# Disability Access and Inclusion Plans

A guide for public authorities

March 2025

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## Introduction

People with disability are diverse and active contributors to communities across Western Australia (WA), however, they continue to experience barriers that limit their choices, and their social and economic participation in society. This diminishes the wellbeing of the entire community.

Since the introduction of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (WA), public authorities have been consistently and collectively working to improve the way they collaborate with and support people with disability to enjoy an accessible, inclusive and welcoming State.

This guide for public authorities covers:

* What is a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?
* Why have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?
* Developing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
* Implementing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.
* Disability Access and Inclusion Plan reporting.

#### In 2022[[1]](#footnote-1)



1 in 5 Western Australians, or 515,600 people living in WA, had disability.



1 in 10 Western Australians aged 0-64 years had disability.



1 in 10 Western Australians with disability reported a schooling or employment restriction.



1 in 9 Western Australians with disability experienced discrimination in the past 12 months.

## What is a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?

A Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is a critical driver of positive change for public authorities to:

1. eliminate discrimination against people with disability.
2. provide inclusive and accessible facilities, information, services and workplaces.

A DAIP is a clearly written document that demonstrates a public authority’s commitment to access and inclusion. The DAIP outlines the strategies and actions that will be implemented to achieve equitable outcomes for people with disability. Through a DAIP, public authorities demonstrate their leadership role in creating an inclusive WA where everyone belongs.

DAIPs vary according to individual authorities’ size and function, and the residents and service users’ needs.

Since the introduction of mandatory DAIPs for WA public authorities in 1993, approaches to access and inclusion planning have changed. Communities’ expectations have changed, stakeholder engagement methods have evolved, whole-of-community inclusion planning has been introduced, and some public authorities have introduced additional outcomes. The key themes of additional outcomes are advocacy and capacity building, particularly building awareness and capacity of business to incorporate access and inclusion into their day-to-day operations.

While DAIP structures and strategic approaches may vary, at the very least the Act requires the implementation of actions that contribute to positive change across the seven outcome areas set out in the Act. Refer to [Appendix 1: DAIPs: seven outcomes](#_Appendix_1:_Disability)).



## Why have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?

Access and inclusion are as valuable to our broader community as they are for people with disability. People with disability contribute in big and small ways to our community each and every day – as our teachers, our colleagues, local business owners, community leaders, our friends and family members. Every person’s experience is unique to their individual circumstances.

Public authorities play an important role in the well-being of our community by providing the events, facilities, information, services, and workplaces we enjoy on a daily basis. Developing and implementing a DAIP reinforces the social model of disability[[2]](#footnote-2) by addressing the social attitudes, practices and structures that limit and prevent people with disability from living a life of choice and control.

DAIPs recognise and assist people of all abilities, supporting their human rights and dignity, and unlocking the skills and talent our economy and workplaces need to thrive. A DAIP delivers many benefits for individuals, your public authority, your workplace and the broader community.

* A DAIP can help a public authority’s employees and service users understand how the authority is working to make the community more accessible, inclusive and welcoming for people of all abilities[[3]](#footnote-3). For people with disability, DAIP initiatives contribute to increased participation in community life and reduced social isolation and loneliness[[4]](#footnote-4).
* People with disability make up 20 percent of the population, equating to one in five of a public authority’s service users. As such, a DAIP’s strategies can improve a public authority’s service usage and organisational reputation[[5]](#footnote-5).
* A diverse workforce and inclusive workplace can have benefits that include increased innovation, positive impacts on staff wellbeing, reduced discrimination and harassment, and improved customer service and performance[[6]](#footnote-6).
* Social inclusion contributes to improved living standards for everyone – better employment and health outcomes, improved productivity, and economic growth[[7]](#footnote-7).

## Public Authority obligations

Public authorities have a leadership role in achieving an accessible and inclusive community – one that values diversity, promotes equitable participation and provides opportunities for everyone. Each public authority must develop a DAIP relevant to its functions, size, and stakeholders, including people with disability, those who share their lives, disability service providers, and the wider community.

The requirement for public authorities to develop and implement a DAIP is set out in the *Disability Services Act 1993* (Part 5) and Disability Services Regulations 2004 (Schedules 1-3).

To comply with the Act, a public authority is required to:

* Develop, implement and maintain a current DAIP that reflects the seven outcome areas (as specified in the Act).
* Undertake and advertise public consultation when preparing, reviewing or amending its DAIP.
* Publish the DAIP on its website and make it available in alternative formats.
* Lodge amended or new DAIPs with the Department of Communities (Communities).
* Take all practicable measures to ensure the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, and relevant agents and contractors.
* Report annually (in July) to Communities on its DAIP progress.
* Review the DAIP no less than every five years.

Public authorities are also subject to Commonwealth laws, including:

* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
* Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
* Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002
* Disability Standards for Education 2005
* *Fair Work Act 2009*
* National Standards for Disability Services.

In addition:

* The *Local Government Act 1995* requires local government authorities to report on their DAIP in their annual report.
* The *Financial Management Act 2006* requires state government authorities to report on their DAIP in their annual report.

## Developing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A DAIP specifies the strategies and actions a public authority will undertake over a one-to-five-year period across seven disability access and inclusion outcomes.

A great DAIP is well structured, easy to understand and shows how it will work – the strategies and actions, delivery timelines, who’s responsible for what, and success indicators to track the DAIP’s performance.

Public authorities are encouraged to allow approximately 6-12 months for the review and development of a new DAIP. A new DAIP should be endorsed, prior to the existing plan’s expiry date. Best practice access and inclusion has and continues to evolve. It is recommended public authorities connect with the Department of Communities before developing a new DAIP and when the draft is complete.

How the development of a new DAIP is approached will vary depending on the:

* functions of the public authority
* location and size of the public authority
* organisational capability and resources, including staffing and budget.

The five key phases in developing a DAIP are:

* research and review
* stakeholder engagement
* drafting
* public consultation
* approval and publication.

#### Research and review

The research and review phase can involve:

* Developing your community profile drawing on local, state and national data.
* Reading other DAIPs and access and inclusion planning resources to better understand emerging trends and varying approaches to DAIPs.
* Completing an internal review of your current DAIP actions and progress achieved.
* Auditing your DAIP tracking and monitoring processes (what worked, what did not work).
* Reviewing internal DAIP responsibilities (refer Attachment 4 – Roles and responsibilities).
* Reviewing the effectiveness of your DAIP working group and/or advisory group/committee. For example, terms of reference and membership.

The research and review phase will inform how the new DAIP is structured, how the stakeholder engagement phase is approached, and provide direction on how best to implement the DAIP.

#### Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is vital. It’s an opportunity to listen to the expertise and needs of the people, groups and organisations who have an interest in or may be impacted by your DAIP. Stakeholders can include people with disability, carers, family and friends, disability service providers, public authority staff, peak bodies, clubs and community facilities, and the broader community.

Effective stakeholder engagement throughout the DAIP’s development will positively impact implementation. Your stakeholders, internal and external, become valuable advocates and champions for your DAIP and its initiatives.

The Act requires public authorities, as a minimum, to undertake an advertised public consultation by calling for submissions on issues of specific or of individual concern to people with disability. This can occur at any stage in the new DAIP development and may occur more than once.

Consultation on its own is limited. Good practice stakeholder engagement uses a diversity of engagement methods at different stages in the DAIP’s development. This ensures all parties have an opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way. The scale of stakeholder engagement will depend on your public authority’s size and functions.

The stakeholder engagement phase can involve:

* Undertaking stakeholder mapping to identify the individuals, groups and organisations who should have a say.
* Clarifying the aim of the engagement process - what do you want to achieve?
* Allocating resources, including budget and staffing.
* Identifying the engagement model(s) to be used. For example, will you be consulting or collaborating with stakeholders?
* Determining the engagement methods to be used. For example, will you use surveys, focus groups, workshops and/or co-design sessions?
* Scheduling and promoting stakeholder engagement activities to maximise involvement.
* Delivering stakeholder engagement activities and collating the findings.
* Communicating the findings to the people and organisations that participated.

It is important that stakeholders understand:

* What the stakeholder engagement is aiming to achieve.
* How their input will be used in the DAIP’s development.
* How decision making on final DAIP actions will be determined.

Some public authorities may have an existing corporate community engagement framework or guide. For those that don’t, there are several engagement models that can help you determine your approach and the engagement methods to use. Refer to [Appendix 2: Stakeholder Engagement model example and useful links](#_Appendix_2:_Stakeholder).

#### Draft

The draft phase can involve:

* Analysing the research and review phase, and stakeholder engagement findings.
* Confirming governance and accountability arrangements.
* Prioritising DAIP actions for implementation based on your context and capacity.
* Deciding on an evaluation approach and internal reporting strategy.
* Determining the plan structure and drafting the content (refer to [Appendix 3: What to include in a DAIP](#_Appendix_3:_What)).
* Confirming internal responsibilities and budget allocations.
* Drafting an implementation plan to clarify actions, timelines, success measures and key responsibilities.
* Reviewing the DAIP to ensure the language is inclusive.
* Checking the document’s accessibility and developing alternative formats.
* Considering how people can access the DAIP and how it will be promoted.

Public authorities can include an implementation plan in their published DAIP or keep it as an internal operational document.

#### Public consultation

Putting the draft DAIP out for a public consultation period is good practice because it enables stakeholders:

* Who have been involved in the development phase to provide feedback on the draft.
* Who have not been involved in the development phase to review the draft and comment.
* To stay informed and engaged in each phase of your DAIP’s development.

The public consultation phase can involve:

* Making the draft DAIP available for public consultation online and in hardcopy.
* Advertising the public consultation period, and how and where to have a say.
* Promoting the public consultation to those who attended engagement activities.
* Analysing the public consultation feedback and making amendments to the DAIP.

#### Approve and publish

The approve and publish phase can involve:

* Finalising the DAIP and accompanying implementation plan.
* Seeking final endorsement of the DAIP from the appropriate delegated authority in your organisation. This will vary by public authority.
* Publishing the DAIP on your website.
* Submitting a copy of the approved DAIP to the Department of Communities.

## Implementing a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Key factors influencing a DAIP’s successful implementation are organisational commitment, staff buy-in, having clear monitoring and evaluation processes, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders.

A good practice guide to implementing a DAIP involves:

* implementing enablers
* internal communications
* evaluating and monitoring
* promoting DAIP successes.

#### Implementing enablers

Enablers are the resources, processes, tools and people that contribute to the successful delivery of your DAIP. The implementing enablers phase can involve:

* Identifying and supporting DAIP champions who will advocate for your DAIP, its actions, and successes. Champions can be anyone, including people with disability, councillors, executive and staff, and community members.
* Clarifying who needs to do what to successfully deliver the DAIP (roles and responsibilities), and clearly communicating what is expected of those involved. Refer to [Appendix 4: Roles and responsibilities](#_Appendix_4:_Roles).
* Establishing an internal staff working group to champion the DAIP across your organisation, support delivery of actions, and monitor its progress.
* Setting up internal tools for staff to easily report on their DAIP actions and opportunities to discuss their challenges and successes. For example, a Teams group.
* Establishing a reference or advisory group/committee comprising people with lived experience of disability and other key stakeholders to provide guidance on implementation and a sounding board for staff with DAIP responsibilities.
* Reviewing progress regularly and identifying gaps and strategies to address any issues.

#### Internal communications

Growing awareness of your DAIP internally will facilitate culture change and maintain the spotlight on DAIP initiatives. The internal communications phase can involve:

* Developing a communications plan for promotions across available internal platforms, such as a staff portal, staff news, Viva Engage (Yammer), and other social media groups.
* Hosting all-staff DAIP information sessions, pop-up events, and lunch and learn sessions.
* Delivering disability awareness sessions and activities.
* Celebrating successes. For example, set up a rotating DAIP award, nominate staff who have DAIP responsibilities for internal awards, create a photo display in the lunchroom, promote success stories in staff newsletters and social media, and add ‘little wins’ to the advisory group agenda.

#### Evaluate and monitor

The DAIP should outline how your public authority will track and measure the success of your DAIP. The evaluate and monitor phase can involve:

* Confirming data collection processes for the DAIP evaluation.
* Supporting staff to set up data collection processes.
* Developing a regular internal reporting mechanism.
* Creating a check-in and monitoring process to support staff responsible for delivering actions and strategies.
* Collating success measures and evaluation results.
* Hosting progress meetings for stakeholders.

#### Promote

Promoting the DAIP and its achievements to the broader community can boost internal momentum and attract additional support for your DAIP. The promote phase can involve:

* Developing an annual promotional plan.
* Celebrating DAIP successes via the authority’s website, social media and other online platforms.
* Releasing stories for local media. For example, newspapers and radio.
* Publishing a DAIP report card on your website.
* Creating videos featuring DAIP successes and interviews with community members who have benefited from initiatives.
* Hosting a podcast featuring community members and/or staff.

## Disability Access and Inclusion Plan reporting

The Act requires public authorities to report annually on their DAIP. These reports are used to inform the Minister for Disability Services DAIP Progress Report, which is tabled in the WA Parliament each year.

The DAIP Progress Report requests key information, including lodgement date, where the DAIP is published, status update on all actions, and a concise overview of DAIP achievements. DAIP Progress Reports are submitted to the Department of Communities in July annually.

## Support and resources

The Department of Communities, as the custodian of the Act, works to:

* support public authorities with DAIP development
* monitor the lodgement and currency of a DAIP
* provide feedback on DAIPs in line with the intent and provisions of the legislation
* coordinate the annual DAIP Progress Reporting process.

In addition to this guide, a suite of resources is available:

* Outcome 1: Events and Services
* Outcome 2: Buildings and Facilities
* Outcome 3: Information
* Outcome 4: Quality service
* Outcome 5: Complaints
* Outcome 6: Consultation
* Outcome 7: Employment
* Agents and Contractors

For further information, please email: StateDisabilityStrategy@communities.wa.gov.au

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#### Appendices

#### Appendix 1: Disability Access and Inclusion Plans: seven outcomes

Outcome 1: Events and services

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services and events of a public authority.

Outcome 2: Buildings and facilities

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.

Outcome 3: Information

People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that enables them to access the information as readily as other people.

Outcome 4: Service quality

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive.

Outcome 5: Complaints

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.

Outcome 6: Consultation

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.



Outcome 7: Employment

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

#### Appendix 2: Stakeholder engagement model example

The Public Participation Spectrum developed by the Institute of Public Participation is an example of a stakeholder engagement model. The spectrum identifies five stages of engagement including:

* Informing – sharing information or educating stakeholders about the DAIP. No feedback required.
* Consulting – conducting a survey prior to drafting the DAIP or gathering public comment on the draft DAIP. Final decision maker is the public authority.
* Involving – working with stakeholders to identify the issues and develop actions to be delivered through the DAIP. Final decision maker is the public authority.
* Collaborating – working with stakeholders to identify the issues, develop actions and deciding together what is in the draft DAIP.
* Empowering – working with stakeholders to identify the issues, develop actions and prioritise actions for the DAIP. Final decision-making sits with stakeholders[[8]](#footnote-8).

Methods of engagement might include:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Inform | Consult | Involve | Collaborate | Empower |
| AdvertisingBriefingsEventsFactsheetsInfo sessions Newsletters | Focus groupsPublic commentRound tablesPublic meetingsSurveysPop-ups | Advisory groupsDeliberative pollingDigital storytellingGraphic recordingOpen idea wallsWorkshops | CharrettesCitizens’ panels Co-designParticipatory editingWorking groups | Citizens’ juriesCo-designParticipatory budgeting |

Useful links:

Mental Health Commission has a stakeholder engagement framework and toolkit at [Stakeholder Engagement (mhc.wa.gov.au)](https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/about-us/stakeholder-engagement/)

WACOSS’ Lived Experience Framework outlines principles and practices for Lived Experience partnerships.

[Lived Experience Framework – Principles and Practices for Lived Experience Partnerships](https://www.wacoss.org.au/library/lived-experience-framework-principles-practices-lived-experience-partnerships/)

Disability Gateway has a guideline to support engagement of people with disability at [Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability | Disability Gateway](https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/good-practice-guidelines)

The Tamarack Institute has an index of community engagement techniques at

[TOOL | Index of Community Engagement Techniques (tamarackcommunity.ca)](https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/interactive-tools/index-of-community-engagement-techniques)

Word Health Organisation’s guide outlines the different engagement levels and how they determine the types and degree of engagement.

[Community engagement: a health promotion guide for universal health coverage in the hands of the people ﻿](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240010529)

#### Appendix 3: What to include in a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

A great DAIP demonstrates its workability. This includes key priorities articulated as strategies and actions, allocation of delivery timelines, and success indicators.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What to include | Description |
| Organisation overview | Summary of public authority that may include vision, mission, community profile, and relevant working groups. |
| Policy statement | Commitment to access and inclusion for people with disability, and those who share their lives. |
| Strategic alignment | DAIP’s relationship with other organisational plans (Corporate Plan, Community Strategic Plan, etc), A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 and Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031. |
| Achievements | Overview of previous access and inclusion achievements. |
| Community Engagement and consultation | Summary of engagement and consultation undertaken, how it was promoted, and the findings. |
| DAIP outcomes | Strategies and actions for implementation to progress the seven DAIP outcomes. |
| Timeline | When the strategies and actions will be achieved. |
| Promotion | How the DAIP will be promoted to service users and broader community. |
| Alternative formats | Statement confirming the DAIP will be made available in alternative formats and where to access further assistance. |
| Policy for agents and contractors | Statement on how agents and contractors will be informed of the DAIP and their responsibilities.  |
| Reporting  | Summary of annual DAIP reporting requirements. |
| Evaluation | Outline of how the DAIP strategies and actions will be measured and monitored. |
| Feedback | How people with disability and other stakeholders can provide feedback. |
| Review | Statement confirming when the DAIP will next be reviewed. |

#### Appendix 4: Roles and responsibilities

Council / Director General / CEO

Meeting legislative responsibilities include:

* ensuring a current DAIP is in place
* ensuring DAIP reporting requirements are being met
* final endorsement of the DAIP
* final endorsement of the DAIP Progress Report.

Contracting/procurement/grants

Responsibilities include:

* inserting DAIP clause of special condition of contract into tender and contract documentation
* monitoring agent and contractor delivering of DAIP requirements.

Whole of public authority

Responsibilities include:

* delivering DAIP actions
* reporting on progress of DAIP actions
* contributing to awareness raising of the DAIP
* providing feedback on DAIP actions.

Designated DAIP staff member

Responsibilities include:

* development, implementation and monitoring of a DAIP
* understanding of relevant DAIP legislation
* providing contracting/procurement area with DAIP information for agents and contractors
* monitoring agent and contractor activity
* completing DAIP reporting
* seeking approval and endorsement for the DAIP Progress Report
* submitting amended or new DAIPs to Department of Communities.
1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022, [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release) (accessed 24 November 2024) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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