

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Office for Women

2014–2016

“Everything we do is for everyone”



Government of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

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Statement from the Director

I am pleased to present our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Through this plan, we show our commitment to meet the diverse needs of our clients, stakeholders, staff, contractors and visitors. Importantly, this plan identifies the positive strategies we are adopting to ensure women with disability are accorded respect, are listened to and have choices about how their needs are met.

The Office for Women recognises the particular needs of women with disability, and that their issues and needs are often overlooked within services and programs. This increases the vulnerability of women with disability; they often lack vital information about their rights resulting in them being unable or unaware to defend and advocate for their rights. The Office for Women will ensure that the issues affecting women with disability are considered and incorporated into policy agendas and will advocate for their incorporation on their behalf. In addition, the Office for Women, through the Women's Information Service, will continue to ensure that women with disability have full access to information on their rights and services available to them.

Our broader equity and diversity strategies represent our commitment to ensuring employment diversity and our understanding that an inclusive and accepting workforce benefits not just staff but students in our schools, families and the wider community.

This plan provides the framework within which the Office for Women works towards providing inclusive, safe and welcoming environments.

We are committed to ensuring that every South Australian woman has the opportunity to live and contribute to society to their fullest — whatever their ability, wherever they live, whatever their background. This plan will help us in this mission.

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Context

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) strategy demonstrates the South Australian (SA) Government's commitment to improving the participation of people with disability across a range of areas so that they can enjoy the rights and opportunities provided to all citizens to reach their full potential.

DAIPs provide a systematic approach for organisations to identify and address barriers to access and inclusion and develop strategies that meet the participation and service needs of people with disability. The plans are active documents that recognise community and cultural diversity and acknowledge the valuable contribution of everyone to the social and economic fabric of our society.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The development of DAIPs aligns with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) ratified by Australia in 2008, and the Optional Protocol signed by Australia in 2009. The convention acknowledges the value of existing and potential contributions made by people with disabilities to the overall wellbeing of their communities. It is underpinned by eight guiding principles based on respect, equality and non-discrimination.

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

Inherent in Australia's commitment to the UNCRPD is an obligation to continually improve the lived experience of people with disability. For government, that not only means improving outcomes through the specialist disability service system but also ensuring that mainstream services, programs and infrastructure are responsive to their needs.

On 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* (NDS). The NDS provides a shared agenda to help achieve the vision of an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to achieve their full potential as equal citizens.

The NDS outlines a 10 year national policy framework for all governments to address the barriers faced by Australians with disability and will ensure that services and programs including healthcare, housing, transport and education, address their needs.

The NDS will help ensure that the principles underpinning the UNCRPD are incorporated into policies and programs to improve access and outcomes for people with disability, their families, carers and supporters??.

The NDS was developed in partnership with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments under the auspice of COAG. The Australian Local Government Association also assisted in the development of the NDS.

Strong Voices: A Blueprint to Enhance Life and Claim the Rights of People with Disability in South Australia (2012–2020)

In March 2012, the SA Government endorsed the introduction of DAIPs across government in accordance with recommendation six of the report *Strong Voices: A Blueprint to Enhance Life and Claim the Rights of People with Disability in South Australia (2012-2020)*.

The introduction of DAIPs replaces the previous access strategy, *Promoting Independence: Disability Action Plans for South Australia*. Although the DAIP strategy has a specific focus on upholding the rights of people with disability, it fits into the broader social inclusion framework of the SA Government.

Disability Services Act 1993 and Disability Services (Rights, Protection and Inclusion) Amendment Act 2013

The *Strong Voices* report recommended that new rights-based legislation, aligned with the UNCRPD, be enacted to replace the *Disability Services Act 1993*. In view of the continuing relevance of this Act and the significant reforms implemented subsequently by both Commonwealth and State Governments (including the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme), it was decided that alternative approaches should be considered.

Consultation and engagement with the community sector and people with disability culminated in the identification of priorities for action and ways to address these through complementary legislation or policy and program implementation.

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, through Disability SA, supported these consultations and the drafting of the *Disability Services (Rights, Protection and Inclusion) Amendment Act 2013* which was proclaimed on 5 December 2013.

The amendments strengthen protections available to South Australians living with disability by referencing the UNCRPD and including provisions such as enshrining the right to exercise choice and control in decision-making, ensuring accessible complaints and grievance processes and protection for those who raise a complaint. State and National discrimination legislation is also referenced and safeguarding policies mandated for all disability service providers.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Framework

DAIP key outcome areas align with those of the NDS, which were developed following extensive consultation with people with disability, their families and carers. Although aligned with the National strategy, policy directions specifically relate to the South Australian context.

This approach provides for development and implementation of a common framework that reflects the direction of current disability reforms in moving from a focus on service provision to a rights-based approach supporting individual choice, control and independence. Within this framework individual agencies can determine actions and strategies based on their own priorities and timelines.

Definitions

Under federal legislation (the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*) and SA legislation (*Equal Opportunity Act 1984*) it is against the law to discriminate against someone based on their disability. Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability are treated less fairly than people without a disability and the discriminator fails to make reasonable adjustments to rectify the situation. It also occurs when people are treated less fairly because they are relatives, friends, carers, co-workers or associates of a person with a disability.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* defines "disability" as meaning:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
 - (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
 - (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
 - (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
 - (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
 - (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
 - (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
- and includes a disability that:
- (h) presently exists; or
 - (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - (j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
 - (k) is imputed to a person.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Definition

The UNCRPD defines persons with disabilities as including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which interact with various barriers to hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

This broader understanding recognises that disability may also be a product of the environment in which a person lives. Social, attitudinal, economic and cultural barriers can limit participation as can a person's individual circumstances (ie the nature and degree of impairment, capacities and skills).

The UNCRPD defines 'discrimination' on the basis of disability to mean "... any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

South Australians living with disability

The Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2012* (SDAC) defines a person with disability as someone who has a functional limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

In SA, over one in five people (357,100 or 21.5%) reported having a disability in 2012. More than half of these were women (187,800). Of these, nearly 90% had a specific limitation or restriction that meant they were limited in the core activities of self-care, mobility or communication, or restricted in schooling or employment. Around 32.0% of people with disability had a profound or severe limitation in one or more of the core activity areas with a further 49.5% having a moderate or mild limitation in core activity areas.

In 2012, there were 22,700 (including 8,400 girls) children aged less than 15 years with a disability (7.7% of all children aged less than 15 years). Of these, 54.6% had a profound or severe limitation in core activity areas and 10.6% had a moderate or mild limitation in core activity areas.

ABS findings indicate that there were 219,000 people providing informal assistance to people with disability (13.4% of population). More than half of these were women (118,800). Of these, 56,000 (including 38,000 women) identified themselves as being primary carers (3.4% of the population).

Participation in other specific activities away from home over the previous 12 months was also measured. These include visiting a library, participating in physical activities for exercise or recreation, or attending a sporting event or movie. Nearly one in five (18.0%) South Australians with a disability aged less than 65 years did not participate in any of these activities away from home.

About the Office for Women

The Office for Women works toward achieving gender equity and positive change for women by collaborating across government and the community. The Office works closely with women's groups and organisations, as well as with the Government of South Australia's advisory group on women's issues, the Premier's Council for Women.

The Office for Women provides strategic policy and advice to the South Australian Government on issues affecting women.

The Women's Information Service provides information to South Australian women online, over the telephone and in person. We aim to increase access to information that promotes choice and empowerment.

The Premier's Council for Women (PCW) is an independent advisory board that provides leadership and advice to the South Australian Government to ensure the interests of women are at the forefront of its policies and strategies

The Office for Women has 14.9 FTEs, none of whom identifies as having a disability. Of the 27 volunteers at the Women's Information Service, one woman identifies as having a disability. All Office for Women staff and volunteers are women.

Our vision: “Everything we do is for everyone”

Our vision for the future is of an inclusive South Australian community that genuinely welcomes, respects and values the contributions of all citizens regardless of their abilities, gender, age or background.

The *Disability Services (Rights, Protection and Inclusion) Amendment Act 2013* legislates the intent of both the UNCRPD and the NDS in ensuring that people with disability live in inclusive and accessible communities. A key step in achieving this is to incorporate the concept of universal design into design and planning processes.

Access is not limited to the physical environment. Universal design allows everyone to the greatest extent possible, to use programs, services and facilities. This includes access to the physical environment including public buildings, transport, parks and streetscapes. The terminology of access in this context is inclusive of accessible information, communication systems and in relation to products and services.

It is cheaper and more effective to incorporate universal design features in the planning stages rather than trying to adapt existing structures and programs later.

Relationship to other policies, strategies, frameworks

OFW Disability Access and Inclusion Policy (to be developed)

Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PCO13, 6.2 (2013).

Previous achievements

The Women's Information Service (WIS) relocated to its current location at Chesser House, 91–97 Grenfell Street in September 2008. WIS has been situated in Station Arcade since 1997, with the Office for Women located above on the 3rd floor of the Roma Mitchell Building.

The design of the new office included features not previously available at the Station Arcade site, including a kitchenette, private interview room and automatic doors to enable access by people with disability. A support rail was also installed along the ramp from the shop front to the phone room.

In 2009 the Office for Women launched the *Don't Cross the Line* Community Education Campaign. The four year campaign sought to change community attitudes with the main target audience being 18 to 25 year old men and women. A community education grant fund was also established as part of the campaign. Aimed at informing and educating groups in the community who would not necessarily receive the messages of the mainstream campaign, the Don't Cross the Line Community Education

Grants provided funding for community organisations to undertake antiviolenence education programs. The third funding round in 2010/11 was aimed at young people with disability and the successful organisations were:

- Tutti Ensemble - *Respect Me, Respect You* involved the creative arts being used to promote messages by young people with disability for young people with disability.
- Yarredi Domestic Violence Service worked with local 18 to 25 year old men and women with disability to produce a DVD about respectful relationships.
- Christies Beach High School supported their senior students with disabilities to develop their knowledge of sexual assault and domestic violence legislation in South Australia and of respectful relationships.
- Legal Services Commission further engaged young people through the highly successful *Expect Respect* peer education drama-based model, aspiring young artists working in the disability sector and with disability will be engaged to deliver the project's performances and workshops.

Also in 2011, \$13,000 funding was delivered to Women With Disabilities South Australia (WWDSA) to conduct awareness raising activities in 2011/12 as part of the Don't Cross the Line community awareness campaign. Awareness raising training sessions were conducted in metropolitan and regional areas specifically focusing on education around the *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009*. Amendments to the *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009* also help to facilitate improved access to domestic violence support for women with disabilities. The funding assisted WWDSA to work with young women with disabilities and with women's domestic violence, mainstream women's services, as well as State Government Services to enhance their services support for women with disabilities.

Disability access and inclusion plan outcomes

Ensuring that the rights of people living with disability are upheld is the responsibility of the whole community and requires a state-wide response. Most people take the ability to go about their daily life for granted. People with disability should also be able to access and participate in all aspects of our society, including using 'mainstream' services and programs. Social inclusion is fundamental to one's quality of life and critical to achieving positive life outcomes across all domains.

Developing a DAIP illustrates that an agency recognises the importance of including and being accessible to everyone, has a welcoming attitude and employs well informed staff who are aware of the needs of people with disability.

South Australian DAIP Outcomes

The SA DAIP strategy specifies the following outcome areas.

Outcome 1. Inclusive and accessible communities

Women with disability live in accessible and well-designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

Outcome 2. Economic security and employment

Women with disability, their families, carers and supporters have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

Outcome 3. Rights protection, justice and legislation

Women with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.

Outcome 4. Personal and community support

Women with disability, their families, carers and supporters have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

Outcome 5. Learning and skills

Women with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high quality education system that is responsive to their needs. Women with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

Outcome 6. Health and wellbeing

Women with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

Consultation and Implementation

People with disability have a unique insight into the barriers they face and what would be helpful to reduce these. They have repeatedly stated that they wish to be consulted on matters that affect them, giving rise to the saying, “Nothing about us, without us”.

The Office for Women will continue to consult internally at all levels of the organisation, and externally with local communities and women with disabilities, to assist in making strategic and operational decisions regarding access and inclusion of people with disability.

The Office for Women maintains a strong relationship with Women With Disabilities South Australia, who provides advice and information on the needs of South Australian women with disabilities.

Office for Women staff will be informed of the DAIP and it will be available electronically on the Office’s internal network. The plan is also available on request. Implementation will be monitored by the relevant Office for Women staff and will be reviewed after two years.

Key strategic actions will be incorporated into the overarching DCSI DAIP which will be publicly available. In accordance with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC013, DCSI will report on the departmental DAIP in the 2013-14 annual report.

Glossary

DCSI	Department for Communities and Social Inclusion
OFW	Office for Women
PWD	Premier's Women's Directory
SASP	South Australia's Strategic Plan
WIS	Women's Information Service
WWDSA	Women With Disabilities South Australia

Outcome 1 Inclusive and Accessible Communities

Women with disability live in accessible and well-designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic sporting and cultural life.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
1 Ensure that all buildings are physically accessible in respect of external and internal access, toilets and signage	OFW Management	Ongoing	Ongoing review of facilities to ensure continued compliance
2 Ensure all new staff attend disability awareness and disability discrimination awareness training	OFW Management	Ongoing	Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities
3 Ensure all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability

4	Continue to include a focus on women with disability across all policy and services developed by OFW	All staff	Ongoing	Improved policy and service outcomes for women with disability Increased number of women with disability on the PWD
5	Ensure all venues for public participation and consultation have no access barriers with regard to location and design	All staff	Ongoing	Increased ability for women with disability to provide advice and seek information
6	Ensure that women with disabilities are informed of planned major public forums and consultation events	All staff	Ongoing	Increased ability for women with disability to provide advice and seek information
7	Staff are aware of and enact DCSI equity and diversity policies	All staff	Ongoing	Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities

Outcome 2 Economic Security and Employment

People with disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
1 Continue to include a focus on women with disability across all policy and services developed by OFW	All staff	Ongoing	Improved policy and service outcomes for women with disability
2 Continue to promote the Premier's Women's Directory to women with disability and organisations representing or providing services to people with disability	OFW Policy Team	Ongoing	Increased number of women with disability on the PWD Increased opportunities for women with disability to provide input on decision making and services
3 Continue to provide access to information on issues related to economic security for women with disability, their carers and supporters through the WIS	WIS staff	Ongoing	WIS Statistics



4 Continue to ensure all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability
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Outcome 3 Rights Protection, Justice and Legislation

Women with disability have their rights upheld, promoted and protected.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
1 Continue to provide access to information on issues related to rights and access to justice for women with disability, their carers and supporters through the WIS	WIS Staff	Ongoing	WIS Statistics
2 Continue to ensure that all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability
3 Continue to provide the Family Court Support Service to women with disability when requested	WIS	Ongoing	Number of women with disability using the Family Court Support Service



4 Continue the A Right to Safety (ARTS) Women’s Safety Strategy and the Family Safety Framework to ensure that women with disability have the right to live free from violence	All staff	Ongoing	A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women (SASP Target 18)
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Outcome 4 Personal and Community Support

Women with disability, their families, carers and supporters have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
1 Continue to provide access to information for women with disability, their carers and supporters through the WIS	WIS Staff	Ongoing	WIS Statistics
2 Continue to ensure that all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability



3 Continue the A Right to Safety (ARTS) Women’s Safety Strategy and the Family Safety Framework to ensure that women with disability have the right to live free from violence	OFW Policy Team	Ongoing	A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women (SASP Target 18)
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Outcome 5 Learning and Skills

Women with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive, high quality, education system that is responsive to their needs. Women with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
1 Continue to provide access to information for women with disability, their carers and supporters through the WIS	WIS Staff	Ongoing	WIS Statistics
2 Continue to ensure that all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability
3 Ensure that initiatives to increase the participation of women in non-traditional study and employment, (eg STEM) includes a focus on women with disability	OFW Policy Staff	Ongoing	Increased access to employment and study opportunities for women with disability

Outcome 6 Health and Wellbeing

Women with disability are supported to attain the highest possible health throughout their lives.

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Measurable Target</i>
Continue to provide access to information on health and wellbeing for women with a disability, their carers and supporters through WIS	WIS Staff	Ongoing	WIS Statistics
2 Continue to ensure that all OFW communications use accessible technologies and are available in alternative formats when requested	All staff DCSI Media and Communications Unit	Ongoing	Improved services and outcomes for women with disability
3 Continue the A Right to Safety (ARTS) Women's Safety Strategy and the Family Safety Framework to ensure that women with disability have the right to live free from violence	OFW Policy Team	Ongoing	A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women (SASP Target 18)



4	Ensure that the WIS Body Image Digital Media Campaign includes a focus on women with disability	WIS Staff	2015	Increased access to information on body image and related issues for women with disability
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Appendices

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Principles

The purpose of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Article three of the convention identifies the principles as follows:

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- b) Non-discrimination
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- e) Equality of opportunity
- f) Accessibility
- g) Equality between men and women
- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Legislative and policy context

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans align with the intent of the following initiatives in advancing the rights of people with disability to full and meaningful participation in society:

International

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (and [Optional Protocol](#))

National

- [Carer Recognition Act 2010](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [National Carer Strategy](#)
- [National Disability Agreement](#)
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) ([SA launch](#) site for children initially from 2013-2015, followed by full implementation by July 2018)
- [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)
- [National Quality Framework for Disability Services in Australia](#)

South Australian

- [Advancing the Community Together](#): A partnership between the volunteer community and the South Australian Government (revised in 2011)
- [Carers Recognition Act 2005](#)
- [Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [Disability Services \(Rights, Protection and Inclusion\) Amendment Act 2013](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [South Australia's Strategic Plan 2011](#) (specifically targets 11, 25, 50) and [Seven Strategic Priorities](#)

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- *Strong Voices: A Blueprint to Enhance Life and Claim the Rights of People with Disability in South Australia (2012–2020)*
 - *The 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide* (launched in 2010)