

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2012-15
SEPTEMBER 2012

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Foreword

I am pleased to present the Department's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012-15. I recognise the importance of improving government services and workplaces to provide equitable access to people with disabilities and the benefits in making Tasmania a more inclusive place to live.

The purpose of this Plan is to document our approach to addressing the barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing the Department's programs, services and facilities, whether as a colleague or member of the public.

We do so on the basis that 'It's the barriers present in society that really disable people.'¹

Such words give us insight into the barriers that reside within our institutions. Physical and attitudinal barriers can turn a person's impairment into a disability, restricting that person's ability to fully participate in our community. Working to address these barriers is something that our Department is well positioned to plan for and champion throughout Tasmanian society.

I am confident that improving access and inclusion in our programs, services and facilities will benefit people with disabilities, their families, friends and carers, and Tasmanian residents and visitors generally.

This is essentially our second Plan under the Tasmanian Government's *Disability Framework for Action 2005-2010*, building on the lessons learned since 2005. It is with this increased understanding and experience that we renew our focus on realising achievable and meaningful results for people with disabilities.

This Plan has been adopted as Department policy by the Executive Committee, and as such, employees of

¹ Carson, Grant quoted in Elder-Woodward, Jim: Models of Disability: Fact Sheet: Direct Payment Scotland, 2001

the Department will be responsible for implementing the Plan and will be held accountable for their actions through our business planning and performance management process.

The Department is committed to supporting the intent of the *Disability Framework for Action* and upholding the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

In closing, I would like to thank members of the Department's Working Group for leading engagement throughout the Department and the disability sector, evaluating our past actions, investigating new initiatives, and preparing this Plan.

Kim Evans
Secretary

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Background

The Tasmanian Government's *Disability Framework for Action 2005-2010* (the Framework) is a whole-of-government approach to policy and planning, service delivery, and evaluation, which seeks to remove barriers and enable people with disability to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as other Tasmanians.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet has started a review of the Framework; however, the Framework continues to apply to all agencies until the review is complete. There are to be no substantive changes as a result of the review so the Department's work will still align with the intent of the new Framework.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (the Plan) documents how the objectives specified in the Framework will be met by the Department. The Plan forms part of the Department's strategic and business planning system.

The Framework applies to all people with a disability in Tasmania, as specified in the *Disability Services Act 1992*. This includes people with a disability which:

- (a) is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- (b) is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- (c) results in a substantially reduced capacity of a person for communication, learning or mobility, the need for continuing support services and which may or may not be chronic or episodic in nature.

The Framework covers people with intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairments, as well as individuals with cognitive impairments who fall within the equivalent Commonwealth legislation.

Our Department brings together a diversity of regulatory functions and responsibilities for the sustainable management and protection of Tasmania's natural and cultural assets.

We achieve this by maintaining core business services:

- Manage the sustainable use and protection of Tasmania's natural resources – its water, air, land, plants, animals and fisheries;
- Help to grow competitive primary industries and food sectors;
- Contribute to the management and preservation of Tasmania's natural and cultural heritage;
- Maintain essential land and resource information infrastructure; and
- Deliver ready access to government services via the *Service Tasmania* shop networks.

This Plan is to be considered a 'live' document as the new Disability Framework and the National Disability Strategy will inform the Department's approach to our implementation of access and inclusion initiatives.

Key Outcome Areas

This Plan covers the outcome areas:

- Employment
- Physical Access
- Information and Communication
- Provision of high quality services

The Plan should be read in conjunction with the Department's relevant Human Resources policies and programs, for further details visit <http://intranet.knowledgeshare.tas.gov.au/index.asp?id=4040>

Resourcing the Plan

The initiatives in this Plan will be resourced through current divisional allocations; specific project funds will be accessed through the Department's annual budget development and business planning process. The Department is aware that the Plan will be delivered in an environment of constrained financial resources.

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Monitoring and Reporting

Yearly reporting on actions in the Plan will be delivered through the Department's Annual Report and the Premier's Disability Advisory Council² (PDAC) annual reporting process.

Annual reporting, using the 'most significant change' method, will be coordinated by the Working Group with administrative support from the Department's Policy and Projects Group. The Department acknowledges the assistance provided by the

² The Premier's Disability Advisory Council (PDAC) was established in 2007. Its primary purpose is to assist the Premier and Government to implement the Disability Framework for Action 2005-2010. PDAC works with Government and the broader community to promote the inclusion and participation of people with disability in community life.

Disability Bureau, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department's PDAC community member.

Evaluation

The Working Group will review the effectiveness of the plan at the end of three years, in preparation for development of a new plan.

Evaluation comments, advice and recommendations will be sought from PDAC annually and at the end of the life of the Plan, using existing annual reporting mechanisms.

To assist in the evaluation of the plan, the Department's PDAC community member will be invited to participate in relevant Working Group meetings and senior management forums throughout the life of the plan.

Outcome area 1: Employment

Recruitment, retention, career development

The Department supports the view that people with a disability have the right to compete for and work in mainstream or supported employment aided by appropriate education, training and support.

In the 2007 State Service Employee survey, 7 % of the State Service workforce identified as having a disability³.

The Department is committed to participating in the collection, refinement and reporting of disability employment data, where appropriately available, to help the State Service Commissioner identify access issues and barriers to career development - confidentiality and personal information privacy principles will be adhered to.

We are also committed to expanding the Willing and Able Mentoring program (WAM) within the Department, supporting staff participation, and promoting the experience to others in order to encourage people to become mentors.

The recently released evaluation report '*Recruitment of people with disability into the State Service*' conducted by the Office of the State Service Commissioner will be examined through the life of this Plan.

Where we are at

We have already achieved significant change:

- The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (RTBG) was awarded the winner of the *Wise Employment Disability Confident Award* in 2010.
- The RTBG and the EPA Division engagement with BlueLine Employment, to create employment opportunities for individuals with a disability,

³ Office of the State Service Commissioner (TAS), 'Agency Workplace Diversity Programs (2008)'

continues to realise positive results for individuals and the Department.

- The RTBG have established partnerships to create further opportunities for individuals with a disability with the Tasmanian Redeployment Services and Able Australia.

We will continue to:

- Expand employment opportunities for people with disability throughout the Department, building on successful experiences.
- Promote participation in the Willing and Able Mentoring program, to provide students with a disability with mentoring support as they transition from university to the workplace.
- Review and update recruitment materials, including referrals to fixed term employment registers for people with a disability.
- Work with the Community Development Division Directorate (DPAC) on employment initiatives and requirements, and to access material to support supervisors and managers.
- Promote training opportunities in disability awareness for supervisors, managers and staff.
- Utilise Disability Employment Service Providers.

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Emerging Issues

- The Department is aware that the current budget environment limits opportunity for employment; however, the Department is confident that many initiatives can be progressed in order to maximise opportunities for people with disabilities.

New Actions

What we are going to do	Timeframe	Who	Performance Indicator
Incorporate disability awareness information, tools and skills into the Leadership Program.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: Leadership and Communications Committee Others: Executive Committee	Leadership Program reviewed and modified.
Revise the Induction Intranet site to provide a prompt for supervisors and managers to raise disability access and inclusion issues with new employees.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: Manager HR Others: All divisions	Induction Intranet site reviewed and modified.
Seek assistance where appropriate from the Australian Government Employment Assistance Fund to provide work related modifications and services for current and new employees who have raised a disability issue.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: All divisions Others: Manager HR and Manager Facilities branch	Work related modifications/services as required.
Include specific Plan action items, when appropriate, in Performance Management Reviews (PMRs) for general managers, managers & supervisors.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: Executive Committee Others: All Divisions	PMRs conducted and specific Plan action items discussed.
Invite speakers from disability organisations to present at the Senior Managers forum.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: Executive Committee Others: Director, PPG	Attendance at forum.
Promote 'Balancing Work & Caring – Information & Guidelines' which includes flexible leave for carers of people with a disability.	June 2013	Lead: Manager HR Others: All Divisions	Relevant part of Guidelines promoted in an appropriate forum.

Outcome area 2: Physical Access

Buildings, facilities, equipment, outdoor spaces, off premises events

Physical accessibility is crucial for people with a disability to take advantage of the broad range of services and facilities that our Department manages and provides.

People with a disability, like all other members of the community, have the right to access public facilities and other buildings to enable them to fully participate in their local communities. The Department is aware that improving access is particularly important in our national parks, reserves, and other natural and cultural heritage sites with which we are affiliated.

The Department is committed to review renovations and building works that comply with current *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* standards and the regular review of all building, site, and the renovation plans in this regard.

Whilst the Department has no control over the implementation of the Act in relation to leased sites, we will continue to have ongoing discussions on access and inclusion issues with Building Owners and Managers.

Where we are at

We have already achieved significant change:

- The Department's obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* were examined when assessing tasks for inclusion in the annual essential maintenance component of our Capital Investment Program. No issues were identified at any of our major owned or leased premises. The Department is also reviewing all new rental properties to ensure compliance with the Act.

- During 2010 Heritage Tasmania installed an all-access ramp to the front door of their heritage-listed offices. Such all-access ramps are typically considered an inappropriate complication for heritage property owners and managers, with rear or side access often adopted as a preferred solution because of the reduced visual impact. Heritage Tasmania is showcasing an 'up-front', simple, cost effective solution to access requirements that provides front access to a building without compromising heritage values.
- The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens conducted a review of access options for people with limited mobility. This review resulted in the introduction of an electric courtesy vehicle to assist the elderly and those with limited mobility to access the Gardens and participate in interpretation programs.
- In 2009 *Service Tasmania* provided 27 shops state-wide with increased access for customers and, in particular, customers with a disability. Each new shop or redevelopment provided an opportunity to reassess shop and counter design and improve access for people with a disability.
- *Service Tasmania* also worked with the Department of Education to ensure that all disability access issues are being addressed with its LINC/HUB developments, including shops in Queenstown and George Town.
- Investigations continued into providing Assistive Listening Services at *Service Tasmania* shops.
- In 2011, the Parks and Wildlife Service identified 132 assets suitable for disabled access and have recently carried out various works to address physical access issues for people with a disability, such as improved toilet access and wheelchair accessibility in managed areas in the North East, North West, South West and West Coast of Tasmania.

We will continue to:

- Ensure all new building projects will comply with legislation and policy requirements, including whole-of-government requirements for quality assurance in regard to physical accessibility.
- Provide information on access for people with disabilities to Parks and Wildlife Service reserves and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.
- Consider work spaces of employees with disabilities and implement changes, where feasible, to make work areas more accessible.
- Advise on incorporating disabled access in heritage buildings.

Emerging Issues

- The Department is aware of the need to continue to improve access for people with disability and will continue to explore mechanisms for achieving incremental improvements across our portfolio of assets.

New Actions

What we are going to do	Timeframe	Who	Performance Measure
Develop a process to internally review Department buildings, facilities and structures (with a particular focus on public access structures) throughout the life of this Plan. We may engage consultants to assist the process.	June 2014 then ongoing	Lead: Manager Facilities Branch with relevant General Managers Others: All Divisions	(1) Number of in-house assessments undertaken and documented. (2) List of priority areas for assessments.

What we are going to do	Timeframe	Who	Performance Measure
Apply Department guidelines in accordance with the Building Code of Australia and new Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010, for leasing premises incorporating accessibility for people with disabilities.	June 2013	Lead: Executive Committee Others:	Report by exception.
Consider physical access issues for building and construction tenders for more than \$100,000.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: General Manager, Corporate Services Others: Senior Consultant, Procurement and Contracting	Revised Tender Assessment Checklist.
Natural and cultural site signage guidelines (when dealing with establishing new signage or reviews of current signage) will consider the needs of people with disabilities.	June 2014	Lead: General Manager PWS, Director RTBG, Director HT	Guidelines reviewed and modified where appropriate.
Assess disability access to public toilets on natural and cultural sites that the Department manages and schedule the design and construction of improvements and accessible pathways as resources allow.	June 2014	Lead: General Manager PWS, Director RTBG, Director HT	Assessment results incorporated into operational planning documents.

Outcome area 3: Information and Communication

Written material, websites, audiovisual information and communication

The Department is aware that there is a need to ensure that information about publicly funded services is available to all members of the Tasmanian community.

Service Tasmania is committed to providing information about Government services in ways that are accessible to people with a disability, including physical access through shopfronts, and phone and internet access.

By the end of 2012, all Tasmanian Government Agencies are required to have website and online publications at the minimum standards established under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

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Where we are at

We have already achieved significant change:

- The Department is working to establish full compliance against W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 across all its Divisions. The Department has started reviewing its web policy and web publishing guidelines to ensure consistency and compliance of new and upgraded websites and addresses to improve access for people with a disability.
- The content of the “Parks for all People” brochure, providing information about access for people with a disability, was integrated into the state-wide brochure “Visitor Guide to Tasmania's National Parks and Reserves” published in early 2010. The brochure is available in hard copy and online.

- Physical access details are included in the brochure for The Open Doors - A Tasmanian Heritage festival event.

We will continue to:

- Improve the accessibility of the Department's website and online publications to minimum standards required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, starting with the deployment of the accessibility strategies developed and distributed to agencies by DPAC, and incorporating a plan to install accessibility features into all online and hard copy Departmental publications.
- Provide access to information for people with hearing and visual disabilities.
- Ensure all new and upgraded Department websites conform to level A of the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, and exceed this level and reach level AA or level AAA wherever possible.

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Emerging Issues

- The Department is aware of the increasing demand for improved access to websites and materials from people with disabilities and is committed to making staff aware of their web content obligations and the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.

New Actions

What we are going to do	Timeframe	Who	Performance Measure
Communicate disability issues, access and inclusion emerging issues, applicable standards and legislation to staff.	ongoing	Lead: Director PPG and Working Group Others: Manager, Corporate Communications	Number of Intranet articles.
Provide regular stories to staff highlighting policies and activities dealing with disability initiatives and general information.	ongoing	Lead: Manager, Corporate Communications Others: Working Group	Number of Intranet articles.
Promote opportunities to encourage people with disabilities to access our parks, gardens and historic sites through key disability organisations.	June 2014	Lead: General Manager PWS, Director RTBG, Director HT	Department publications and information updated. Ongoing engagement with key disability organisations.
Provide information in formats that are accessible to people with a disability, such as Braille documents, audio tours, pod casts and text for interpretative films.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: Manager, Corporate Communications	Establish a point of contact in Corporate Communications for these enquiries.
Assess the need for AUSLAN training opportunities with frontline staff in <i>Service Tasmania</i> , Parks and Wildlife Service and Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens	June 2014	Lead: General Manager ILS, General Manager PWS, Director RTBG	AUSLAN training opportunities made available to staff as required
Identify IT infrastructure and software (such as JAWS) options to support the retention of employees with a disability	June 2014	Lead: Manager, Information Services Branch	IT infrastructure and software adopted in the work place as required
Develop an Accessible Events Checklist that considers the needs of people with disabilities to assist with planning Department events/programs.	June 2013	Lead: Director PPG and Working Group Others: Manager Facilities and Manager Corporate Communications	Checklist developed and made available on the Intranet.

Outcome area 4: Provision of High quality services

The Department recognises that people with disabilities require a service system that is individualised, responsive, flexible, and provides continuity of support, with particular attention to:

- Health and wellbeing;
- economic security (including affordable housing, concessions);
- rights protection, justice, legislation; and
- inclusive and accessible communities: (including planning schemes, housing, transport, arts, tourism, sport and recreation).

The Department provides services to all community members and visitors to Tasmania; it is not a specialist service provider for people with disability, but acknowledges the important supportive role the Department can play.

Aspects of the Department's portfolio directly relevant to this issue, in particular the areas of health and wellbeing, economic security, and inclusive and accessible communities, include:

- increasing the accessibility and accuracy of natural, cultural, land resource information;
- improving the convenience of government services provided through the *Service Tasmania* shop network;
- protecting and building upon Tasmania's brand credentials;
- stimulating the sustainable use and development of Tasmania's natural and cultural resources;
- strengthening the competitiveness of Tasmania's primary industries; and
- guaranteeing a healthy environment for all Tasmanians.

Health and wellbeing, recreation, and tourism services are of particular relevance to land and place management within the Department, notably the Parks and Wildlife Service, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and through our Crown Land functions.

Where we are at

We have already achieved significant change:

- Our staff induction sessions include a diversity component, which provides staff with information to improve their awareness of disability issues.
- Our Training Essentials Calendar ensures that our managers and employees have relevant and appropriate information and training to understand their obligations and responsibilities as Public Servants. The Calendar provides Disability Awareness training for managers and employees.
- In 2011-12, targeted training sessions for Mental Health Awareness and Access Awareness were conducted.
- We produce some specialty maps with disability access information through Information and Land Services.

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We will continue to:

- Implement concession initiatives through the Parks and Wildlife Services and for all relevant Department events.
- Include a diversity component in our staff induction program, which provides staff with information to improve their awareness of disability issues.
- Help our managers and employees to have the relevant and appropriate information and training in disability awareness through our Training Essentials Calendar.

- Promote and champion accessible arrangements for people with disabilities.
- Build on our working relationship with the disability sector at all levels of the Department, in particular to facilitate participation in the decision making process for actions under this Plan, as well as participation in policy and program development across the Department's interests more broadly.

Emerging Issues

- The Department recognises the importance of using an evidence-based approach to gain a better understanding of the needs of people with disability; we intend to directly engage with specialist service providers and people with disability, in order to improve the relevance of the Department's services.

New Actions

What we are going to do	Timeframe	Who	Performance Indicator
Communicate our involvement in the Australian Walking Track Grading System Program.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: General Manager – PWS Manager Strategy & Sustainable Use - PWS	Updates through existing Department forums.
Publish online upgraded tracks and pathways information relevant to disabled access.	June 2013 then ongoing	Lead: PWS, RTBG, HT	Timely notification.
Support the development of robust communication networks and exchange of information between the Principal Liaison Officer-Disability, Community Development Division (DPAC), disability service providers and the Department.	ongoing	Lead: Director- PPG Others: all divisions	Regular information exchange.

More Information

For further information about our *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan*, write to:

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and
the Environment

Attn. DAIP Working Group Chair

C/o Policy and Projects Group

GPO Box 44

Hobart TAS 7001

or email us at:

disability@dpiuwe.tas.gov.au

Accountabilities

Implementation	The Working Group, established to develop and maintain the Plan, will facilitate its implementation.
Compliance	Executive Committee Members will be accountable for the implementation of the Plan within their Divisions.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Executive Committee Members, Supervisors, Managers, Working Group and Policy and Projects Group (through existing annual reporting instruments).
Development and Review	Working Group and Policy and Projects Group