



Department of
Environment and Conservation



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Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012 -2017

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Further information

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

Background

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)

Role of the department

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 (DEC) is in the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment. 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 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 parks, 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 carries 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 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
- Keep Australia Beautiful Council
- Marine Parks and Reserves Authority
- Waste Authority
- Contaminated Sites Committee

Planning for better access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6per cent 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 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 disabilities 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*.

DEC's 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 disabilities. People with disabilities are among

visitors to parks and recreation facilities managed by DEC. 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.

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 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 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 disabilities 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 disabilities. This includes collating data on their work experiences and requirements, and the perceptions of managers on employing people with disabilities.

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 DEC 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 2012 – 2017

Responsibility for the planning process

DEC's Disability Access and Inclusion Committee (DAIC) 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 2012, DEC undertook to review its DAIP 2007 -2012 and draft a new five year DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the 2007 – 2012 DAIP, and subsequent review of reports to see what has been achieved and what is still in progress.
- 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
- copies of the plan emailed to community stakeholders
- DEC staff advised via the intranet.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all divisions of the department. The DAIC 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.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

- The plan was finalised in April 2012 and formally endorsed by Corporate Executive in June 2012.
- Copies of the plan were emailed to all DEC managers and to staff with responsibilities under the plan.
- The department advised, through its [website](#) and through *The West Australian* newspaper, that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request.
- As and when the plan is amended, both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of the 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 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 DAIC 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 2012-2017, which will be submitted to the DSC in 2012. The report will outline what has been achieved under the department's DAIP 2012-2017.
- Each year the DAIC 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 DEC.

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

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

Strategy	Task	Responsibility
2.1 Create a list of DEC meeting rooms that are accessible to people with disabilities.	<p>Complete access audit on all DEC meeting rooms.</p> <p>Make available audio loop where required.</p> <p>Place list of meeting rooms on intranet and advise staff via broadcast email.</p>	Executive Officer Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
2.2 Promote awareness of DEC's participation in the <i>You're Welcome Access Initiative</i> .	<p>The initiative is promoted via Environment and Conservation News and other media sources/publications.</p> <p>Information provided for the <i>You're Welcome Access Initiative</i> is updated every six months.</p>	Assistant Director Visitor Services

2.3 Ensure that DEC ACROD (new Australian Parking Permit) parking provisions meet the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.	Audit ACROD bays at DEC locations and address any problems identified.	Chair Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
2.4 Ensure that DEC reception areas are accessible to people with disabilities.	Audit reception areas and address any problems identified.	Chair Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
2.5 Where practical and appropriate all new recreation facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.	All site plans will be developed with universal access considerations and reasons for accessibility documented.	Coordinator Recreation and Landscape Unit

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from DEC in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as the general population.

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

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff and volunteers of DEC as the general population.

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 DEC induction. Ensure existing DEC staff who have direct contact with the public (reception/front counter) complete training.	Executive Officer Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
4.3 Further generate and sustain staff awareness of disability and access issues.	Provide regular information on access and inclusion in Environment and Conservation News, DEC intranet and DEC's 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 Disability Access and Inclusion Committee

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as the general population to make complaints to DEC.

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 DAIC of the complaint.	Chair Disability Access and Inclusion Committee
5.2 Ensure current complaints policy and procedure is accessible for people with disabilities.	Review and revise current mechanisms for complaints handling. Ensure policy and procedure is available to the community via DEC website.	Manager Corporate Information Services
5.3 Improve staff knowledge of complaint handling from people with disabilities.	Include <i>Accessible Information Training Package</i> in DEC induction. Ensure existing DEC staff who have direct contact with the public (reception/front counter) complete training.	Executive Officer Disability Access and Inclusion Committee

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

Strategy	Task	Responsibility
6.1 Ensure that consultations with the public are held in an accessible manner.	Continue to promote the use of DEC's public participation fact sheets via annual broadcast email.	Manager Public Participation Planning Section
6.2 Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the local community.	DAIC members to attend disability forums and workshops.	Chair Disability Access and Inclusion Committee