

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

(DAIP)

2013 – 2018

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats

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Inspector's Message

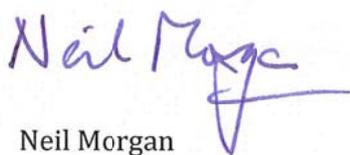
This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) has been developed to maintain and improve our Office's commitment to ensuring people with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access employment in this Office, communicate with us and access information produced by us.

Our role is to provide Parliament with an objective assessment of the status of the custodial environment in Western Australia, which can only be achieved by effectively engaging with prisoners, their families, and staff.

We know that people with disability are over represented in our prison system. While there are no statistics available in Western Australia, work in the UK found that over a third of prisoners were considered to have a disability¹. The study found that prisoners with disability were more likely to report having used drugs, having experienced abuse or observed violence as a child, being homeless before custody, and needing help to find a job when released. Importantly, 14 per cent of Australian prisoners said they were unable to work due to disability, age or health conditions². These factors have implications for prisoner policies and access to programs. One of our roles is to effectively engage with these prisoners to measure how the Department of Corrective Services is meeting their needs and to guide continual improvement.

In addition, this Office is committed to workforce diversity. While we are a small agency our team is diverse, in terms of culture, age and gender. Ensuring that people with disability are not excluded from working in this Office is an important part of maintaining our commitment. The only way to make sure this occurs is to continually scan for, and address, any potential barriers to accessing our workplace. This plan provides the framework to achieve this goal.

Through the implementation of this plan, we seek to continue to make our workplace accessible to people with disability and to make improvements where needed. I look forward to the ongoing commitment and participation of all staff in implementing this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.



Neil Morgan
Inspector of Custodial Services

¹ Ministry of Justice (UK), *Estimating the prevalence of disability amongst prisoners: results from the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) survey* (May 2012). Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/162358/estimating-prevalence-disability-amongst-prisoners.pdf

² The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: *The Health of Australia's Prisoners 2012*

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

About us

The Office is an independent statutory body with a strong human rights focus. It provides external scrutiny to the standards and operational practices of custodial services in Western Australia and reports to Parliament.

The Office's responsibilities include:

- Inspecting adult custodial facilities, juvenile detention centres, court custody centres and custodial transport services.
- Conducting reviews of specific aspects of a custodial service or a specific custodial experience of individuals or groups.
- Managing the Independent Visitors Scheme.
- Carrying out thematic review of system-wide prison services.

The Office does not deal with complaints or grievances relating to an individual.

Purpose

Our Purpose is to report to Parliament on the state of custodial places and services with the intention of:

- Improving public confidence in the justice system.
- Reducing re-offending in Western Australia.
- Ensuring the justice system provides value for money.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide valuable advice that contributes to the overall development of correctional facilities and services in Western Australia.

Key Stakeholders

The Office key stakeholders are:

- Parliament.
- Minister of Corrective Services.
- Department of Corrective Services management and staff.
- Prisoners and their families.
- Non-government organisations.
- The Western Australian community.

Our values

Integrity: We seek to act ethically, honestly, impartially and in the best interests of the community.

Quality: We seek to be efficient in all that we do, deliver on-time, and provide well researched advice and recommendations.

Equity: We treat all people with respect and we value diversity.

Innovation: We value creativity, learning and continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence.

Access and inclusion policy statement

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Service is committed to:

- Ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access our services and facilities (both in-house and contracted).
- Providing people with disability, their families and carers with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community.
- Consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and disability organisations as required to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed.
- Ensuring that our agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in this DAIP.
- Achieving the desired outcomes of this DAIP.

The desired outcomes are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and any events organised by the Office.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the Office's accommodation and other facilities.
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.
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Office.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Office.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Office.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment at the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (recruitment and retention practices).

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The following overarching strategies will guide us from July 2013 to June 2018 in maintaining, and where needed, improving access to our services, buildings and information. The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability. These strategies will be supported by an implementation plan identifying specific tasks to meet the strategies outlined below.

It should also be noted that access and inclusion barriers are not exclusive to people with disability, and can be attributed to factors such as speaking English as a second language; living in rural or remote areas; low literacy levels, age, gender, ethnicity, Aboriginality and culture. Therefore where appropriate, the strategies in the DAIP may also allow for us to create initiatives within our implementation plans that not only cater for people with disability but also consider other factors associated with 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 the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
1.1 Ensure people with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services provided by the Office.	Principal Audit and Research Officer	December 2013
1.2 Ensure liaison visits, independent visitor visits, inspections and pre-inspection surveys are promoted through multiple methods to include people with disability.	Liaison Officers	Ongoing
1.3 Ensure office events are accessible to people with disability by staff adhering to the Disability Services Commission's Creating Accessible Events checklist when organising events.	Senior Management Group	December 2013
1.4 Ensure that methods to contact and communicate with the Office are accessible for people with disability.	Senior Management	December 2014

1.5 Redevelop an access and inclusion policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disability, their families and carers throughout the various functions of the Office.	Director Operations	December 2014
1.6 Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into the Office's strategic business planning, budgeting processes and other relevant plans and strategies.	Director Operations	December 2014

Outcome 2:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
2.1 Ensure that our Office continues to be accessible to people with disability	Director Operations	Ongoing
2.2 Ensure all future premises leased by the Office are accessible by people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing

Outcome 3:

People with disability can access information from the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
3.1 Develop and implement a policy which ensures materials from this Office (reports, website etc) are accessible, available in appropriate formats and distributed in a manner inclusive of people with disability.	Director Operations	December 2014
3.2 Establish an internal committee to determine the most appropriate, up to date methods for providing accessible information to our stakeholders with disability, low literacy, language barriers or other communication difficulties.	Principal Audit and Research Officer	July 2014
3.3 Continue to improve staff ability to write in Plain English so that materials are more accessible to people with cognitive difficulties.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing

3.4 Upgrade the Office's website to ensure content meets current WCAG guidelines	Principal Audit and Research Officer	December 2014
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Outcome 4:

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services as other people.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
4.1 Ensure that all staff, independent visitors and contractors of the Office are aware of our strategies to continually improve access for people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
4.2 Provide opportunities for staff to improve their skills to enable them to provide a good service to people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
4.3 Promote policies and the code of conduct that prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimisation of key stakeholders, staff, independent visitors, contractors and visitors with a disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
4.4 Ensure that the Office staff are aware of the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act</i>	Senior Management Group	Ongoing

Outcome 5:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
5.1 Review grievance mechanisms to ensure they remain accessible for people with disabilities.	Director Operations	July 2014
5.2 Ensure the pending redevelopment of the Office's complaints process incorporates the ability for people with disability to make complaints.	Director Operations	December 2014

Outcome 6:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
6.1 Ensure all public consultations are accessible and undertaken in an inclusive manner for people with disability, their families and carers.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
6.2 Ensure that disability peak bodies are invited to participate in relevant public consultations.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
6.3 Ensure our DAIP is open to public comment during the review period and between reviews.	Principal Audit and Research Officer	December 2013

Outcome 7:

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment the Office's employment (recruitment and retention practices)

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
7.1 Ensure that recruitment activities are inclusive in design and accessible to people with disability.	Business Manager	Ongoing
7.2 Ensure staff, independent visitors and contractors with a disability are provided with appropriate support to carry out their employment/volunteer responsibilities as specified in their position description.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
7.3 Ensure the Office's Workforce and Diversity Plan incorporates people with disability.	Director Operations	December 2014

Appendix A: Disability Access and Inclusion Plan development

Consultation process

As required under the Act, in 2013 the Office undertook a review of its DAIP 2007-2011 and drafted a new five year DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The methodology for the review included examination of:

- existing 2007-2011 strategies (to determine which strategies are ongoing and/or need revision);
- DAIP progress reports to DSC and in our Annual Report;
- contemporary and developing trends, and best practice in access and inclusion – particularly in other oversight bodies;
- other relevant documents plans and strategies, such as independent visitor reports, access and inclusion checklists; and
- literature on changes to disability legislation.

The community was informed through the OICS website of the opportunity for comment and feedback on our DAIP. An email was sent to all staff and Independent Visitors requesting suggestions for improvements to the DAIP. A Public Notice calling for submissions was placed in the West Australian. As a result of this process we reviewed our exiting DAIP and drafted a new plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The consultation was designed to ensure that any barriers faced by the public in relation to access and inclusion were identified.

Findings of the consultation and review

The review and consultation found that most of the objectives of the previous DAIP had been achieved. Some strategies were no longer relevant and others need to be revisited in the next cycle. As such, the 2013-2018 plan seeks to address current access barriers and reflects contemporary values and practices, such as striving for inclusion and meeting more than the minimum compliance with access standards. Is also addresses relevant legislative and regulatory changes.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Group. Some actions will apply to all areas of the Office while others may apply only to a specific area. While leadership of some strategies have been assigned to particular

positions, the Senior Management Group will maintain responsibility for guiding the overall implementation of the plan.

Communicating the plan

The 2013-2018 Plan will be communicated by:

- promoting the DAIP to staff, independent visitors and peak disability bodies involved in the consultation via a broadcast email;
- lodging the DAIP with the Disability Services Commission;
- making the DAIP available:
 - on the Office's website and intranet;
 - through a link in Office induction material;
 - in the DAIP section of our internal resource centre; and
- placing a Public Notice in the West Australian.

As plans are amended staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Office's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with *The Disability Services Act*.

Monitoring and reporting on the DAIP

A committee of interested staff will be developed to implement the DAIP and to review and evaluate the plan. This committee will meet every quarter in the first year, and as required thereafter, to review progress. The chair of the committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to the Senior Management Group for endorsement.

Staff will also be encouraged to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.

OICS will report on the implementation of the DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress reporting template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year.

Appendix B: Facts on disability

A disability can be defined as any continuing condition that restricts every day activities.³ The term disability may refer to any intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory and/or physical impairment that is, or is likely to be, permanent.⁴ A disability will cause a person to have a reduced capacity to communicate, interact socially, learn and or move about.⁵

Disability affects the lives of more than half a million Western Australians, either directly or as a carer.⁶ The approximate 405,500 people living with disability in Western Australia⁷ add to the diversity of our society. 95 per cent of Western Australians with disability live independently or with family and friends; and are a part of every section of our community as adults, children, parents, employers, employees and customers. People with disability can be found in all levels of government and business, community organisations and on boards and committees. They are also our neighbours, family members, friends and work colleagues.

There are many types of disability, with physical disability being the most prevalent.⁸ A disability may be visible or hidden, and for many people, can have significant impact on their capacity for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility. The very nature of the physical, social and cultural structure of our environment can present barriers to inclusion and access for people with disability. It can also be adapted and altered to be inclusive and accessible. Inclusion of people with disability is underpinned by respecting, accepting and welcoming people into community life; recognising their value and strengths and providing opportunities to participate, give and receive as citizens in the community.

³ Disability Services Commission 2008, *What is a disability?* Available from: <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/aboutdisability/disabilitydefined.html>

⁴ *Disability Services Act* 1993 part 1

⁵ National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, *National Disability Strategy Consultation Report*. Available from: http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/pubs/policy/community_consult/Documents/NDS_report.pdf

⁶ Count Us In Teaching Resource Package: Creating Welcoming Communities Disability Services Commission: <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/Global/Publications/Understanding%20disability/teacher%20information%20booklet%201.pdf#xml=http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/Search10/isysquery/efb050c7-b7eb-41bc-97b4-971f9b45d38b/1/hilite/>

⁷ ABS Statistics

⁸http://jobaccess.gov.au/Coworkers/Working_with_people_with_disability/What_is_disability/Pages/home.aspx