
DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN (DAIP) 2007–2010

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ombudsman's office is committed to developing a strong disability access and inclusion framework supported by a range of proactive initiatives. These are designed to maximise the opportunities for people with a disability to access the services provided by the office and employment opportunities in the office.

APPLICATION OF POLICY

This plan applies to all products, services, events and programs developed or hosted by the Ombudsman's office.

BACKGROUND

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services, facilities and information of the Ombudsman's office. This includes both service delivery and employment.

Other legislation supporting the aims of a DAIP include:

- the Western Australian *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* which makes discrimination on the grounds of a disability unlawful in both service delivery and employment
- the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. A DAIP may also satisfy the Disability Discrimination Act's requirements for an Action Plan.

While action plans are not compulsory under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* or the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, they can assist organisations become more accessible and inclusive, and can provide some clarity in the event of a disability discrimination proceeding.

Part IX of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* also requires WA public authorities to develop EEO Management Plans. Our office's plan focuses on

- Workplace culture and accountability
- Workplace support equity and diversity
- An equitable and diverse workplace profile

for people with disabilities and other equity and diversity groups. The achievement of accessible workplaces under the DAIP is closely related to achievement of employment objectives through EEO Management Plans and these documents are closely related.

DEFINITIONS

DAIP – Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Disability – as defined in the *Disability Services Act 1993* - means a disability:

- which is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- which is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature; and

- which results in substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity

PRINCIPLES

The office recognises the rights of people with disabilities as listed in the *Principles applicable to people with disabilities* in Schedule 1 of the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

1. People with disabilities have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity.
2. People with disabilities, whatever the origin, nature, type or degree of disability, have the same basic human rights as other members of society and should be enabled to exercise those basic human rights.
3. People with disabilities have the same rights as other members of society to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.
4. People with disabilities have the same right as other members of society to services which will support their attaining a reasonable quality of life in a way that also recognises the role and needs of their families and carers.
5. People with disabilities have the same right as other members of society to participate in, direct and implement the decisions which affect their lives.
6. People with disabilities have the same right as other members of society to receive services in a manner that results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities.
7. People with disabilities have the same right as other members of society to pursue any grievance concerning services.
8. People with disabilities have the right to access the type of services and supports that they believe are most appropriate to meet their needs.
9. People with disabilities who reside in rural and regional areas have a right, as far as is reasonable to expect, to have access to similar services provided to people with disabilities who reside in the metropolitan area.
10. People with disabilities have a right to an environment free from neglect, abuse, intimidation and exploitation.

ROLE OF THE OFFICE

The Ombudsman is an independent officer appointed by the Governor of Western Australia and is responsible directly to the Parliament rather than to the Government of the day or a particular Minister.

The Ombudsman's governing legislation is the *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971* (the Act). The *Telecommunications (Interception) Western Australia Act 1996* also gives certain statutory responsibilities to the Ombudsman.

The Act provides that the core function of the Ombudsman is to investigate administrative practices in public sector agencies and local governments, and make recommendations to remedy defective administration and prevent its recurrence.

This role is fulfilled by:

- providing an impartial, efficient and effective complaint-handling system
- assisting to improve the quality of, and public confidence in, public administration by identifying and investigating areas of defective administration, whether or not complaints have been received.
- developing community awareness of the Ombudsman and services provided
- developing an understanding of the role of the Ombudsman in public sector agencies and local governments

- helping agencies and local governments maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of their own internal complaint handling systems.

The Act enables the Ombudsman to serve in the role of Energy Ombudsman. The functions of the Energy Ombudsman are in addition to and separate from the State Ombudsman role. The Energy Ombudsman receives, investigates and facilitates the resolution of complaints from residential and small business customers about their electricity or gas provider. The Energy Ombudsman has the authority to make decisions that are binding on electricity and gas providers.

Under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003* the Ombudsman receives public interest disclosures of information relating to matters of administration within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman, and matters relating to most public officers.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Ombudsman's office is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are able to access the full range of services, facilities and information provided by the office and enjoy the same opportunities as other community members to participate in employment, programs and services run by the office.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

This DAIP identifies areas where access and inclusion strategies are being implemented to optimise the accessibility of facilities, products and services. The objectives and strategies of this DAIP support access and inclusion outcomes that are defined as the minimum standard for DAIPs under the Act.

The plan covers strategies to achieve the following outcomes:

- Inclusive programs, services and events
- Physical accessibility
- Accessible information
- Skilled and aware staff
- Accessible complaints processes
- Public consultation

The initiatives relate primarily to service delivery. Initiatives relating to employment of people with disabilities are included in the office's *EEO / Diversity Management Plan*.

A number of areas within the office are shared with co-located agencies including the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner (OPSSC). In order to identify disability access and inclusion needs the office has used the results from the building access audit conducted by the OPSSC in December 2007.

This covered all shared lease areas including reception, function rooms, carparks and access outside leased areas. The Ombudsman offices on the 16th floor were not included but are based on the same open plan arrangement of the OPSSC offices on the 17th floor and the findings there are therefore relevant.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Governance and accountability arrangements within the DAIP will ensure that the objectives and outcomes of this plan are monitored and integrated into existing systems. Further, new strategies will be implemented and/or revised in a way that is consistent with the objects of the Plan and the Act.

DAIP planning, evaluation and continuous improvement will be integrated into business processes and systems by ensuring that Disability Access and Inclusion issues are identified in corporate planning and both recurrent and asset replacement funding.

CURRENT AND PLANNED INITIATIVES**Outcome 1: Inclusive programs, services and events**

The Ombudsman's office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and any events organised by the office.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Ensure that the Ombudsman complaint handling function is accessible to people with disabilities.	Review the website and any publications to ensure they are accessible and available in alternate formats.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: Initial review by September 2008 with any required updates completed by March 2009	Currently the website offers a downloadable complaint form and an online form.
Ensure that Ombudsman events and activities are organised at venues that are as accessible as possible.	Compile a list of function centres that have best practice disabled access and make available on the Intranet.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: October 2008	
	Staff responsible for organising events run through the Ombudsman's office will be trained in best practice with regard to organising events that are accessible for people with disabilities.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: October 2008	
	Standard format event invitation to be developed to ensure that customers have an opportunity to identify special needs they may have.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: October 2008	

Outcome 2: Physical accessibility

The Ombudsman’s office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the building and other facilities for the office.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Optimise accessibility and safety of the Ombudsman’s office	Negotiate with building management on access issues associated with common property outside of leased space which were identified through disability access surveys including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non slip coating in foyer • Awareness training • Parking facilities • Accessible toilets • Modifications to lifts 	Responsibility: Executive Director Strategic and Corporate Services Timeframe: June 2008	Completed. St Martins have advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foyer is non slip and conforms to AS 4663-2004 • Concierge has had training in regard to disability services. • Arrangements can be made for disabled access parking. • A disabled access toilet is available on the north side of the ground level. • Lift 1 & 6 provide for disabled access with longer opening times and lower call buttons.
Optimise accessibility of public and shared areas within leased spaces	During renovations to reception consider improved signage in line with AS 1428.2 Clauses 16 and 17.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: December 2008	Modifications to 12 th floor signage have been requested and are to be undertaken by OPSSC.
	Modify workplace to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of stone island from Level 12 reception area; • resolve issues/risks identified in audit conducted by OPSSC. 	Responsibility: Executive Director Strategic and Corporate Services Timeframe: February 2009	Modifications to 12 th floor have been requested and are to be undertaken by OPSSC. It is not possible to have an accessible toilet on level 12 or 16 due to the structural components of the building.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Review general level of access within the office environment.	<p>Use the access guidelines, as set out in the <i>Advisory Notes on Access to Premises</i> on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission website, to review access. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches and entrances • Controls • Furniture and fitments • Symbols and signs 	<p>Responsibility: Executive Director Strategic and Corporate Services</p> <p>Timeframe: Initial review 2007 then ongoing as required</p>	<p>The audit for co-located areas completed by OPSSC in 2007 identified needs built into this plan.</p> <p>Renovations to the 8th and 16th floor which were completed in June 2008 were in line with these guidelines.</p>
Optimize future leased accommodation to meet best practice	Ensure any future rental accommodation occupied by the Ombudsman's office and any co-located agencies meets best practice disabled access for staff and customers before a lease is signed.	<p>Responsibility: Executive Director Strategic and Corporate Services</p> <p>Timeframe: as required</p>	

Outcome 3: Accessible information

The Ombudsman's office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities receive information in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Optimise the accessibility of information resources to clients and the public	The Ombudsman's website will be upgraded in line with best practice established by World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) <i>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0</i> .	Responsibility: Communications Manager and Website Administrator Timeframe: June 2008	The web administrator has conducted a preliminary review of the site to ensure that all Priority 1 criteria are met. Some modifications that were made include removing tables that were used for formatting.
	Provide information resources in alternative format on request	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: As required	
	Current publications are to be updated and all future publications are to be developed with accessibility principles in mind. Ensure compliance with <i>Premier's Circular 2003/08 State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities</i>	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: Update current publications by December 2008	

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
<p>Ensure that information provided in the course of delivering services is accessible to people with disabilities</p>	<p>Letters and process documents from the Ombudsman and official documents to Parliament will be prepared in accordance with information accessibility guidelines. Official reports will include a statement about availability of information in alternative formats</p>	<p>Responsibility: Templates: Communications Manager Timeframe: Templates December 2008 and ongoing</p>	

Outcome 4: Skilled and aware staff

The Ombudsman's office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from our staff as other people receive from our staff.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Use DAIP process and plan to promote an awareness of people with disabilities service and access issues and priorities	Disseminate information regarding DAIP to all staff via the Intranet and staff meetings.	Responsibility: HR Coordinator Timeframe: September 2008	
Coordinate training to improve knowledge and skills of staff	Disability access and awareness training will be updated for staff induction.	Responsibility: HR Coordinator Timeframe: September 2008	
	An awareness raising resource kit will be sourced through Disability Services Commission and Edge Employment Services and included on the Intranet.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: September 2008	
	Staff of the Ombudsman's office will undergo periodic training in access and awareness issues for people with disabilities.	Responsibility: HR Coordinator Timeframe: Initial training by December 2008 and then ongoing.	
	Short 'how-to' sessions will be run to provide information about very specific tools and services. (Eg TTY telephony, speech to text software. operation of 'screen reader' software, providing material in alternate formats.)	Responsibility: HR Coordinator with Disability Employment Network (DEN) provider/s as required Timeframe: October 2008	

Outcome 5: Accessible complaints processes

The Ombudsman's office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the office.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Ensure that complaint services offered by the office are accessible.	Review the website information on making a complaint to ensure it meets accessibility guidelines.	Responsibility: Executive Director Strategic and Business Services Timeframe: June 2008	Information about making a complaint about the office is available on the office website. The office website is being reviewed to ensure it meets accessibility guidelines.

Outcome 6: Public consultation

The Ombudsman's office will use the following strategies to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the office.

Strategies	Initiatives	Responsibility and Timeframes	Outcome
Legislative requirements for public consultation on DAIP will be met.	Post a request on the Ombudsman's website, HR Share and EEO Share requesting feedback regarding the DAIP. The request is to include a notice that the DAIP can be provided in an alternative format on request.	Responsibility: Communications Manager Timeframe: July 2008	
Other consultation	Any other public consultation will also be made available as outlined in Outcome 3: Accessible Information.		

REFERENCE LINKS

This document is aligned with the following legislation, standards, or other reference sources:

Western Australian

- [Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [Disability Services Regulations 2004](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [Premier's Circular 20003/08](#) - State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities
- [State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities](#)

Commonwealth

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

Other

- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) - [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission - [Advisory Notes on Access to Premises](#)

AUTHORISATION

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