



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2019 – 2024

This plan is available upon request in electronic format and hard  
copy in large and standard print.

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## Inspector's message

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan has been developed to maintain and improve our commitment to ensuring people with disability have opportunities to access employment with us, and to communicate and access our information.

Our role is to provide Parliament with an independent assessment of the status of the custodial environment in WA, 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. In Australia, almost 1 in 3 (29%) of prison entrants reported a chronic health condition that affected their participation in everyday activities (21%), education (11%), or employment (16%). In comparison with the general community, 1 in 5 (22%) people aged 18 and over reported living with a disability in 2015 that restricted everyday activities, employment or education. One quarter (25%) of female prison entrants reported a limitation in everyday activities, 15% in education and 22% in employment. 1 in 5 (21%) male prison entrants reported limitation in everyday activities, 10% in education and 15% in employment.<sup>1</sup> 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 Justice, Corrective Services Division is meeting their needs and to guide continual improvement.

We are committed to workforce diversity, although small in size, our team is diverse in terms of culture, age and gender. This commitment means we will do what we can to reduce potential barriers relating to access and employment facing people with disability. 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 make improvements where needed. I look forward to the ongoing commitment and participation of all staff in implementing this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Eamon Ryan  
**Inspector of Custodial Services**

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<sup>1</sup> The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare: The health of Australia's prisoners 2018.



# Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

## About us

The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services is an independent statutory body with a strong human rights focus. We provide independent scrutiny of the standards and operational practices of custodial services in WA and report the outcome of our work to Parliament.

Our 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; and
- carrying out thematic review of system-wide prison services.

We do not deal with individual complaints or grievances.

## Purpose

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

- improving public confidence in the custodial system;
- ensuring the decent treatment of detained people;
- reducing re-offending in WA; and
- ensuring the justice system provides value for money.

## Mission statement

Our mission is to provide advice that contributes to the overall development of custodial facilities and services in WA.

## Key stakeholders

Our key stakeholders are:

- Parliament;
- Minister for Corrective Services;
- Department of Justice;
- Prisoners and their families;
- Non-government organisations; and
- the West 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.

## Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013-2018

We achieved the following:

- Ongoing development and maintenance of our website to improve information access for people with disability.
- Plain English training to ensure documentation produced by staff, including correspondence, briefing papers and reports are easily understood.
- Engaging non-government organisations to train our staff in resilience and promoting good mental health in the workplace.
- Assisting prisoners with disability to complete onsite surveys which are used to inform our inspections and reports.
- Our office accommodation, building and facilities provide access for people with disability including:
  - Wheelchair access to the building and inside the office, including ramps, lifts, wide doors and access ways.
  - Braille on lift buttons and on toilet doors.
  - Accessible toilets on all floors used by our office.
- Our website and all its reports include information on how publications can be made available in alternative formats on request if required.





# Access and inclusion policy statement

We are 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 others 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 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP); and
- achieving the desired outcomes of this plan.

Our desired outcomes are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access our services and any events organised by us.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access our accommodation and facilities.
3. People with disability can access our information as readily as others.
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service as others from our staff.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as others to communicate with us.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as others to participate in any public consultation by us.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as others to obtain and maintain employment with us.



## Strategies to improve access and inclusion

The following overarching strategies will guide us from July 2019 to June 2024 in maintaining and, where needed, improving access to our services, buildings and information. The 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 plan may also allow for us to create initiatives within the 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 others to access our services and any events organised by us.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
1.1 Ensure liaison visits, independent visitor visits, inspections and pre-inspection surveys are promoted through multiple methods to include people with disability.	Inspections and Research Officers	Ongoing
1.2 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	Ongoing
1.3 Ensure that methods to contact and communicate with this Office are accessible to people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
1.4 Ensure the access and inclusion plan supports equitable access to services by people with	Manager Corporate Governance	Ongoing

disability, their families and carers throughout the various functions of this Office.		
1.5 Incorporate the objectives of the DAIP into this Office's strategic business planning, budgeting processes and other relevant plans and strategies.	Manager Corporate Governance	Ongoing

### Outcome 2:

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to access our accommodation and facilities.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
2.1 Ensure that this office continues to be accessible to people with disability.	Manager Corporate Governance	Ongoing
2.2 Ensure all future premises leased by this office are accessible to people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing

### Outcome 3:

People with disability can access our information as readily as others.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
3.1 Continue to ensure materials from this Office are accessible, available in appropriate formats and distributed in a manner inclusive of people with disability.	Senior Management Group	Ongoing
3.2 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
3.3 Ensure the website continues to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.	Director Reviews	Ongoing

### Outcome 4:

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service as others from our staff.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
4.1 Ensure all staff, independent visitors and contractors of this office are aware of the 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 staff are aware of the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act 1993</i> .	Senior Management Group	Ongoing

#### Outcome 5:

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to communicate with us.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline
5.1 Maintain grievance mechanisms to ensure they continue to be accessible to people with disability.	Manager Corporate Governance	

#### Outcome 6:

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to participate in any public consultation by us.

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 the DAIP is open for public comment during the review period and between reviews.	Executive Officer	Review period
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**Outcome 7:**

People with disability have the same opportunities as others to obtain and maintain employment with us.

Strategy	Responsibility	Timeline	
7.1	Ensure recruitment activities are inclusive in design and accessible to people with disability.	Manager Corporate Services	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 this office's Workforce and Diversity Plan incorporates people with disability.	Manager Corporate Governance	Ongoing

## Appendix A:

# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan development

### Consultation process

As required under the *Disability Services Act 1993*, in 2019 we undertook a review of the 2013-2018 DAIP and drafted a new five-year plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The methodology for the review included examination of:

- existing 2013-2018 strategies (to determine which strategies are ongoing and/or need revision);
- progress reports provided to Department of Communities, Disability Services and in the Inspectorate's 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 this office's website of the opportunity for comment and feedback on the DAIP. An email was sent to all staff and independent visitors requesting suggestions for improvements. A Public Notice calling for submissions was placed in the West Australian. As a result of this process, we reviewed the existing DAIP and drafted an updated 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 2019-2024 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. It also addresses relevant legislative and regulatory changes.

### Responsibility for implementing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Group. Some actions will apply to all areas of our office, while others may apply only to a specific area.

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 2019-2024 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 plan with the Department of Communities, Disability Services;
- making the DAIP available:
  - on our website and intranet;
  - through a link in the induction material;
  - in the DAIP section of the 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

Our DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

## Monitoring and reporting on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

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.

We will report on the implementation of the DAIP through our Annual Report and the prescribed progress reporting template to the Department of Communities, Disability Services by 31 July each year.



## Appendix B: Facts on disability

A disability can be defined as any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities,<sup>2</sup> a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions.<sup>3</sup> The term disability may refer to any intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory, or physical impairment, or a combination of those impairments and which is permanent or likely to be permanent.<sup>4</sup> A disability results in a substantially reduced capacity of the person to communicate, interact socially, learn or move about.<sup>5</sup>

There are many types of disability, with physical disability being the most prevalent.<sup>6</sup> 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 members of the community.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Communities, Disability Services <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/understanding-disability1/understanding-disability/what-is-disability/>

<sup>3</sup> Australian Network on Disability <https://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html>

<sup>4</sup> *Disability Services Act 1993* s 3(a)(b).

<sup>5</sup> *Disability Services Act 1993* s 3 (d)(i).

<sup>6</sup> [http://jobaccess.gov.au/Coworkers/Working\\_with\\_people\\_with\\_disability/What\\_is\\_disability/Pages/home.aspx](http://jobaccess.gov.au/Coworkers/Working_with_people_with_disability/What_is_disability/Pages/home.aspx)