007	Executive Officer DSPC
Develop links between the DAIP and other Department plans and strategies.	 Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into Department's strategic business planning and all other relevant plans and strategies. 	Ongoing	Corporate Executive All Managers
DEC events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities.	 Ensure all events are planned using the Accessible Events checklist. Make the Accessible Events checklist available to staff on the Department's intranet. Develop standard wording for all information bulletins and event invitations to allow attendees to indicate the nature of any access requirements. Place on intranet. Remind staff of checklist annually via broadcast email 	December 2007	DSPC
Ensure that DEC agents and contractors as appropriate are aware of the relevant requirements of the Disability Services Act.	Include the Department's policy and procedures regarding the Disability Services Act in RFQ documentation.	June 2007	Manager Supply Services

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
People with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	 Raise staff awareness of the importance of receiving feedback on DEC services by people with disabilities. Staff awareness training to be provided at various seminars e.g. Business Support Workshop, PVS Workshop. 	Ongoing	Manager People Services

Outcome Two: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure where practical and appropriate all new recreation facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.	 All site plans will be developed in accordance with DEC's Policy 18 and Universal Access Guidelines (place link to policy and guidelines). All site plans are documented ensuring rational and reason for level of accessibility is included. 	Ongoing	Recreation and Landscape Coordinator
Ensure DEC managed recreation areas with universal access are maintained to original standard.	 Audit sites annually and identify maintenance needs. Identify any access complaints to support audit results. Repair to original universal access standard. Link Access Audit with DEC's RecData audit so procedures can be completed in unison. 	Ongoing	PVS Coordinator
Continue to upgrade access to DEC managed recreation areas. Priorities are based on the following indicators: • Visitor numbers • Costs • Ease of modification	 Annually audit and identify access barriers in recreation areas. Identify any access complaints to support audit results. Prioritise and make submission to the Regional, Branch or District Manager to commence work on rectifying identified barriers. Link Access Audit with DEC's RecData audit so procedures can be completed in unison. Contact DSPC for advice or funding assistance. 	Ongoing	PVS Coordinator
Review and revise DEC's Disability Access Audit Online (DAA).	 DAA is updated to reflect current best practice and legislation. DAA is reviewed annually 	December 2007	Manager People Services
Promote awareness of DEC's participation in the You're Welcome Access Initiative.	 You're Welcome Access Initiative information is placed on NatureBase and DEC intranet. 	Ongoing	Steve Slavin Swan Region

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
	 The initiative is promoted via Environment and Conservation News and other media sources/publications. Information provided for the You're Welcome Access Initiative is updated every 6 months. 		
Ensure all new DEC buildings are accessible to people with disabilities.	 Develop a policy on leasing of premises to ensure they are accessible to people with disabilities. 	June 2008	Manager Supply Services
Regional, Branch and District Managers to progressively upgrade access to DEC buildings. Priorities are based on the following indicators: • Visitor numbers • Costs • Ease of modification	 Audit and identify access barriers to all DEC buildings and facilities. Engage consultant to prioritise list of works. Make submission to the Executive to commence work on rectifying identified barriers 	December 2008	Manager
Provide all regional staff with Site Planning and Design – Universal Access awareness	 Develop Site Planning and Design – Universal Access awareness training. 	June 2007	Recreation and Landscape
training.	 Training to be provided at regional meetings/seminars annually. 	Ongoing	Coordinator
	 Ensure target groups – Rangers and Conservation Employees receive training. 	Ongoing	Landscape Architects

Outcome Three:

People with disabilities receive information from the Department of Environment and Conservation in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Improve community awareness on DEC information being available in alternative formats upon request.	 All documents that can be provided in alternative formats carry a notation regarding availability. Advise the community via NatureBase, the local newspaper, Information Radio, disability group newsletters and other appropriate services that focus on disabilities, that other formats are available. 	Ongoing	Director SDCA
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.	 Develop accessible information guidelines and make available on DEC's intranet. Incorporate accessible information into disability awareness training. 	June 2008	DSPC
Ensure that the DEC's website meets contemporary good practise.	 Develop DEC's website according to the W3C guidelines as outlined in the State Government Access Guidelines. Review and update annually. 	Ongoing	Director SDCA
All information presented by DEC is clear, visible and complies with required standards for people with disabilities.	 Advise Department staff of the minimum requirements. Adopt State Government Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities, and incorporate into general practise. 	December 2008	Director Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs
Facilitate the use of interpreters to improve the availability of DEC's services/information to people with hearing	Investigate the use of interpreters in DEC community based activities. Examples include the use of interpreters once per month at the	December 2008	Manager People Services

Strategy	Task	Task Timeline	Responsibility
impairment.	Penguin Island Experience, for indigenous		
	heritage walks, for cave tours etc.		
Use services which specifically focus on providing information to people with disabilities to disseminate DEC information.	 Develop a list of services that provide information specifically to people with a disability. Advise staff and place information on DEC 	December 2008	DSPC
	intranet.		

Outcome Four:

People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Department of Environment and Conservation as other people receive from the staff of the Department.

Strategy	Tasks	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disabilities.	 Develop training in disability awareness and access issues. Include training in DEC Training Manual Provide training at minium 4 meetings/year. Promote the use of Stepping Out & Getting There videos. Review and revise intranet documents associated with disability. 	Ongoing	Policy and Diversity Consultant
Improve the awareness of new staff about disability and access issues.	 Include awareness of DAIP in DEC's induction program. Encourage managers to show Stepping Out & Getting There videos to new staff. 	Ongoing	Manager People Services
Further generate and sustain staff awareness of disability and access issues.	 Provide regular information on access and inclusion in the Environment and Conservation News, DEC intranet and on NatureBase. Develop a staff recognition program for good practice in access and inclusion. Promote nomination of DEC initiatives for Access Awards. 		DSPC Director Corporate Services

Outcome Five:

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Strategy	Tasks	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Ensure that current complaints policy and procedure are accessible for people with disabilities.	 Review and revise current mechanisms for complaint handling. Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community. 	December 2008	Director Corporate Services
Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	 Ensure all reception staff have disability awareness training. 	December 2009	Manager People Services Branch
All Grievance Contact Officers, PID Officers and Peer Supporters have training in disability awareness.	 Disability awareness training to be included in annual meetings. 	Ongoing	Manager People Services Branch

Outcome Six:

People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Department.

Strategy	Tasks	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Improve community awareness about consultation processes in place within DEC.	Promote the existence, role and activities of the DSPC to the community via distribution of DAIP to key groups.	June 2008	DSPC
	Review DEC's community consultation processes in view of encouraging participation from people with disabilities. Provide staff involved in community consultation.	December 2008	Director Strategic Development and Corporate Affairs
į.	Provide staff involved in community consultation with disability awareness training. Incorporate training into existing public participation/community consultation training.	December 2009	
Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	 DSPC to regularly monitor the progress of the plan and be involved in all reviews of the plan. Place updated plan on the intranet and NatureBase. Advise staff of update via broadcast email. Develop a register of experienced persons to provide comment on access and inclusion issues on request, who may not be members of the Disability Access Committee. 	Ongoing	DSPC
Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.	 DSPC to actively pursue the views of people with disabilities on a wide range of issues. Distribute draft DAIP to key groups for comment. Invite local community representatives from disability groups to attend DSPC meeting. 	Ongoing	DSPC

Outcome Seven: Employment opportunities within the Department of Environment and Conservation are enhanced for people with disabilities.

Strategy	Tasks	Task Timeline	Responsibility
Selection panel training contains learning outcomes on disability awareness.	 Audit current training material. Ensure disability awareness is included in outcomes. 	March 2007	Manager People Services
Develop policy and guidelines on employment of people with disabilities.	Review policy and draft guidelines.	December 2007	Policy and Diversity Consultant
Review JDF's to ensure that selection criteria are essential for the position.	 Managers to review JDF prior to advertising a vacancy. Provide advice to managers to identify potential recruitment opportunities for people with disabilities when a vacancy becomes available. 	Ongoing	Manager Recruitment Officer
Link with community based organisations and agencies to publicise employment opportunities.	 Continue the provision of emailing all Level vacancies to disability employment	Ongoing	Recruitment Officer
Provide disability awareness training for all staff.	 Develop disability awareness training. Provide a minimum 4 training sessions at DEC seminars/meetings and forums. Include disability awareness training in the Graduate Recruit Program and the MATES program. 	December 2007	Policy and Diversity Consultant DSPC
Continue the provision of the Access Improvement Fund for staff and their families.	Broadcast email every 6 months to advise staff of fund.	Ongoing	DSPC
Undertake an audit on the work experience of people with disabilities employed with DEC.	 Develop and conduct survey. Provide results to DSPC & EEO & Diversity Management Committee. Ensure appropriate support is provided to staff with disabilities through job redesign, workplace modifications, equipment, 	June 2008	Manager People Services

Strategy	Tasks	Task Timeline	Responsibility
	training, flexible work arrangements and		
	specialist equipment.		

Last amended 23 March 2007