



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025

Ombudsman Western Australia
Serving Parliament – Serving Western Australians

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025 can be made available in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on CD, by email and on the Ombudsman's website.

Contact Details

Telephone: (08) 9220 7555 or 1800 117 000 (toll free from landlines)

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National): 131 450
(for people who need an interpreter)

National Relay Service (for people with a voice or hearing impairment)

Quote 08 9220 7555

TTY or modem users phone 133 677

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Postal Address

PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6831

Street Address and Office Location

Level 2, 469 Wellington Street
PERTH WA 6000

Office hours are 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday to Friday

The Office is located in Albert Facey House which has easy access for people with a disability. If you have special access needs, please call reception on (08) 9220 7555.

The office of the Ombudsman acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia as the traditional custodians of Australia. We recognise and respect the exceptionally long history and ongoing cultural connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Australia, recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and pay respect to Elders past, present and future.

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025* of the office of the Western Australian Ombudsman. Accessibility and inclusion are absolutely central to the institution of the Ombudsman.

Critically, our office is committed to providing optimum access and service to people with disability, their families and carers. The *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025* embodies our strategies to realise this commitment and continues the important work done under our *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2020*.

We will consider and use this plan in undertaking all of our activities to ensure we continue to provide the access and inclusion that our stakeholders rightly expect of us and that we commit to deliver.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Field', enclosed in a light blue rectangular border.

Chris Field
OMBUDSMAN

Ombudsman Western Australia

Role of the Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is an independent and impartial officer of Parliament with responsibility to investigate the actions of public authorities including State Government agencies, local government and universities.

Functions and services provided by the Ombudsman

The office of the Ombudsman (**the Office**) has four principal functions. The Office:

- Receives, investigates and resolves complaints about State Government agencies, local governments and universities;
- Reviews certain child deaths and family and domestic violence fatalities;
- Undertakes own motion investigations; and
- Undertakes a range of additional functions including statutory inspection and monitoring functions.

The Ombudsman is also the Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia. The Energy and Water Ombudsman investigates and resolves complaints concerning the provision of services by electricity, gas and water services providers.

Location of the Ombudsman

The Office is located in Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street, Perth. The central business district location is close to public transport links and the building has easy access for people with disability.

Our key stakeholders

Our key stakeholders and contacts are:

- Parliament of Western Australia;
- State Government agencies, local governments and universities (public authorities); and
- The public.

Planning for continued access and inclusion

Our *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2025 (DAIP)* continues our commitment to access and inclusion for people with disability contained in our *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015-2020*.

The DAIP meets the requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993 (the Act)* that public authorities develop and implement a DAIP that outlines the ways in which the public authority will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities, services and employment opportunities.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion can be found in the *Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Our commitment to access and inclusion

Our Office is committed to:

- Ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers, are able to access the full range of the Office's services, facilities and information, providing them with the same opportunities as other community members; and
- Consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and, where required, disability organisations, to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately.

Our DAIP provides a framework for the implementation of strategies and initiatives to ensure continued access and inclusion for people with disability. These strategies work towards the seven access and inclusion outcomes, defined in the Act as the minimum standard for DAIPs. The seven desired outcomes of our DAIP are that people with disability:

1. Have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Office.
2. Have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Office.
3. Receive information from the Office in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. Receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Office as other people receive from the staff of the Office.
5. Have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Office.
6. Have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Office.
7. Have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Office.

Progress and achievements

The Office has utilised a range of measures, consistent with our previous DAIPs, to ensure ongoing progress and achievement of access and inclusion for people with disability:

- The Office has continued to ensure that our services are accessible to people with disability and that people with disability are aware of our services, including through:
 - The Office's complaint handling services can be accessed in various ways including by post, email, online and in person, and enquiries can be made by telephone, including using the National Relay Service for people with a voice or hearing impairment. Where necessary, complaint handling processes can be modified to meet the needs of a person with disability, including using an Auslan interpreter. This information is included on all publications and reports;
 - The Office collects information from people who access the Office's services, including whether they have disability. This information is used to identify access needs of individuals, as well as to monitor more broadly the use of the Office's services by people with disability;
 - Disability access is a criterion that is routinely considered when booking venues for all the Office's public events and forums and a notice asking attendees to advise of any special access or dietary requirements is included on all invitations for events coordinated by the Office, to enable the Office to provide for their access and inclusion;
 - The Office routinely informs organisations that provide information, support and advocacy to people with disability about the Office's services and activities; and
 - The Office has internal guidelines on communicating with people with speech, hearing or visual impairments, and the Office's induction training and development programs include information about the Office's DAIP and provide ongoing guidance to raise awareness for staff and assist them to provide access and inclusion for people with disability.
- The Office has continued to make its buildings, publications, communications and consultation accessible for, and inclusive of, people with disability, including through:
 - The Office accommodation, building and facilities provide access for people with disability, including:
 - Wheelchair access to the building and inside the Office, including ramps, lifts and wide doors and access ways;
 - Braille on lift buttons; and
 - Ambulant toilets on all floors used by the Office;

The accommodation and facilities are regularly inspected, including for access for people with disability, and accessibility for people with disability is considered when changing the office layout, including recent changes to the foyer;

 - The Office's website has been regularly reviewed for accessibility for people using assistive technologies such as screen readers; and

- All electronic correspondence and documents are in a screen-readable PDF format and the Office's website and all the Office's reports include a statement that publications can be made available in alternative formats on request if required.
- Recruitment practices continue to actively encourage people with disability to apply for positions and the Office makes appropriate adjustments to support and retain people with disability and provide development opportunities, including through:
 - People with disability are encouraged to apply for positions in the Office and recruitment processes are modified as required to enable people with disability to have the same opportunity as other people to compete on merit for advertised positions. The Office collects information from applicants on whether they have disability. This information is used to identify adjustments required to the recruitment process to meet the needs of the applicant during the recruitment process, as well as to monitor more broadly the access to the Office's recruitment processes by people with disability.
 - Appropriate modifications are made, in consultation with the staff member, to duties undertaken, hours of work and/or equipment required to enable employees with disability, or who acquire disability, to maintain productive employment with the Office. Appropriate resources are made available for equipment and other adjustments and staff with disability are provided with opportunities for training and development.
 - The Office's Code of Conduct and internal policies prohibit discrimination and harassment and are strongly supported by management commitment that such conduct is unacceptable and will be acted on if it occurs.

Development of the DAIP 2020-2025

In 2019-20, the Office undertook to consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide continued improvements to access and inclusion. The process included:

- Examination of the 2015-2020 DAIP, other relevant Ombudsman documents and strategies and annual progress reporting on the implementation of the DAIP strategies;
- Investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion, including the *People With Disability: Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Outcomes 2020-2025* published by the Public Sector Commission (**Action Plan**); and
- Consultation with our staff and the community.

Consultation process

Development and amendments to the DAIP have been made in consultation with the Office's Management Consultative Committee, comprising senior managers across the Office; the Staff Consultative Committee, comprising staff representatives from each team of the Office; and the Office's occupational safety and health representatives (**Reference Groups**). Staff with personal and/or professional knowledge of disability issues were also consulted.

The community was informed through our website and in *The West Australian* newspaper that we were developing a DAIP for 2020-2025 and that we were calling for comments from members of the community to provide feedback on the draft DAIP. The Department of Communities was also invited to provide feedback in relation to the draft DAIP.

Consultation outcome

Through the review of our 2015-20 DAIP and consultation, we identified changes to the strategies and actions to further embed good practice access and inclusion in the Office. In particular, we identified additional strategies to improve employment outcomes for people with disability, based on actions included in the Public Sector Commission's Action Plan.

Implementation of the DAIP

Responsibility for implementation

It is a requirement of the Act that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its staff, agents and contractors.

Accordingly, the implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Office. Some strategies in the DAIP apply to all areas of the Office while others apply to a specific area. An internal DAIP Implementation Plan identifies the specific actions, accountabilities and timeframes to support the implementation of our DAIP strategies (**DAIP Implementation Plan**).

We will ensure that agents and contractors who are engaged to provide services to the general public are informed of our DAIP and that these agents and contractors are required to conduct their business in a manner consistent with the DAIP.

Communication of the DAIP

Following consultation, the DAIP was finalised and submitted to the Department of Communities. The community is informed of the final DAIP through an advertisement in *The West Australian* newspaper and on the Office's website. The website provides information that copies of the DAIP are available upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on CD, or by email. Staff are informed of the final DAIP through an all-staff email and the DAIP is placed on the Office's intranet.

DAIP review and evaluation

In accordance with the Act, we will review our DAIP every five years.

Our DAIP Implementation Plan will be reviewed annually and monitored through a range of ongoing means, including:

- The Reference Groups will meet at least annually to review progress on the implementation of our DAIP strategies and, where appropriate, amend our DAIP Implementation Plan;
- An annual DAIP progress report will be submitted to the Ombudsman and the Department of Communities;
- A summary of DAIP activities will be included each year in our Annual Report; and
- A review report of what has been achieved through the Office's 2020-2025 DAIP will be included in the 2025-2030 DAIP.

New or amended strategies will be included in the DAIP, following appropriate consultation, and submitted to the Department of Communities.

DAIP reporting

In accordance with the Act, we will submit an annual progress report, by the required date, to the Department of Communities on the implementation of our DAIP. The progress report will be in the prescribed proforma and will provide information about progress towards the desired outcomes of our DAIP and, where applicable, action of agents and contractors towards meeting the desired outcomes.

The Office will also provide information about the progress made through the DAIP in its Annual Report.

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability. As a result of the consultation process, within the seven outcome areas, broad strategies have been identified, for 2020-2025, where there is a potential to continue and improve access and inclusion. These strategies will guide the identification of actions to be included in our DAIP Implementation Plan.

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Office.

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that the Office's complaint handling function takes into consideration accessibility by people with disability.	Ongoing
Raise awareness of people with disability of the Ombudsman's complaint handling function and ways to access it.	Ongoing
Ensure that any public events and forums take into consideration accessibility for people with disability.	Ongoing
Provide opportunities for people with disability to comment on access to services and information provided by the Office.	Ongoing
Ensure that all agents and contractors of the Office who provide services to the general public are aware of their requirements under the DAIP.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disability, where possible, including quantity and location of parking and client contact areas such as reception areas.	Ongoing (Building designed for disability access in 2012)
Ensure all future premises leased by the Office are accessible, where possible.	Ongoing (Current lease in place until June 2023)

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that all Ombudsman publications are accessible to people with disability and able to be provided in alternative formats on request.	Ongoing
Maintain staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide people with disability with information in other formats.	Ongoing
Improve the awareness of staff, particularly reception and complaint-handling staff, about communication needs for people that are hearing impaired, hard of hearing, deaf, and people with speech impediments.	Ongoing
Ensure that the Ombudsman's website meets contemporary good practice for accessibility for people with disability.	Ongoing

Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Office as other people receive from the staff of the Office.

Strategy	Timeline
Provide ongoing disability awareness training and development for relevant staff and include this in Performance Development Plans as appropriate.	Ongoing
Inform staff of their role in implementing and monitoring the DAIP to ensure its success.	July 2015 and ongoing
Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into the Office's business planning and other relevant strategies.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Provide accessibility for people requesting a review of a decision in relation to their complaint to the Ombudsman, or making a complaint about the Ombudsman's other services.	Ongoing
Maintain staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints about the Office's services from people with disability.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure access for people with disability to the established consultative processes of the Office.	Ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all buildings, facilities and office equipment are physically accessible to employees with a disability, where possible.	Ongoing (Building designed for disability access in 2012)
Promote the Office as an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and use inclusive and accessible recruitment practices.	Ongoing
Partner with disability employment providers and networks to attract candidates with disability and to distribute job vacancies.	Ongoing
Monitor employment of, and job applications by, people with disability to inform recruitment and workplace planning.	Ongoing
Provide regular opportunities for staff with disability to share information regarding their disability.	Ongoing
Support staff with disability through job design, flexible working arrangements, appropriate resources and appropriate training and development.	Ongoing
Ensure that internal policies prohibit discrimination and harassment, and that all staff and candidates for positions with disability are not subject to any discrimination.	Ongoing
Provide support and training for management staff on disability awareness, providing appropriate support, adjustments and mentoring for people with disability and dealing with disability discrimination issues.	Ongoing

Ombudsman Western Australia

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