



# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2023–2028







# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities proudly acknowledges the Traditional Owners throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, families, and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

The first step in living alongside and working with the Aboriginal community is built upon establishing respectful relationships. Crucial to these respectful relationships is acknowledging the history of Aboriginal people and recognising the importance of connection to family, culture, and country.



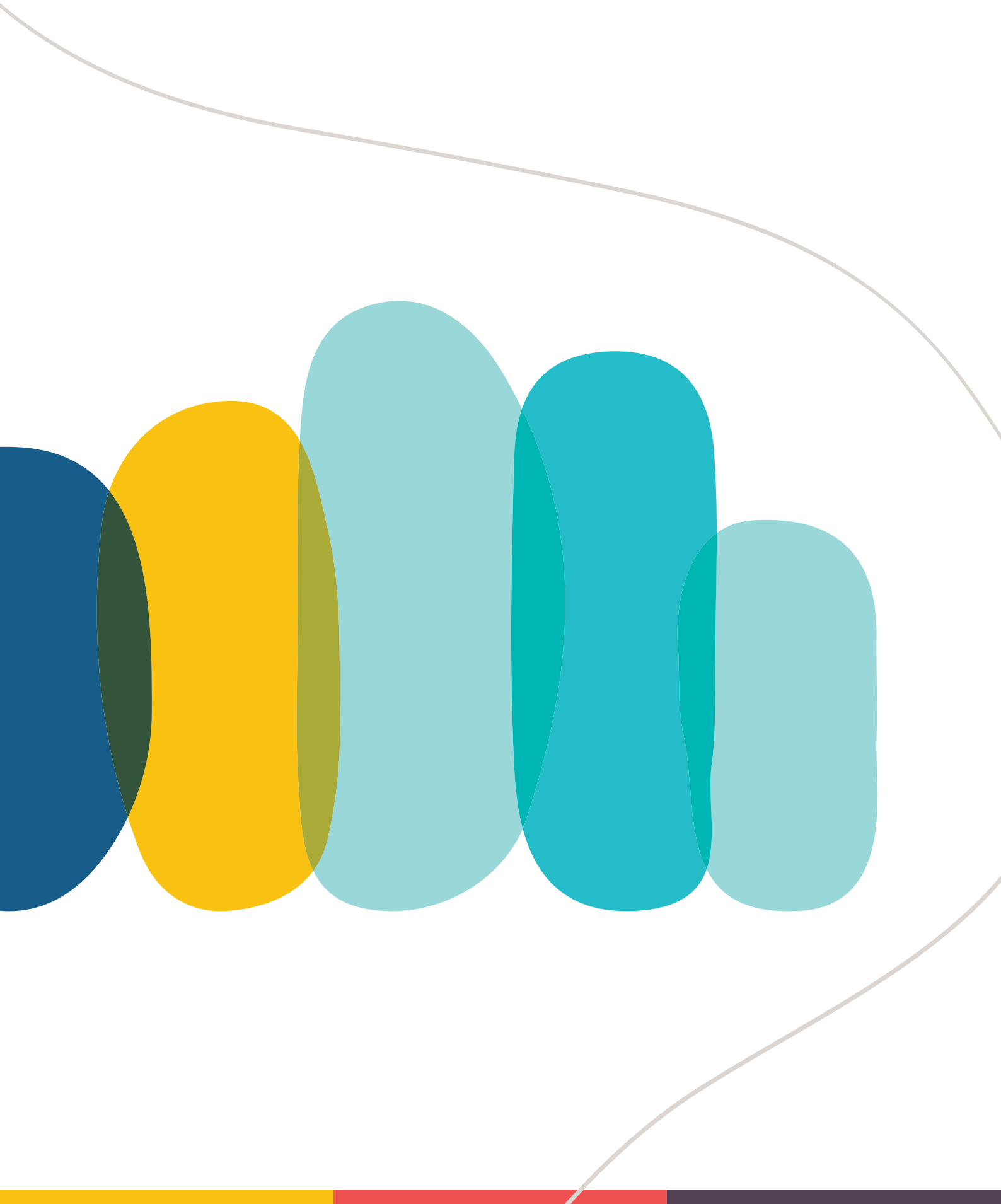
## Alternative formats

Alternative formats of the Department of Communities Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2028 are available at [enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au)

Or contact the Department of Communities on (08) 6217 6888

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Mike Rowe  
**Director General,**

# Director General foreword: DAIP

It is my pleasure to present the Department of Communities' Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2028 (DAIP).

We take our role and responsibilities in meeting the diverse needs of its clients, and their care and support networks, seriously. Similarly, Communities strive to create an internal environment where staff of all abilities are supported in the work they do. The focus of this DAIP is to promote and exercise access and inclusion as part of our day-to-day operations, including the way we develop and deliver programs. It acts as a guiding framework to help us improve our policies, work practices, communication and infrastructure.

Our DAIP aims to promote the access and inclusion of people with disability via our consultation processes, employment, services and events, buildings and facilities, quality of service, information, and complaints.

Aligning our DAIP with '[A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030](#)' was a deliberate approach; it provides

us with a solid foundation to achieve the outcome areas in a more meaningful and person-centred way and allows greater opportunities for people to richly engage in a social, cultural and economic life.

Extensive consultation was undertaken with our internal and external stakeholders to ensure a co-design outcome for our DAIP. This included the establishment of an internal Working Group with members consisting of staff from diverse backgrounds, those with lived experience with disability or as a carer, or within other profiles that could contribute to broader access and inclusion matters. The feedback received, as well as some of the views and aspirations of those consulted, have been incorporated into the DAIP.

My sincere thanks to all who were involved in the development and production of this important document. We look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our access and inclusion goals over the next five years, and beyond.

# People with disability in Western Australia – a snapshot

## 1 in 6



**AUSTRALIANS**

have disability (**4.4 million** people in Australia)



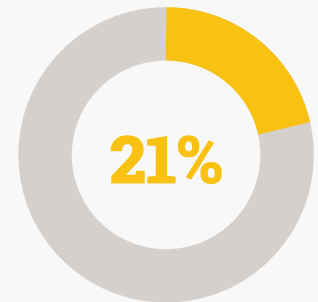
## 411,500

Western Australians **have disability**

## 50%

### OF PEOPLE

aged **65 years and over** have **disability** (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019)

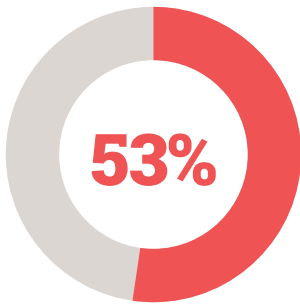


People born in 2018 can expect to **live 21% of their lives with disability** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

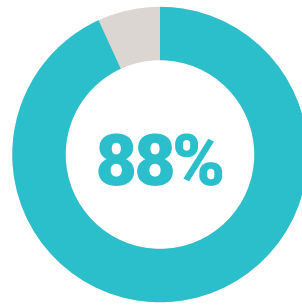
## 36%

36% of Disability Support Pension recipients **aged 16 to 64 years** have a **psychological or psychiatric condition** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

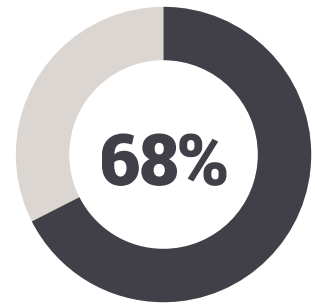




53% of people with disability aged **15 to 64 years** are in the labour force



88% of paid employees with disability aged 15 to 64 years **do not need support to work** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)



68% of people aged 15 to 64 years with disability **have one or more employment restrictions** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

# 1 in 10



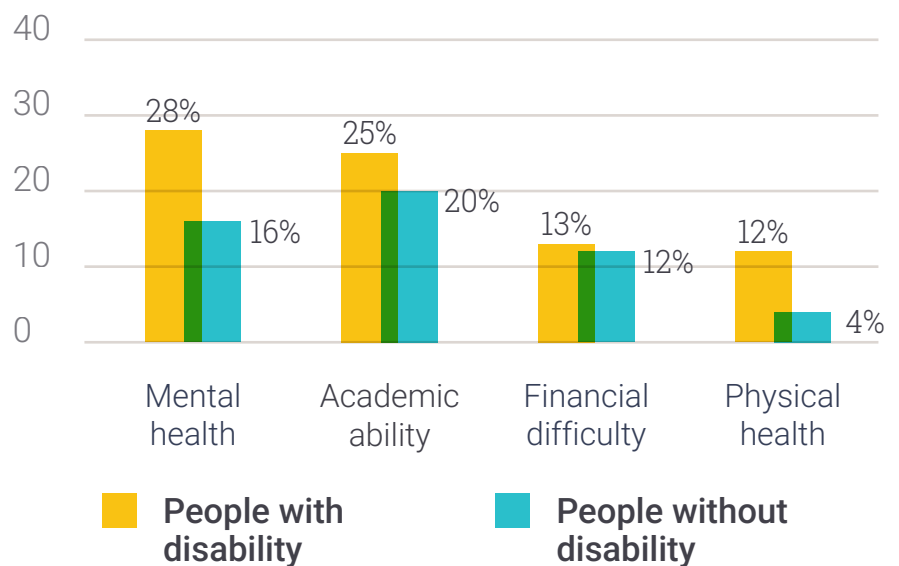
## SCHOOL STUDENTS

have disability. Most students with disability attend mainstream schools (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

**37%**

37% of school students with disability **receiving support need more support.** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

Young people with disability are more likely (64%) to face barriers to achieving their study/work goals after school than those without disability (48%). The most common barriers are:



- mental health (28% compared with 16%)
- academic ability (25% compared with 20%)
- financial difficulty (13% compared with 12%)
- physical health (12% compared with 4.0%).

Respondents were **able to choose more than one option** (Hall et al. 2020 cited Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).



89% of women with disability, and 68% of men **with disability in Australia have experienced sexual harassment**. They are more likely than those without a disability to have been sexually harassed **in the workplace** (44% and 32% respectively). (UN Women 2018).

People with disability

People without disability

## 2.65 MILLION CARERS



There **were 2.65 million carers**, or 11% of the population in 2018. 235,000 carers were under the age of 25 years. **72% of carers were women**. (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019) (UN Women 2018).

Women  
Men

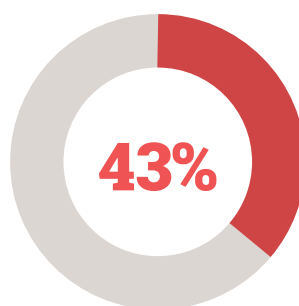


## 1 in 10

1 in 10 people with disability aged 15 years or older **experienced disability discrimination in the past year**

## 47%

47% of adults with disability **have experienced violence after age 15** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)



43% of people with disability aged 15 to 64 years **receive a government payment as their main source of income**

## 1 in 8



people with disability **have modified their accommodation** (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)

# The Department of Communities

The Department of Communities (Communities) is a multi-function human services agency. Everything we do is about people, place and home. We support many Western Australians with a strong focus on some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Our diverse activities include the protection of children, housing assistance, disability support, urban development and providing community grants.

Communities aspires to increase the representation of people with disability at all levels across communities, and to ensure all employees in Communities experience a sense of belonging and inclusion in the work environment.

In all things, we focus on five interconnected outcome areas:

1. **Safe children:** to enable a good start to life
2. **Empowered people:** with valued roles and fulfilling lives
3. **Inclusive and accessible communities:** that enable social, economic and cultural prosperity
4. **A place to call home:** that provides a secure foundation for life
5. **Strong families and kin:** to provide safe and nurturing environments.

(Department of Communities Strategic Plan 2019-2023)



# Alignment with key priorities

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2028 (DAIP) aligns to the outcomes of our strategic and focus area plans, all of which work towards an inclusive and accessible Western Australian community.

Our [Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#) is delivered through a series of annual implementation plans and by business planning at divisional, directorate and district levels. Other plans, policies, and strategies set the foundation to achieve the outcomes of the strategic plan and identify access and inclusion as an area of focus:

- [A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030](#)
- [Disability employment at the Department of Communities \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)
- [WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030](#)
- [Creating Age-friendly Communities in Western Australia 2021 \(www.wa.gov.au\)](#)
- [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#)
- [Department of Communities Multicultural Plan 2021-2023](#)
- [Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality](#)
- Workforce Equity and Diversity Plan
- [Path to Safety: Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030.](#)

## **A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030**

[A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030](#) (State Disability Strategy) is for the whole Western Australian community, designed by and for people with disability. The vision for the Strategy is: People with disability, and those who share their lives, are engaged, and feel empowered to live as they choose in a community where everyone belongs.

It sets the foundation for a more inclusive Western Australia. It empowers people with disability to participate meaningfully in all parts of society and to have the resources to do so. The four pillars of change aim to give people with disability equitable opportunities and outcomes in all areas of life

1. **Participate and contribute** – everyone is involved
2. **Inclusive communities** – places and attitudes are welcoming
3. **Living well** – people are happy and healthy, with the support they need
4. **Rights and equity** – everyone is treated fairly

# Developing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2028

The Department of Communities wanted to strongly align its DAIP with the State Disability Strategy. This was achieved by mapping the seven outcome areas for a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, as specified in the Disability Services Regulations, to the four pillars in State Disability Strategy.

To develop this DAIP, consultation was conducted internally, with employees and key stakeholders, and externally, with the community and targeted organisations. The information gained during these internal and external consultations informed the actions, outcome measures and implementation of this plan.

Internally, a cross-divisional, employee-led working group enabled employees to share their stories, information, and expertise, providing advice to leadership on how to improve services for employees and vulnerable groups in the community.

Broadcasts from the Director General, and advertising on Communities' intranet, encouraged employees to participate in the surveys and opportunities for input.

A literature review and research were completed on significant matters impacting the community. Initial community surveys provided specific feedback on the areas

of change and growth needed to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Our sector partners assisted with promoting the consultation process.

## **The following internal consultations informed the DAIP:**

- a cross-divisional, employee-led working group
- online survey for employees
- consultation sessions for employees
- targeted internal consultations
- focus groups.

## **External feedback on this plan was sought using:**

- advertisements in The West Australian and some regional newspapers
- social media
- targeted external consultations with peak bodies

The DAIP has been finalised after the external consultation. Feedback from the external consultation was discussed by the internal employee-led working group before the DAIP was confirmed.

An implementation plan will be developed to outline the actions, timeframes and responsibilities to achieve the DAIP outcomes.



# Implementing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023-2028



The [Disability Services Act 1993](#) requires our employees, organisations, contractors, and agents to operate in a way consistent with this DAIP. Our implementation plan will outline the actions, timeframes, and responsibilities to achieve the DAIP outcomes. Some of the actions listed over the coming pages are already underway and this will be clarified in the implementation plan.

The DAIP employee working group will meet regularly to review progress on actions and outcomes. Reporting on progress against this DAIP will form part of Communities' Annual Reporting obligations.

This DAIP will be published on Communities' internal and external websites for employees, community, contractors, agents and providers.

Agents or contractors are required to declare in their annual service agreement that they are enacting their own Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.





Communities' Disability  
Access and Inclusion Plan  
2023-2028





# Pillar 1: Participate and contribute

## **1.1 All community members can participate in public consultation conducted by us**

To achieve this, we will:

- Use best practice, partnering, and collaborative approaches to engage with people with disability, carers and diverse groups when creating strategies and planning services.
- Learn from the skills and knowledge of people with lived experience. This includes people with disability, seniors, Aboriginal people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Grow partnerships, networks, skills and leadership in the community and disability sectors. Seek advice from them on how to improve access and inclusion for diverse groups of people.

## **1.2 All community members are encouraged to pursue employment opportunities with us**

To achieve this, we will:

- Aim to increase the percentage of people with disability in our workforce and ensuring that our workforce diversity data is maintained to inform recruitment and workforce planning.
- Strengthen our strategies and policies to improve attraction of people with a disability.

- Use recruitment processes that are best practice and inclusive, and recognise and value diversity, as well as the roles of carers and supporters.
- Partner with disability employment service providers on positions advertised under 66R of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984.
- Promote career progression and ensure that employees with a disability are provided with appropriate development opportunities.
- Include training on unconscious bias, diversity, cultural competence, and mental health and well-being programs in employee induction and onboarding, and for all managers.
- Foster a workplace that welcomes people of all backgrounds and abilities and reflects the diverse community we serve.
- Provide opportunities for employees with a disability to contribute to the review and design of strategies and practices that impact employment outcomes.
- Ensure managers can optimise the work environment to meet employees' needs.
- Provide and promote appropriate software technology (eg alternative formats and platforms, and digital wayfinding) to support employees as needed.
- Managers to ensure Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are reviewed annually and distributed to relevant stakeholders to ensure employees are safe and well while at work.
- Raise awareness and encourage implementation of the Statement for Australia's Carers (Carers Recognition Act 2010) through our employment and contracting practices.

# Pillar 2: Inclusive communities

## **2.1 Our events and services are accessible to all community members**

To achieve this, we will:

- Build our understanding of the access and inclusion needs of the people we serve and the broader community with who we connect. Review and promote the information, tools and resources available to our employees to help them deliver inclusive and accessible events and services for our diverse community.
- Plan, design, promote and deliver events and services to be inclusive and accessible. From the start, we will keep in mind the people who will use the service.
- Apply continuous improvement strategies to enhance access and inclusion to our services and events. Seek input from people with lived experience and provide a platform for the community to provide feedback on our events and services.
- Improve the understanding of employees and contractors on disability and substantive equity. Set clear expectations on inclusive, non-discriminatory practices and behaviours.
- Review our operational procedures to make sure they include disability awareness and inclusive practices to support employees and the community we serve.
- Arrange training on disability awareness and inclusive practices for our employees.

- Transition all public facing information to formats that are accessible (major language groups, easy read, Auslan and large print) and able to be translated with devices used for vision impairment. Investigate and use technology to support accessibility. Write all information in plain English.
- Ensure our emergency response communication protocols for people with disability and vulnerable community members maximises their safety and provides appropriate and up to date information to meet their needs.

## **2.2 Our buildings and other facilities are accessible to all community members**

To achieve this, we will:

- Incorporate universal design principles into all new buildings and facilities. We will exceed the minimum standards to lead by example.
- Have an external evaluator audit our buildings and facilities to ensure they are easily accessible for people with disability.
- Ensure, where possible, that our buildings and their amenities are located so they are inclusive and easily accessible by the community. Signs will be braille and large print, buildings and ablutions will be accessible, and accessible parking bays will exceed the minimum standard.
- Work towards creating a digital platform so people can search for the accessible features of each office before they arrive and know how to get personalised support to facilitate their needs.

## Pillar 3: Living well

### **3.1 All community members will receive the same level and quality of service from our employees**

To achieve this, we will:

- Include the outcomes of this DAIP in our strategic and operational business plans to monitor compliance and results.
- Provide easily available resources for our employees to equip them with the knowledge and skills to serve our diverse community.
- Ensure our policies and practices are inclusive, equitable and reflect the needs of the community. Enhance the capacity of the community to participate in decision-making about services that will impact them.
- Develop and implement procedures to help our frontline employees provide quality services to people with disability.
- Arrange training on disability awareness and inclusive practices for our employees that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensure all agents and contractors that provide services on our behalf comply with this DAIP.

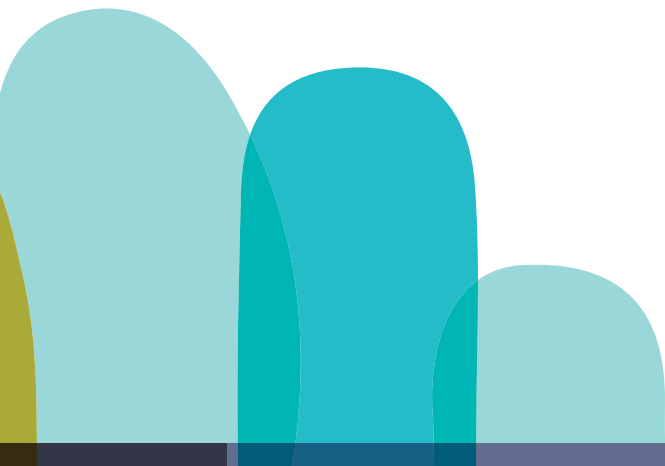


# Pillar 4: Rights and equity

## **4.1 Our information will be accessible to all community members**

To achieve this, we will:

- Provide information for employees and the community in a range of formats, including hard copy and digital. Offer more bespoke solutions to access documents and communication materials as required.
- Provide information in languages other than English.
- Promote to all our business areas, the benefits of providing accessible information. These benefits extend to people with disability, as well as those who speak a language/s other than English, have low literacy, or Aboriginal people.
- Make our websites accessible to a wide range of people, including those using assistive technology. Ensure compliance with the W3C AA Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
- Close caption video and streamed resources.



## **4.2 All community members will have the same opportunities to provide feedback or make complaints to us**

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure our complaint procedures are easy to find and user friendly for people with different backgrounds and abilities.
- Offer a range of ways for people to give feedback or submit a complaint.
- Seek feedback on, and improve, digital complaint platforms to ensure ready access across the state.
- Monitor and measure trends in complaints and our performance (including corrective actions, review of services, risk management and improvements in complaints processes) to improve the accessibility of our services.
- Report on complaint management in our Annual Report including how well we handled complaints, and how we improved our complaint management process.



## Appendix 1: Alignment with key initiatives within Communities

### Department of Communities Multicultural Plan 2021-2023

Communities' Multicultural Plan 2021-23 captures the benefits of cultural diversity among our staff. It aims to improve our cultural competence as it relates to both Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This is our first whole-of-department Multicultural Plan. Targets that will be incorporated into our annual reporting are

grouped under the three key policy priorities from the WA Multicultural Policy Framework:

- **Priority 1** – Harmonious and inclusive communities
- **Priority 2** – Culturally responsive policies, programs and services
- **Priority 3** – Economic, social, cultural, civic and political participation.

### Workforce Equity and Diversity Plan 2020/21 – 2020/23

Diversity in our workforce is a business imperative. It's everyone's responsibility to support an accessible and inclusive workplace that meets the needs of our diverse and contemporary workforce.

Removing barriers to make sure everyone can fully participate in the workplace, and has equal access to opportunities, will empower people to contribute their skills and perspectives. This will benefit both Communities, and the community we serve.

Our Workforce Equity and Diversity Plan 2020/21 - 2020/23 is the road map to a

workforce where all employees are valued and respected. It aligns with Part IX of the [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#).

We are committed to having a workplace culture where people with disability have equal access to employment and development opportunities. People with disability represent 1.9 per cent of our workforce. While this is higher than the public sector representation of 1.5 per cent, we believe we can further improve on this.

## Closing the Gap

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) aims to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

We recognise and support this Agreement. It identifies four priority reform areas and 16 socio-economic targets and outcomes to change the way governments work with

Aboriginal people. Communities is the lead/co-lead agency for four targets and is the support agency for an additional two targets.

This DAIP must focus on improving overall life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This will occur through implementing plans and reporting on progress through the Closing the Gap Reporting Frameworks.

## Stronger Together – WA's Plan for Gender Equality (10-year Plan)

Western Australians are active in the growing global momentum for gender equality and women's rights, including the women's marches and the #metoo and #timesup campaigns. The community is sending a clear message that more needs to be done to achieve gender equality.

[Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality](#) is the first plan of its kind for Western Australia. It was informed by

consultations held across the state that gave the community valuable opportunities to discuss what gender inequality means to them.

The Plan for Gender Equality is an action framework for government, business and the community so we can all work together over the next 10 years to create a better, fairer and more equitable community in Western Australia.



## References

1. Disability Services Commission, Government of Western Australia [Accessibility](#)
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics [Disability, Ageing and Carers Summary of Findings, 2018](#)
3. Australian Public Service [Disability Employment Strategy 2020–2025](#)
4. Department of Communities, Government of Western Australia [A Western Australia for Everyone State Disability Strategy Action Plan 2020–2030](#)
5. Government of Western Australia [Disability Services Act 1993](#)
6. Government of Western Australia [People with Disability: Action Plan to Improve WA Public Sector Employment Outcomes 2020– 2025](#)
7. Australian Institute Health and Welfare [People with Disability in Australia 2020](#)
8. Australian Institute Health and Welfare [Reasonable Adjustment \(Disability Discrimination Act\) policy and procedures](#)
9. Australian Human Rights Commission [The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
10. UN Women [Sexual harassment against women with disabilities in the world of work and on campus](#)



# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2023–2028



## Department of Communities

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Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)  
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If you are deaf, or have a hearing or  
speech impairment, contact us through  
the National Relay Service. For more  
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