



Small Business Development Corporation

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2021

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio (on CD) or Braille.



Small Business
Development Corporation

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Background

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is focused on the development of the small business sector and committed to:

- championing the cause of small business
- developing practical programs and services to meet the needs of small business owners
- establishing and strengthening relationships between SBDC and key agencies (public and private sector)
- maintaining and enhancing the independence, innovation and responsiveness of the Corporation

The mission of the SBDC is to facilitate and deliver relevant, practical support to small businesses and foster the development of policy conducive to the growth of a thriving sector.

The SBDC, led by the Small Business Commissioner, works directly with small business operators and liaises with industry and business associations to exchange information and provide support and assistance to their members. The SBDC also maintains an information centre with a comprehensive range of business resources and delivers workshops for existing and potential small business operators. The Corporation currently consists of the following four functional areas:

- Small Business Services
- Policy and Advocacy
- Communications and Marketing
- Corporate Resources

Products and Services

The Corporation provides a variety of resources and services to support the development of new businesses and the growth of existing businesses, by improving the level of business skills, and promoting a fair operating environment favourable for small business. Some of these services include:

- specialist advice and referral
- small business advocacy services
- dispute resolution services
- business migration
- workshop program
- Business Local outreach service
- Business Information Centre
- Industry Link

The SBDC team is made up of dynamic, creative and resourceful people from a diverse range of business and government backgrounds.

Background to SBDC's Disability Planning

The disability prevalence rate in Australia has remained relatively stable over time, with 18.3% of people reporting disability in 2015, and 18.5% in 2012 and 2009. In this survey, a person has disability if they report they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

There are many different kinds of disability, usually resulting from accidents, illness or genetic disorders. Disability may affect a person's mobility, communication or learning. It can also affect their income and participation in education, social activities and the labour force. The collection of information about people with disability is important for many reasons including the provision of appropriate services and support.

In 2015:

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioural disorders.
- More than half of those with disability aged 15 to 64 years participated in the labour force (53.4%), which is considerably fewer than those without disability (83.2%). These results are consistent with those in the 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC).

The SBDC is driven by the premise that creating an agency which is accessible and inclusive will help support small business owners with a disability. The Corporation adopted its first Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 1996 to address barriers for people with disability who needed access to our services. In 2007, to further the commitment to accessible services and facilities and to comply with the objectives of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended in 2004), the Corporation implemented the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP).

In reviewing and developing this plan, the SBDC remains committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through enhanced access to its information, services and facilities.

The DAIP provides a framework for the identification of barriers to access and inclusion, and for development of strategies to improve access and inclusion. These strategies contribute to seven access and inclusion outcomes, which are defined in the Act:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by a public authority.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and other facilities of a public authority.
3. People with disability receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from employees of a public authority as other people receive from employees of that authority.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.
7. People with a disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

Methodology

The review and development of the SBDC's DAIP was facilitated by the Human Resources Manager and Director of Corporate Resources who used contributions from key staff of the Corporation and employees with a disability to shape the plan. Feedback from workshops delivered by the Corporation was used to gather information on an ongoing basis. Assistance from the assigned liaison officer at the Disability Services Commission provided useful direction, resources and ideas.

Review and achievements since 2012

The review of the DAIP had two primary objectives:

1. Ascertain the success in improving access to the Corporation's services, information and facilities for people with a disability.
2. Identify access barriers that still need to be addressed in the new plan, along with the new initiatives and timeframes.

The review found that, since the adoption of the last DAIP in 2012, the Corporation has implemented the following initiatives and changes towards better access. Achievements include:

- Continued affiliation of the Companion Card Program which promotes the existing right of people with a disability to fair ticketing as a simple method of identifying people who require attendant care and support to participate in events or activities.
- All contractors undergo an induction on commencement and are directed to the SBDC's DAIP to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities.
- People with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services or make a complaint according to the Complaints Management Policy.
- Translators and interpreters are provided to clients if required when seeking business advice or attending an event or workshop at the SBDC.

Consultation and Planning for better access

People with disability consistently report that they do not have the same opportunities as others to participate in community life. They face daily barriers such as being unable to hear what is said, see and read print, climb stairs and understand signage. The SBDC is committed to inclusion so that no clients are impacted in this manner. In addition, the SBDC acknowledges that effective access also benefits other members of the community including the family, friends and carers of people with disability, parents with prams, seniors and those with a temporary disability through accident or illness.

A consultation process ensured that any barriers faced by the Corporation's customers and staff in relation to access and inclusion were identified. Members of the community were invited, via an advert in the Weekend West, to provide further comment on this DAIP through the SBDC's website over a period of three weeks during November 2017.

Our commitment to access and inclusion policy statement

The SBDC is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of services and facilities it provides
- ensuring that people with disability are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of the Corporation's services through consultative processes
- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations, to ensure barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately and quickly
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP
- achieving the seven desired outcomes of its DAIP

Implementation of the DAIP

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires staff and the agents and contractors of the Corporation to conduct their business in a manner consistent with the Corporation's DAIP. It requires agents and contractors to take all practicable measures to ensure that relevant outcomes are implemented.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all staff of the Corporation. Some initiatives apply to all areas of the Corporation while others will apply to specific areas.

Communication of the DAIP

Copies of the Corporation's DAIP will be communicated via:

- the Corporation's website
- a notice placed in the West Australian newspaper
- a notice on the SBDC intranet homepage
- a broadcast email for staff during staff training sessions

Copies of the DAIP will be available in alternative formats and languages upon request.

DAIP reviewing and reporting

The Corporation will review progress against the strategies and undertakes to develop a new DAIP every five years. Monitoring the progress of the DAIP on an annual basis will ensure it remains consistent with the Corporation's priorities and adapts to emerging access and inclusion initiatives.





This will be achieved by:

1. 'HR News' updates to staff about progress on the implementation and achievement of strategies outlined in the DAIP.
2. Appropriate training opportunities for frontline staff and as part of the staff induction process.
3. The Corporation will annually report to the Disability Services Commission as required by Legislation, by 30 June each year on the following:
 - the number of strategies completed, partially completed or not commenced
 - the number of current contractors who are working towards DAIP outcomes
 - the strategies used by the Corporation to inform its contractors about the DAIP
4. In accordance with the Public Sector Commissions Annual Reporting Framework, the Corporation will report on its current initiatives that address each of the seven outcomes, and actions undertaken by the Corporation to implement the DAIP.

Strategies by outcome

Outcome 1

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by the Small Business Development Corporation.

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Ensure that all events organised by the Corporation are planned in accordance with the Disability Service Commission's Creating Accessible Events checklist and make the checklist available to all staff to ensure events are equally accessible to people with disability.	Ongoing
Incorporate DAIP strategies into the Corporation's business and strategic planning. Raise for discussion at Executive meetings, when required.	Ongoing
Contractors who provide a service on behalf of the SBDC continue to be made aware of the DAIP to ensure they conduct their business in accordance with the DAIP outcomes. All contractors will continue to undergo an induction on commencement.	Ongoing

Outcome 2

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

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Ensure the Corporation's facilities are located to maximise ease of access and to promote inclusion within the community.	Ongoing
Ensure appropriate signage is in place to meet the needs of people with disability.	Ongoing
Monitor the emergency evacuation procedures for the building to ensure people with disability are always accounted for.	Ongoing
Conduct regular accessibility audits and ensure that recommendations are implemented where practicable.	Annually

Outcome 3

People with disability have the same level and quality of information from the Corporation in a format that will enable them to understand the information as readily as other people.

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Improve community awareness that the Corporation's information is available in alternative formats upon request.	Ongoing
Ensure all staff are aware that information can potentially be provided in alternative formats.	Ongoing
Continue to ensure that the review and updates to the Corporation's website meet the needs of people with disability by complying with the W3C Guidelines and incorporating new techniques when they become available.	Ongoing
Ensure there is access to interpreter services for people with disability and that staff are aware of the process in engaging an Auslan interpreter if required.	Ongoing



Outcome 4

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

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Conduct regular disability awareness training for staff across the Corporation and specialist training for key frontline staff such as those in the Business Information Centre and Business Advisers.	Ongoing
Provide a link to the Disability Services Commission's website and all relevant resources including access checklists, guidelines for accessible formats and other information available on the Intranet.	Ongoing
Ensure that the Corporation's induction for new staff members includes information regarding disability and access issues and best practice.	Ongoing
Ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills to provide quality services for people with disability, their families and carers.	Ongoing

Outcome 5

People with disability have the same opportunity as other people to make complaints to the Corporation.

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Review existing complaint mechanisms to ensure they meet the needs of people with disability.	30 June 2018
Provide information and guidance to staff on the appropriate application in handling complaints from people with disability.	30 June 2018
Ensure the Corporation's complaints procedures are made available in flexible and accessible formats.	Ongoing

Outcome 6

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

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Increase the community's knowledge of the Corporation's consultation processes and opportunities and develop proactive initiatives to encourage feedback.	Ongoing
Ensure consultation and feedback documents are available in alternative formats on request.	Ongoing



Outcome 7

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

Strategies	Timeframe (due by)
Continue to develop strategies to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of employees with disability. Simple strategies to optimise recruitment processes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reducing complicated job descriptions and excessive selection criteria• allowing extended reading time before an interview• providing for questions throughout the interview• encouraging candidates to pause and compose themselves if required at any stage• using smaller recruitment panels	Ongoing
Promoting the department as an equal opportunity employer.	Ongoing
Consult regularly with employees with disability to ensure their working environment maximises their productivity and comfort.	Ongoing
Consult with disability employment service providers as required.	Ongoing

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