



Disability Action Plan

2010 – 2013

October 2010

Foreword from the Director General

The work of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is guided by the aspiration and principle that all people of NSW should have the opportunity and support they need to live as good a life as possible with dignity, independence, and a strong feeling of wellbeing.

As a new department in the NSW public sector we know that the divisions which form the department have worked hard to be more inclusive for all people, but we can do more to reduce the barriers people with a disability face when working in the department or accessing services provided by the department. We can learn to be more inclusive.

As the department works to improve outcomes for our clients through better planning, resourcing and integrated delivery of services, it is important we build on the past success of our divisions. Over the last three years divisions have reviewed policies and procedures to make sure that they are an accessible and supportive employer.

In this new departmental three year plan we affirm our commitment to an inclusive workplace, and strengthen our focus on the services we deliver.

This plan sets out our goals and actions for the next three years. Actions will be further refined on a year-by-year basis to ensure they remain relevant to our changing society and the work we do. This plan will be refined over the next 12 months, with a view to further integrating the plans of each division and establishing some clear whole-of-Department priorities.

Responsibility for the cultural change required to reach our aspiration belongs to us all and I look forward to working towards a truly inclusive organisation.

Jennifer Mason
Director General

Executive summary

Our vision

The Department of Human Services (DHS) aims to be an employer of first choice for people with a disability and to lead the public sector in building a workforce that more truly reflects and values the diversity of our society.

This DHS Disability Action Plan 2010-2013 seeks to continue the development of a workplace and service delivery culture where inclusive behaviour comes naturally, where people feel confident to interact with a client or a colleague with a disability and where the leadership, tools and resources are available to guide and support access and inclusion.

The Disability Action Plan also aligns with *EmployABILITY*, a disability employment strategy for the NSW public sector to meet its commitments as a major employer and contribute to the achievement of State Plan targets.

Within DHS, the Ageing, Disability and Home Care agency has played a key role in the development of the *EmployABILITY* strategy, which encourages agencies, managers and employees at every level to focus on ability, not disability, and to explore opportunities to value and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our society.

Achievements to date

DHS' three year Disability Action Plan for the period July 2010 to June 2013 builds on the actions undertaken by divisions over the previous years to reduce barriers and enhance opportunities for people with a disability, both as clients and employees.

Previous plans developed by the divisions that now make up DHS focused on the development, review and promotion of whole-of-agency policies and procedures that underpin our work and improved approaches for our own employees or potential employees.

To date, key achievements have included:

- development and review of policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of people with a disability
- work to improve the employment, support and retention of staff with a disability
- access audits of front end service delivery sites
- development and implementation of accessible communication standards and products
- strong efforts to raise awareness amongst staff of approaches, policies, procedures and practical resources available throughout the department.

The next three years

The DHS Disability Action Plan 2010-2013 (DHS DAP) builds on the foundations laid by divisions in planning and implementing service strategies for people with a disability. Over the next three years, we will continue to build on those foundations and achievements and broaden our focus to explore ways to improve how our clients experience our services.

The people of NSW have access to a range of human services from a variety of sources across government and non-government providers. While this Plan focuses on improving client access to and experience of the services that our staff provide, DHS will also play a role in modelling, promoting and influencing the delivery of more accessible and inclusive services to shared clients of our community sector partners. This will be achieved in part through our strong working relationship with all Government agencies and our non-government partners. All government departments will implement disability action plans over the next three years and these complement the already well established working arrangements we have through the various Memoranda of Understanding and agency working agreements.

We will also promote the objectives set out in this document as part of our ongoing working relationship with the non-government community sector. For example, the NSW Disability Services Sector - Directions for Industry Development highlights the partnership between the community sector and government to achieve wellbeing and social inclusion opportunities for people with a disability.

Who is this document for?

All staff and the department as a whole has a responsibility to ensure the goals and strategies of the Disability Action Plan are incorporated into the way we work. DHS' leaders and managers share a direct responsibility to ensure they drive the required organisational change in the department by committing to actions in this Plan and by leading by example. Each staff member has a direct responsibility to ensure they are aware of disability issues and that their workplace practices are non-discriminatory.

Context

People with a disability

Both State and Federal legislation have varying definitions of disability. A definition for disability is detailed in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and in the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (ADA). The *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* (DSA) defines the target groupings for disability services.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of disability, which covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities including:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing (or capable of causing) disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- 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:
 - presently exists; or
 - previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - may exist in the future; or
 - is imputed to a person.

Disability is part of human diversity. In fact one in five Australians have one or more disabilities (ABS, 2003) and this proportion is expected to increase with the ageing of the population. Disability can result from accident, illness, congenital and genetic disorders or the ageing process. It may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary, and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's mobility, cognitive, sensory and interpersonal functions.

The number of people with a disability has increased over time, as has the proportion of the Australian population with disability. The reasons for the increase include:

- people are generally living longer and acquiring disabilities as they age - as the population ages, the number of people with a disability is expected to rise
- people who already have a disability are living longer
- as community attitudes become more accepting of people with a disability, people may be more willing to identify as having a disability.

Legislation and Disability Action Plans

Disability Action Plans support the principles articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the *Disability Services Act 1993*. They further support the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*.

Departmental staff have an obligation to uphold the principles of the *Disability Services Act 1993*. These principles state that:

Persons with disabilities have the same basic human rights as other members of Australian society. Their rights, which apply irrespective of the nature, origin, type or degree of disability, include the following:

- persons with disabilities are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity
- persons with disabilities have the right to live in and be part of the community
- persons with disabilities have the right to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development
- persons with disabilities have the same rights as other members of Australian society to services which will support their attaining a reasonable quality of life
- persons with disabilities have the right to choose their own lifestyle and to have access to information, provided in a manner appropriate to their disability and cultural background, necessary to allow informed choice
- persons with disabilities have the same right as other members of Australian society to participate in the decisions which affect their lives
- persons with disabilities receiving services have the same right as other members of Australian society to receive those services in a manner which results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities.

Discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because they have a disability, had a disability in the past, or another person assumes they have a disability and discriminates against them for that reason. People who are relatives, friends and carers of people with a disability are also protected from discrimination by these laws.

Discrimination laws apply to public behaviour, not to private conduct. Discrimination laws require that people with a disability be given equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to a full range of activities in their lives. This includes the opportunity to seek access to goods, services and facilities provided by government departments.

It is a legislative requirement under Section 9 of the *Disability Services Act* (DSA) that all NSW Government agencies listed in Schedule 1 Parts 1 and 2 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002* are obliged to prepare a Disability Action Plan. The DSA covers all services, whether or not they are provided predominately for people with a disability.

Section 9 of the *Disability Services Act (1993)* requires NSW Government agencies to:

- prepare a Disability Action Plan showing how they propose to meet the needs of people with a disability
- periodically review and report on their progress in implementing the plan
- make the plan and any subsequent amendments available to the public.

The NSW Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulation 1995 currently requires agencies to report on implementation of Disability Action Plans in each annual report.

The NSW State Plan

The NSW State Plan: A new direction for NSW highlights the importance of building inclusive communities so that people with a disability have the same opportunities as other citizens of New South Wales to participate in the life of the community. The NSW State Plan not only commits the NSW Government to the achievement of key social objectives for people with a disability, but also prioritises increased customer satisfaction with government services.

Specific State Plan targets are to:

- measure, report and improve customer satisfaction with government services' key social objectives
- close the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016
- increase the out-of-home participation rate of people with a severe or profound disability to at least 85 percent.

Department of Human Services

Disability Action Plan

DHS employs staff to provide frontline services in the areas of disability, juvenile justice, Aboriginal services, housing and support for children, youth and families. The department coordinates the delivery of its services through rural and metropolitan regions.

Given the size and range of functions of the department, the DHS DAP takes a staged, strategic approach over several years. This approach will enable the department to identify and systematically address barriers to people with a disability across all agencies and regions. Within DHS, the Ageing, Disability and Home Care division will lead the development, implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

The DHS DAP consolidates previous agency Disability Action Plans. Over the next three years further work will be undertaken to incorporate all previous goals and actions into a consolidated and comprehensive plan.

These previous Disability Action Plans of agencies addressed the key areas of employment, information and communication, consultation and decision making, physical access to buildings and facilities, staff awareness and understanding the needs of people with a disability. The DHS DAP continues and expands this focus to include the department's direct service delivery functions. Key considerations will be:

- maximising knowledge gained from the development and implementation of the previous Disability Action Plans
- ensuring a strong emphasis on achieving a cultural shift in the organisation
- ensuring that actions are meaningful and achievable
- exploring and implementing mechanisms for involving people with a disability in the further development, implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

The DHS DAP takes an incremental and sequential approach with some of our Year 1 actions implementing or consolidating the achievements over the last three years.

Some of the work undertaken in previous Disability Action Plans will continue where it requires further work to make it part of ongoing practice. These ongoing activities are noted in each division's action plan. Each agency is working towards the following outcomes:

1. identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability
2. providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability
3. making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

4. assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees
5. increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector
6. using government decision-making, programs and operations to influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability
7. providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not responsive or adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Our priorities and goals

The DHS DAP maintains the key priorities and goals determined by individual agencies' disability action plans prior to 2010. To achieve these goals we continue to explore and implement changes internally. As DHS further develops, common priorities and goals will be synthesised for future Disability Action Plans.

Several Year 1 actions address the key areas of employment, information and communication, consultation and decision making, physical access to buildings and facilities, staff awareness and understanding of the needs of people with a disability, as well as moving towards an increased emphasis on the department's direct service delivery functions.

Some specific examples of the strategies that divisions have identified to address key areas are:

- including within the induction Program a Disability Awareness Training for all new staff when joining Aboriginal Affairs
- creating an identified position for an Aboriginal person with a disability in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (Aboriginal Housing Office)
- including a person with a disability on interview selection panels where appropriate (Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- conducting a training needs analysis to identify training needs of BSC staff in disability awareness (Businesslink)
- recruiting staff with a disability to advisory boards and committees as appropriate (Community Services)
- improving management practices in relation to staff with a disability through workplace adjustment including flexible work practices and job design, and disability awareness training (Housing NSW)
- Incorporating the physical accessibility of each property, including the accessibility of public transport, into future building standards and into the selection criteria for properties (Juvenile Justice).

In Year 2 and Year 3 of the Plan the focus will shift to actions that have a more direct impact on service delivery. Examples include:

- All information published on the DAA's website and Bayalagu to comply with Accessibility Guidelines and government requirements (Aboriginal Affairs);
- fund modifications for Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to suit needs of occupants with disability (Aboriginal Housing Office);
- developing strategy and approaches to include people with a disability in service development and planning (Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- reviewing accessibility to services provided by incorporating disability access into current customer satisfaction surveys administered by Businesslink (Businesslink);

- strengthening communications about supports for families where a child has a disability. Increased access to a range of services provided under the Brighter Futures Program that respond to identified individual and family needs for families with children under nine years, or who are expecting a child (Community Services)
- working with NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care to improve access to Occupational Therapists' assessment and reporting for disability modifications (Housing NSW)
- incorporating the needs of young offenders with disabilities into the standards for community based and custodial services (Juvenile Justice).

Governance

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Ageing, Disability and Home care will lead the development of the DHS DAP.

Divisional DAPs

Each division will continue to use their existing structures to develop, implement and review their Action Plan.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care will provide support and advice to divisions in the development of their DAP.

Consultation

All divisions have undertaken consultation in the development of their respective Disability Action Plans. These consultations also provided an opportunity for discussions about the work the department collectively does well and for identifying actions to improve public access to services. The outcomes of these agency consultations informed the development of this Plan.

The Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies, September 2008, recommends agencies consult with external stakeholders to:

- identify the most effective means of providing equitable services to people with a disability
- determine any specific barriers people with a disability may encounter in relation to their dealings with the agency
- set priorities and identify solutions to concerns raised
- assess and review the effectiveness of previous measures taken.¹

¹ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care *Guidelines for disability action planning* September 2008

Divisional Disability Action Plans

The following section contains each division's Disability Action Plan detailing the strategies to be used to achieve the planning outcomes as described in the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies*².

Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Housing Office

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Businesslink Pty Ltd

Community Services

Housing NSW

Juvenile Justice

² NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care *Guidelines for disability action planning* September 2008

Aboriginal Affairs Disability Action Plan 2008-2010

Introduction

Scope

This Disability Action Plan has been developed within the New South Wales (NSW) Government's *Disability Policy Framework*. The *Disability Policy Framework* translates into action the Government's commitment to improving the opportunities for people with disabilities to share fully in community life. NSW Government agencies are required under the framework to prepare a plan, which is to be submitted to the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and reported against in the Annual Report.

The framework provides an opportunity for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to measure and record its achievements whilst demonstrating its ongoing commitment to equity and access in all aspects of service provision.

As required by the framework, the first section of this plan provides the context in which planning has been undertaken. The framework also requires the identification of tangible and measurable actions in a range of nominated areas considered having the greatest potential to improve access in all areas of provision of public services.

This Disability Action Plan sets the agenda for mainstreaming disability issues in the planning and on-going development within the organisation. The tasks identified in 'Priority Areas for Action' set clear and achievable priorities for 2008-2010. Successful implementation of these areas for action will integrate access into the Department's strategic, budget and operational planning processes.

Executive Summary

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) has produced this Disability Action Plan 2008 to 2010 as required by the New South Wales Disability Policy Framework. The Plan was developed by a Human Resources working group. The working group identified barriers to access to the Department's services, facilities and resources and developed the Plan.

The Plan was endorsed by DAA's Executive in April 2008.

Objective

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to improving access to DAA information and its offices throughout New South Wales, for clients and stakeholders with a disability and to providing employment and career opportunities for people with a disability.

DAA is committed to supporting and meeting the needs of people and stakeholders with disabilities who are in contact with DAA services.

DAA is also committed to fully meeting its obligations under the State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These laws require the Department to eliminate practices which may discriminate against people with disabilities, and to assist people who are in contact with DAA in gaining full and equal access to departmental services.

The Disability Action Plan 2008-2010 is a working document which is intended to develop the disability competence and confidence of the Department, and ensure better support for people with disabilities who are in contact with DAA.

Definition of Disability

The NSW Disability Services Act 1993, defines its target group as people with a disability:

- a) that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments, and
- b) that is permanent or is likely to be permanent, and
- c) that results in:
 - i. a significantly reduced capacity in one or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, mobility, decision making or self-care, and
 - ii. the need for support, whether or not of an ongoing nature.

Workforce Profile

DAA has a workforce profile of approximately 97 established positions consisting of a mix of permanent and temporary staff. A significant proportion of these staff are temporary based on the nature of the funding provided for specific program delivery across the State.

DAA provides a State-Wide regional presence with positions located in rural centres to be able to more effectively liaise with regional stakeholders

The DAA's staff are critical to the success of the organisation. Staff appointments are on the basis of merit to ensure the best people are recruited and promoted. A strong emphasis is placed on staff involvement in the operation of the Department through participation, teamwork and effective communication. Employees enjoy equality of opportunity in employment, and a work environment, which is free from harassment and bullying.

Approach to disability Issues

The Department's Corporate Plan, Results and Services Plan set the agenda organisational commitment to high levels of accessibility for people with disabilities through the following strategies:

- Ensuring all staff are conversant with the Department's commitment to accessibility;
- Ensuring accessibility to all Aboriginal Affairs stakeholders and the community is available at all our regional offices and head office;
- Ensuring the Department's event and operational activities include access requirements.

Organisational Context

DAA, through the partnership between the Government and the Aboriginal people of New South Wales, is the lead agency for driving positive change and achievements in Aboriginal affairs and strengthening Aboriginal communities.

The Department is also responsible for the administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

In this role DAA has lead agency responsibility for coordinating with partner agencies to ensure delivery of the State Plan Priority: F1: Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Department achieves this and the strengthening of Aboriginal communities by working towards the following results:

- Aboriginal communities are socially, economically and culturally strong;
- NSW Government agencies are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, and cooperate on Aboriginal issues;
- Aboriginal people and communities are engaged in developing and implementing government policies and programs on Aboriginal issues; and
- Aboriginal people have access to culturally appropriate services.

Key services provided by the Department to contribute to these results include:

- Providing clear and appropriate policy advice to the Minister on the impact of government programs, services and decisions on Aboriginal people;

Promoting and advocating Aboriginal culture through administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*, support for local projects and events and maintenance of the Aboriginal family records database;

Coordinating the F1 Priority Delivery Plan "Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people" and NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Plan 2003-2012 - Two Ways Together which achieves a collaborative approach by relevant agencies in addressing Aboriginal issues;

Supporting Aboriginal participation in decision making at State, Regional and Local levels;

Coordinating the work of agencies addressing access for Aboriginal communities to satisfactory environmental health infrastructure through the Aboriginal Communities Development Program;

Advising and influencing government agencies in their development of policies and delivery of services to overcome Aboriginal disadvantage.

The Department's focus for the next three years is on the following priority areas:

- ▶ 1 Support, strengthen and promote culture and heritage
- ▶ 2 Strengthen governance and community resilience
- ▶ 3 Support and build healthy, prosperous and safer families and communities
- ▶ 4 Coordinate and lead government policy and service delivery

Our Clients (Aboriginal people and communities and other stakeholders)

The Government of NSW has committed to help build healthier, safer and more prosperous Aboriginal communities. The Department will support this commitment by taking a strategic approach that reflects the interrelated and complex causes of Aboriginal disadvantage.

The Department can achieve its goal of supporting Aboriginal communities and government to work together, we will influence the way Government programs and services are coordinated and how well these are matched to the needs of Aboriginal people. The Department's policy leadership under *Two Ways Together* is made more effective combined with the Government's developed range of specific programs to improve the lives of Aboriginal people. These include Job Compacts, Aboriginal Communities Development Program, development of environmental health infrastructure (water and sewerage), Safe Families Program, support for carbon sequestration and other commercial ventures.

The Department will continue to deliver on the NSW Government's commitment to represent the interests of the State's Aboriginal people in the national agenda, when:

- • the Director-General supports the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA);
- • the Department provides advice to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), and administers COAG policies to close the gap;
- • the Department influences policy through the State/Federal bilateral agreement by providing analysis and advice.

DAA will continue to strengthen government and community engagement by providing expert advice and support to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The Department will also continue to provide publicity for key issues, arrange Ministerial visits to Aboriginal communities, and to seek the Minister's support for local *Two Ways Together* initiatives.

Implementation of the Disability Action Plan

To ensure an integrated approach to service planning and delivery, the Disability Action Plan will be incorporated into the department's Corporate Plan and all Divisional business planning. This process will help ensure that the

strategies and actions detailed in the Disability Action Plan become a part of our business.

The **HR Working Party** will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and will report to the Executive Committee.

The Disability Action Plan will be promoted and disseminated as follows:

- Distribution of copies to peak disability organisations and making copies available to all stakeholders, with alternative formats available on request and in a timely manner;
- Summary to be circulated to staff and available for general distribution with the full document being available through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs website; and Intranet “Bayalagu”
- Report on implementation to be included in the Department’s Annual Report, which will be forwarded to the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Evaluation

Senior Executives ensure all policies and practices comply with anti-discrimination and occupational health, safety and rehabilitation legislation and promote the establishment of equal employment opportunity and adherence to the Charter of Principles for a culturally diverse society in accordance with Government Policy.

The Executive Director Business Strategy and Support will take responsibility for the evaluation, review and monitoring of the Disability Action Plan.

‘Priority Areas for Action’ identify key performance indicators, timelines and resources that relate to strategies for overcoming those barriers already identified. The success of this Disability Action Plan will be determined by measuring achievement against these performance indicators and commitments made within the body of this document.

The following evaluation procedures will be adopted:

- Six monthly progress reports from key areas will be provided to the Executive Committee.
- The Disability Action Plan will be reviewed annually, with a report provided to the Executive Committee.
- Results of the DAP will be published in the Department’s Annual Report.
- Evaluation procedures will include the capacity to involve other government agencies, the Aboriginal community and other major stakeholders.

Priority Areas for Action

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs Disability Action Plan focuses on three priorities, in accordance with the Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies:

- Physical Access

- Promoting Positive Community Attitudes
- Information about Services
- Training of Staff
- Employment in the Public Sector of People with Disabilities
- Complaints Procedures

The table below identifies those priorities and the designated Units within DAA with primary responsibility for the carriage of issues responding to the priority areas for action.

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Physical Access

OBJECTIVE: DAA offices and facilities to ensure that people with a disability do not experience discrimination as either users of services or as staff, and have their particular needs for services and support acknowledged and met.

OUTCOME: Our offices and facilities are adapted to enable effective and equitable access by people with a disability.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
1. Maintain offices and facilities to comply with the requirements of relevant Building Code of Australia and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.	All fit-outs and refurbishments comply with requirements of Building Code of Australia; Australian Standards; Disability Discrimination Act 1992	2008-2010	Corporate Services Manager, Project Managers & Executive	Within budget	

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Training of Staff

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that DAA staff are adequately trained to provide effective services and access to employment for people with a disability.

OUTCOME: Staff are confident and competent in providing services to people with disabilities in a manner which acknowledges the rights of people with a disability.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
2. Include within the Induction Program a Disability Awareness Training for all new staff when joining DAA.	100% of all new staff recorded as having attended disability awareness training.	Ongoing	Human Resources	Within budget	

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Information about Services

OBJECTIVE: Provide information about DAA services in accessible manner to all clients and stakeholders.

OUTCOME: Information about our services and programs are communicated in a range of methods to accommodate the needs of a range of disabilities.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
3. All information published on the DAA's website and Bayalagu comply with Accessibility Guidelines and government requirements.	All information supplied on the web meets guidelines and government requirements. Compliance with W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines Access to electronic commerce and new service information technologies for older Australians and people with a disability	Ongoing	Executive Director E&BS	Within budget	Bayalagu updated in 2008 and 2009 with all relevant policies

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Employment in DAA

OBJECTIVE: Ensure policies and practices which meet the Department's responsibilities as an EEO employer, comply with the requirements of the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*, and actively encourage employment, career opportunities and career progression for people with a disability.

OUTCOME: People with a disability are actively encouraged to work at DAA and their career progress is comparable to other staff with similar knowledge, skills and experience.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
4. Selection Committees trained in the responsibilities of DAA as an EEO employer for selection and interview processes in relation to people with a disability.	Disability requirements included in selection techniques training.	2008-2010	Human Resources Officer	Within budget	

Aboriginal Housing Office Disability Action Plan 2009-2013

Policy Statement

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is committed to:

- ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (hereafter referred to as Aboriginal) with disabilities have full access to all our services;
- ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to apply their skills and abilities within the AHO as every other person, and,
- providing appropriate adjustments for staff with disabilities.

The AHO will work with the Aboriginal community housing sector to ensure that processes are in place to address the needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities as tenants, employees or both.

People with disabilities may require special facilities or modified equipment to assist them to access employment within the AHO, and to access services provided and delivered by the AHO. Such facilities may include handrails, ramps, elevators, specific ergonomically designed work spaces, modified toilet facilities or technical equipment such as closed circuit television, Braille word processors and telephone typewriters.

To comply with the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, AHO management and staff must be aware of their responsibilities to ensure that people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect. Management and staff will deliver upon any adjustment required for disabled people and ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made, either to AHO dwellings or within the workplace.

The AHO will also work with Housing NSW (HNSW), Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other relevant government departments, and community housing providers, as required to ensure that Aboriginal people with disabilities who are social housing tenants or applicants for social housing are able to access accommodation which is appropriate for their needs.

Introduction

The AHO Disability Action Plan 2009-2013 details the AHO's commitment to providing appropriate affordable and accessible housing services to Aboriginal people with a disability, and providing employment opportunities to disabled applicants and staff.

The Plan was developed in accordance with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies* and under the guidance of the AHO Board and senior management.

An overview of the AHO

The AHO is a statutory authority established by the NSW Government in 1998 to assist Aboriginal people to meet their housing needs and to increase the range of housing choices, especially for those most in need.

The AHO has 69 staff, as detailed in the AHO Annual report 2007/08.³ Of this, approximately 60% are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. 3% of staff have identified as having a disability.

As well as its head office in Parramatta, the AHO has offices within 3 regions:



Northern Region, covers approx 170,000 square kilometres. The major services and housing demand centres for Aboriginal families are Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Newcastle, Moree, Port Macquarie, Tamworth and Tweed heads. There are some 1,685 properties owned by ACHPs and 1,570 owned by the AHO within the Region.⁴ Currently approximately 40% of Aboriginal people in NSW live in the Northern region. (See appendix 1)

Sydney/South Eastern Region: The Sydney/South Eastern Region covers some 69,150 square kilometers. Thirty six percent of Aboriginal people living

³ Aboriginal Housing Office Annual Report 2007-2008 p 50

⁴ Ibid p. 20

in NSW live in this region. (See appendix 1) Although small in geographical comparison with other Regions, Sydney has the highest Aboriginal population in NSW (around 31%) while the South Eastern area has the smallest percentage of 6%⁵.

Western Region: The Western Region covers approximately two thirds of NSW on a land mass extending from the Queensland border to the Victorian and South Australian borders, including a number of significant remote Indigenous communities. More than 23% of the NSW Aboriginal population lives in Western Region. (See Appendix 1)

Aboriginal Housing

In pursuing its vision for Aboriginal people living in NSW to live in culturally appropriate, affordable quality housing and undertaking its role of developing a viable Aboriginal housing sector, the AHO has developed and implemented a number of housing assistance projects which are supported by both State and Australian Government funding.

The AHO is committed to the primary aim of *The State Plan – A new direction for NSW* to deliver better results for the people of NSW. The *Plan* is committed to ‘strengthening Aboriginal communities’ and provides an overarching influence and direction in all planning and service delivery.⁶

The AHO Capital Works Program includes dwellings acquired or constructed for use by Aboriginal people that are funded under the various National Agreements. These dwellings are owned by the AHO, and typically managed by HNSW under a fee-for-service basis.

The AHO maintenance program provides repairs and maintenance of properties owned by the AHO, as well properties owned by Aboriginal community housing providers. The maintenance program ensures that all Aboriginal housing meets public housing standards and aligns those standards with mainstream community housing.

Meeting the Needs of Disabled people

The needs of disabled people are one of the criteria taken into account in the development of both the capital and maintenance programs. Improved capacity within the Aboriginal community housing sector will also enhance the ability to meet the needs of disabled people within the overall tenant group.

Definition of Disability

Both State and Federal legislation have varying definitions of “disability”. A definition for “disability” is detailed in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

⁵ ibid p. 21

⁶ Ibid p. 3

(ADA). The NSW Disability Services Act 1993 (DSA) defines the target groupings for disability services.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of “disability”, which covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities, including

- total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2003 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, defined disability as;

“..... a person has a disability if they report that they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. This includes:

- loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses)
- loss of hearing where communication is restricted, or an aid to assist with, or substitute for, hearing is used
- speech difficulties
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties causing restriction
- chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort causing restriction
- blackouts, fits, or loss of consciousness
- difficulty learning or understanding
- incomplete use of arms or fingers
- difficulty gripping or holding things
- incomplete use of feet or legs
- nervous or emotional condition causing restriction
- restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work
- disfigurement or deformity
- mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision
- long-term effects of head injury, stroke or other brain damage causing restriction

- receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term conditions or ailments and still restricted
- any other long-term conditions resulting in a restriction”⁷

ABS data indicates the under-representation of Aboriginal people in the user population of disability services. This is despite the incidences of disability in the Aboriginal population being higher than in the Australian population as a whole.⁸

Publications from the Aboriginal Disability Network⁹ and the National Disability Network¹⁰ agree that many NSW Aboriginal communities have differing understandings and interpretations of ‘disability’; often not able to differentiate between ageing, disability and mental illness.

Aboriginal Population with Disabilities

The *Two Ways Together Report on Indicators 2007*¹¹ found that, when compared to Non-Aboriginal people,

- Aboriginal people are more likely to describe their health as fair or poor.
- Aboriginal people are more likely to report three or more long term medical conditions, including kidney disease, results of injuries or accidents, asthma, bronchitis, migraine, diabetes, high cholesterol, cancers and infections diseases.

The Report also found that hospitalisations rates for diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dialysis, are higher for Aboriginal people than for the total population. Between 2000-01 and 2005-6 the hospitalisation rates for cardiovascular disease fell for the total population; however the rate rose for Aboriginal males.

The Commonwealth Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2005 Report* notes that:

"The proportion of the Indigenous population 15 years and over, reporting a disability or long term health condition was 37 per cent (102 900 people). The proportions were similar in remote and non-remote areas."¹²

⁷ ABS, Disability, Ageing & Carers: Summary of Findings, Australia 2003 (cat. No. 4430.0)

⁸ John Gilroy, [Service Delivery for Aboriginal People with a Disability and their Families](#), *Disparity*, Vol. 5 No 1 pp24-27, 2008

⁹ Aboriginal Disability Network Telling it Like It is: a report on community consultation with Aboriginal people with disability and their associates throughout NSW 2004-2005 September 2007

¹⁰ John Gilroy, [Service Delivery for Aboriginal People with a Disability and their Families](#), *Disparity*, Vol. 5 No 1 pp24-27, 2008

¹¹ NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *Two Ways together Report on Indicators 2007* p. 19-20

According to the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Report 2005, “disability or long-term health condition” includes a greater range of conditions than disability and core activity restriction. It could include individuals whose disability does not result in specific limitations. “Disability or core activity restriction” as used in the Report refers to ‘limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder, which has lasted, or was likely to last for six months or more, and which restricted a person’s ability to perform everyday activities’.

It can be cautiously inferred that, based on the trend within the Indigenous population, at a minimum, 1 in 3 AHO tenants have a disability or long-term health condition. As it is considered that social housing tenants could be over represented with tenants with complex needs, the proportion can be expected to be higher.

In 2007, an updated Review of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Report indicated that health issues and disability were not decreasing, and in many instances were worsening.¹³

AHO Households and Tenants

A HNSW report indicates that, in March 2009, 30 per cent of tenants who receive rental subsidy also receive payments of Disability Support Pension (DSP) or Carer Payment through Centrelink. Subsidised tenants make up 80% of AHO tenants.

HNSW, as manager of AHO properties, does not obtain detail on the type of disabilities of tenants. Also, Aboriginal Community Housing Providers do not maintain data on disabled tenants. Therefore the AHO is currently only able to report on a proportion of its tenants, rather than all of its tenants.

AHO Staff with Disabilities

NSW Government has a global target of 12 percent of staff having a disability and 7% for people with a disability who require work-related adjustments.

The 2007/08 AHO Annual Report indicates that the AHO has 3 per cent of staff with a disability¹⁴, which was an increase on previous years. The AHO has not completed a comprehensive disability survey of its staff in recent years, and acknowledges that the information held regarding its disabled staff may not be accurate. To correct this, the AHO plans to conduct a comprehensive Disability Survey of all Staff in 2009/10. This survey will provide more accurate information on staff with disabilities.

Disability Action Plan Consultation

¹² Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2005 Report Commonwealth of Australia, p.3.6

¹³ Overview, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators Report, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007. p4

¹⁴ NSW Aboriginal Housing Office *Annual Report 2007/2008*, p. 51.

The development of this Action Plan involved consultations with:

- Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- AHO Board
- Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC) members
- Aboriginal Disability Network
- NSWALC
- HNSW and
- AHO staff.

The Plan also refers to research and reports completed by

- AHO
- Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics
- Department of aboriginal Affairs
- KPMG on behalf of HNSW
- National Disability Services

Communication Strategies

The Disability Action Plan will be provided to all staff, Board members, members of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees (RAHCs) and ACHPs. The Plan will be accessed on the AHO website.

Distribution of the Plan will enable staff, tenants and members of the community to become familiar with the actions outlined in the Plan and increase awareness of the AHO's commitment to meeting the housing needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities, as well as providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

Priorities for Action

The AHO Disability Action plan focuses on 7 priorities, in accordance with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies*:

1. Identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability
2. Provide information in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability
3. Improve physical accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with a disability
4. Assist the participation of people with a disability in public consultations and on AHO advisory boards and committees
5. Increase employment participation of people with a disability in the AHO
6. Influence other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing

7. Provide quality specialist and adapted services to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

The plan will be monitored and evaluated by the Director corporate Services every 12 months through the life of the plan (5 years).

Reporting

Progress against Performance Indicators will be reported on in the AHO's Annual Report every three years. A copy of the DAP will be submitted to the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for publication on their web site. The Director Corporate Services will report to the AHO Executive every 12 months.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 1 Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability	Improve information collection, analysis and use of disability data in asset and service planning.	Manager, Planning and Reporting	2009 and ongoing	Improved quality of data collected on tenants with disability.
	Identify disability awareness training for all AHO staff who work with people who may have a range of disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Course/s identified.
	The provision of Disability Awareness training included in AHO Induction Program	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Disability Awareness Training detailed on Induction checklist for all new staff.
	Disability Awareness training provided for all AHO staff	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010 and ongoing	All AHO staff complete training
	Specific Disability Awareness training provided for AHO staff who work with people who have a range of disabilities	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Staff complete training as required
	Develop information systems to identify assets with	Director Statewide Housing Services	2009 and ongoing	System developed and implemented.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
	disability modifications.			
	Adapt complaints management systems to accept complaints from tenants and applicants in a range of formats.	Director Corporate Services	2009	Complaints Policy updated and distributed in a range of formats.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 2 Providing information and services in a range of acceptable formats	Develop and update fact sheets and brochures on a range of housing assistance and other communication, including electronic communication, for people with a range of disabilities	Director Policy and Strategic Development AHIS	2010 and ongoing	Fact sheets reviewed and updated Range of formats developed, used and distributed.
	AHO Website upgraded to meet requirements	Director Corporate Services	July 2009	By July 2009 the AHO website will comply with level 'Double A' in W3C's web Content Accessibility Guidelines and will provide a statement on accessibility
	Update information on AHO website and presented in format relevant to people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Director Statewide Housing Services Director Policy and Strategic Development	2009 and ongoing	Website updated.
	Annual reporting of Disability Action plan in AHO Annual Report	Director Corporate Services	2009 and ongoing	AHO Annual Report includes updated review of Plan progress
Outcome 3	Develop long term office	Director Corporate	2010 and ongoing	All buildings newly acquired by

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Making buildings and facilities physically accessible	accommodation strategy to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.	Services Office Manager		AHO comply, or plan to comply, with the disability Components of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the relevant parts of the Australian Building standards 1428: Design for Access and Mobility All AHO offices physically accessible
	Audit AHO offices to assess accessibility for people with disability and modify accordingly.	Director Corporate Services Office Manager	2009	All AHO offices are accessible to people with disabilities.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
Outcome 5	Complete Staff Survey to	Director Corporate	December 2009	Survey completed and results

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
Increasing	identify staff with disabilities	Services Human Resources		analysed

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
employment participation in AHO		Manager		
	Improve AHO recruitment	Director Corporate	2009 and ongoing	Employment for people with a

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	practices for people with a disability by increasing the use of disability employment	Services Human Resources		disability is 12% of all employees

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	agencies	Manager		Employment for people with a disability who require work-place adjustment is 7% of all

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
				employees
	Managers to complete	Director Corporate	2010 and ongoing	Managers complete training

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	disability training to empower managers to work effectively and confidently with people	Services Human Resources		

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	with a disability.	Manager		
	AHO to provide training for	Director Corporate	2009 and ongoing	Training courses provided as

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	staff and managers on specific health/ disability issues relevant to staff within	Services Human Resources		required

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	a business unit	Manager		

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 5 Increasing employment participation in AHO (cont.)	AHO employees are informed of the rights of disabled persons.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Induction Program updated
	Investigate the establishment of an inter-agency mentoring program for staff with a disability	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010-2011	Mentoring program investigated
Outcome 6 Influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing	Assist Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to provide training to assist staff working with people who may have a range of disabilities	Director Statewide Housing Services Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Training course identified Training completed
	Develop and promote partnerships with other government agencies to share resources and expertise.	Director Statewide Housing Services Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010 and ongoing	Partnerships developed and promoted, improving access for people with a disability.

		Regional Managers		
Outcome 7	Identify need for dwelling modifications	Director Statewide Housing Services	Ongoing 2010	Data compiled and updated
Providing specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not responsive or adequate to meet the needs	Fund modifications for Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to suit needs of occupants with disability	Director Statewide Housing Services	Commence 2009 Complete 2013	Modifications completed
	Analyse alternative means of providing full access to dwellings using current technologies	Director Statewide Housing Services	2011	Analysis complete New technologies adopted where appropriate

Appendix 1: NSW INDIGENOUS POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2006-2009

DAA RCMG	2006	2009	% NSW	% NSW	Average Annual Growth Rate
REGIONS			2006	2009	
AHO NORTHERN REGION					
Males	29,998	32,456	39.4%	39.9%	2.41%
Females	30,527	32,811	39.9%	40.2%	2.37%
Total	60,526	65,267	39.6%	40.1%	2.39%
AHO SYDNEY SOUTH-EAST REGION					
Males	28,192	29,836	37.0%	36.7%	1.98%
Females	27,903	29,705	36.5%	36.4%	2.03%
Total	56,095	59,541	36.7%	36.6%	2.01%
AHO WESTERN REGION					
Males	18,039	19,021	23.7%	23.4%	1.96%
Females	18,026	19,043	23.6%	23.3%	1.90%
Total	36,065	38,064	23.6%	23.4%	1.93%
TOTAL NSW					
Males	76,229	81,312	100.0%	100.0%	2.15%
Females	76,456	81,559	100.0%	100.0%	2.14%
Total	152,685	162,871	100.0%	100.0%	2.15%

Source: Derived using population projections data presented in: Noor A Khalidi, Aboriginal Population Projections, NSW 2006 to 2021, DAA, 2009.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care Disability Action Plan 2010-2013

Introduction

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) *Disability Action Plan 2010 – 2013* identifies activities and outcomes for the Agency to ensure that, as far as possible, people with a disability are able to access services and facilities on an equitable basis, without facing discrimination or barriers. The implementation of this plan continues ADHC's work to review and improve services for people with a disability; develop more appropriate and sustainable public services; and reduce barriers for people with a disability.

ADHC's plan builds on the work of the previous *Disability Action Plan* for 2000-2002 and has been developed in accordance with the *Guidelines for Disability Action Planning by NSW Government agencies*, released by ADHC in September 2008. The plan involves new and existing strategies across ADHC and aims to link with business planning and complement key initiatives such as *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011* and *Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2016*.

The plan is informed by consultations conducted for *Stronger Together* planning involving people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocates, academics, peak bodies and the community. Further consultations with staff and disability peak organisations were conducted to refine the actions, responsibilities and timeframes within the plan.

Policy Statement

ADHC is committed to creating, promoting and sustaining opportunities and services that allow people with a disability, older people and their carers to participate in the wider community and to live as full a life as possible. The experiences and perspectives of people with a disability are diverse and effective strategies for improving outcomes for people with a disability will need to be varied and flexible. Strengthening available supports is a primary focus of ADHC and a crucial part of an early intervention and prevention approach that aims to assist people to stay in their own homes with their families wherever possible.

Effective planning to meet the needs of people with a disability requires a community-wide, whole-of-government approach. The Australian Government has set the framework for a new national disability reform agenda that places people with a disability, their families and carers at the centre of services across Australia. The NSW Government and ADHC have a number of policy commitments that support planning for inclusive services to meet the needs of people with a disability.

United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people with disability, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Australia ratified the Convention on 17 July 2008.
National Disability Agreement 2009	<p>The Council of Australian Governments' national framework commits government agencies to a new national disability reform agenda.</p> <p>The objective of the Agreement is to create an effective, efficient and equitable disability service system which places the individual at the centre of service delivery and enhances the well-being, contribution and inclusion of people with a disability. The Agreement also aims to support families and carers.</p>
NSW State Plan: A New Direction for NSW	<p>Relevant targets for the state include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ measuring, reporting and improving customer satisfaction with government services' key social objectives; ■ closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016; ■ increasing the out-of-home participation rate for people with a severe or profound disability to at least 85 percent; and ■ improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people.
Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006 - 2016	A 10-year plan to improve specialist disability services for people with severe or profound disabilities. It involves real increases in funding of over \$1.3 billion in its first five years of which \$270 million is for expanding programs that specifically target improving opportunities for community participation and transition to work.
Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011	ADHC is the lead agency for the whole-of-government plan for disability services. <i>Better Together</i> extends the commitments of <i>Stronger Together</i> by emphasising a cross-agency approach to promoting and improving access for people with a disability to government services available to the rest of the community.
ADHC Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2008 – 2009	This plan underpins reporting on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) strategies to Department of Premier and Cabinet (annually) and covers a range of ADHC specific EEO programs targeting disability, cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD), discrimination and Aboriginal employment.

Overview of ADHC Functions and Services

ADHC is one of the largest human service organisations in NSW and is now one of a cluster of other agencies, including Community Services, Housing NSW and Juvenile Justice that forms the Department of Human Services NSW (DHS).

ADHC provides strategic policy advice, planning, funding, quality assurance, evaluation and monitoring services for older people and people with a disability, as well as providing direct assistance to people with a disability and their carers.

ADHC has a regional structure comprising a central office located in the Central Business District of Sydney, six regions and sixteen local planning areas. ADHC's regional offices are located in Burwood, Parramatta, Newcastle, Lismore, Queanbeyan and Dubbo. The Office for Ageing is located in Tweed Heads. In addition, each region has extensive service outlets in different locations. There are 198 offices across the state. In 2008/09, ADHC had a total budget of \$2.1 billion. The NSW Home and Community Care (HACC) budget in 2008/2009 was \$546.3 million, an increase of 7.13 percent over 2007/08.

NSW State Plan

As the lead agency for *the NSW State Plan* goal of increasing employment and community participation for people with disabilities, ADHC is committed to closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016. This is the equivalent of around 6,000 jobs.

- The Transition to Work Program (TTW) was introduced in 2005 to assist school leavers with a disability to develop skills that enable them to transition to employment or further education within two years. It is anticipated that at least half the *State Plan* target for employment will be met through successful TTW employment outcomes.

Stronger Together

Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW: 2006-2016 is the NSW Government's 10-year plan to provide greater assistance and long-term practical solutions for people with a disability and their families. The plan includes \$1.3 billion in new funding over its first five years.

Stronger Together aims to strengthen the disability sector by the following enhancements:

- Strengthening families – enabling children with a disability to grow up in a family and participate in the community;
- Count me in – supporting adults with a disability to live in and be part of the community; and
- Improving the system's capacity and accountability – fairer and clearer ways to access services, greater accountability and more opportunities for innovation.
- ADHC is committed to leading the implementation of this plan and working in partnership with non-government organisations to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

Services

ADHC comprises 19 program and corporate support directorates and six regions that undertake its core functions:

- Strategic planning and policy development on disability and ageing issues, including 'whole-of-government' strategic frameworks;
- Leading the development of an evidence base to support ADHC strategic policy and service planning through research, evaluation and data analysis;
- Provision of funding to non-government service providers for delivery of services targeted mainly to people with a disability and older people through disability services programs and the HACC program;
- Monitoring to ensure that contracted service providers are delivering high quality services relevant to the needs of a particular area and that the maximum benefit is obtained in the use of Government resources;
- Delivering a range of community support services, respite care and supported accommodation services for children and adults, as well as early intervention services to young children who have a developmental delay;
- Delivering inclusive services for Aboriginal and CALD communities; and
- Assisting frail older, younger people with a disability and their carers to live independently in their own homes by providing domestic assistance, personal care, respite and other home based services through the Home Care Service of NSW (HCS) which includes Aboriginal Home Care (AHC).
- ADHC funds and delivers an extensive and diverse range of services which are consistent with the policy commitment of the DAP. These include:
 - TTW program to improve the transition to employment outcomes for school leavers who are able to move to employment within two years;
 - The preferred supplier program which has enabled public sector agencies to purchase goods and services from organisations that predominantly employ people with a disability without going to open tender. This has given such organisations an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet government requirements without requiring them to compete in an open market;
 - Community Participation, Life Choices, Active Ageing programs to provide long term funding and innovative support to improve community participation for school leavers and adults who cannot transition readily to full time employment or employment programs;
 - Respite services that are flexible and responsive to carers' needs and which support families to stay together;
 - Managing and administering the HACC program service to enable frail older people and people with a disability to remain in their own homes;
 - Young People In Residential Aged Care Program (YPIRAC) to provide support and better meet the needs of young people with a disability who are living in a residential aged care facility;

- Emergency Response project to provide short term funding to meet the immediate crisis induced needs of people with a disability;
- Culturally appropriate Aboriginal and CALD drop-in support services;
- Disability Housing and Support Initiative (DHASI) to provide drop-in support in a social housing setting;
- Early intervention and community support – including Community Support Teams, Local Support Coordination and Information, Referral and Intake (IRI) services for people with a disability;
- HCS delivers services to more than 50,000 clients a year, helping them to live independently in their own homes. The majority of HCS funding is from the HACC program. HCS is also funded to provide a range of other services including Veterans' Home Care, Community Aged Care packages, National Respite for Carers and ComPaks;
- Community Justice Program is funded for the provision of accommodation and support services for people with an intellectual disability exiting the criminal justice system;
- Seniors Week and Seniors Card program to promote active ageing and to raise awareness about issues which affect older people; and
- The Office of the Senior Practitioner, established under *Stronger Together*, provides leadership and coordination of services to clients with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

ADHC works with a number of stakeholders to ensure that policies, programs and services are well informed and meet client needs. These stakeholders include almost 900 government and non-government organisations and service providers who are funded by ADHC to deliver services: peak bodies, advocacy and industry groups; community agencies and organisations; and, regulatory bodies.

ADHC administers the following Acts:

- NSW Disability Services Act 1993;
- Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 No 2;
- Home Care Service Act 1988;
- Community Welfare Act 1987;
- Guardianship Act 1987 No. 257; and
- Youth and Community Services Act 1973.

Characteristics of current and potential customers and staff with a disability

Service user profile

A significant proportion of people in NSW are affected by disability. The 2003 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) (released in September 2004) reported that 17.9 percent of persons in NSW had a long term disability that restricted their everyday activities. While most of these people live independently or with family, some require the assistance of government to participate in education, work and community living. It should be noted that there is 2.4 times the incidence of functional disability in Aboriginal communities compared to other Australians, yet access to services is significantly reduced.

The shape of the Australian population is changing with the older age groups making up an increasing proportion. With an older population and increasing life expectancies there will be more people with disabilities and an associated increased demand for carers¹⁵. It has been forecast that in the period 2006 – 2010 there will be an increase of 11.6 percent in the projected population of persons aged 65 years and over with a severe disability that restricts everyday activities. The incidence of severe disability is expected to rise by 9.1 percent in the population aged 45 to 64 years¹⁶.

ADHC is currently working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to improve the availability of disability data in order to better understand unmet need and plan more effectively for service provision. The accuracy of disability data will improve with the increase in the sample size of the 2009 SDAC.

ADHC collates information on clients in ADHC operated disability services and ADHC funded disability services. These figures are reported in the ADHC Annual Report and published on the ADHC website.

Demographic information collected about ADHC operated services in 2008/2009 indicates that the largest proportions of clients are currently those with an intellectual disability (63 percent). Clients with an intellectual disability are also the largest proportion of clients accessing ADHC funded services (37 percent).

The 18 to 64 years age group is the largest group of clients accessing ADHC operated services (45.9 percent)¹⁷ and ADHC funded services (54 percent).

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, 'Themes - Disability, Ageing and Carers', viewed 20 August, 2009, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/29ac3ed8564fe715ca256943002c4e3c!OpenDocument>>

¹⁶ ADHC 2008, 'Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies', p. 5, viewed 20 August, <http://www.ADHC.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/998B6A21-F698-4219-9E73-8B8EC492C882/3828/DAPGuidelines.pdf>.

¹⁷ ADHC 2009, *Annual Report 2008/09*, p. 361.

Aboriginal people make up five percent of clients in ADHC operated services. This compares with 4 percent in ADHC funded disability services. Approximately 8 percent of clients in ADHC operated services are from a CALD background. This compares with four percent in ADHC funded services. Aboriginal and CALD groups may be underrepresented in services due to the difficulty engaging with services and negotiating a complex service system.

Staff profile

In 2009, ADHC employed over 13,000 staff with 79.5 percent of staff working in direct client services including 39.3 percent in Accommodation and Respite, 9.1 percent in Community Access and 31.1 percent in Home Care services. The remaining 20.5 percent of staff work in service support, policy and strategic development, regional support and central office administration. EEO information was available for 5,574 employees. It should be noted that EEO data is collected from staff through the recruitment process and relies on staff voluntarily providing such information online.

The SDAC indicates that in 2003 there were approximately 621,000 people with a disability and/or long-term health condition aged between 15 and 64 years in NSW¹⁸. The NSW Government has set disability employment targets at 12 percent of all NSW public sector employees and 7 percent of all employees for people requiring a workplace adjustment¹⁹.

Available statistics indicate that the performance across all NSW Government agencies is falling well short of these targets. The Australian Government and all other State jurisdictions have also been unable to meet targets for employment of people with a disability.

In 2009, 6.4 percent²⁰ of ADHC employees had identified themselves as having a disability. In the same period, 2.1 percent²¹ of ADHC employees with a disability needed workplace adjustment.

It should be noted that the percentages included above may significantly underestimate the proportion of workers with a disability as figures are dependent on voluntary disclosure by employees.

In 2009, ADHC's commitment to EEO was further enhanced with the implementation of its *Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2008 – 2009*.

Four action plans continue to be in place:

1. Action Plan for Employment Equity and Diversity;

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, 'Themes - Disability, Ageing and Carers', viewed 20 August, 2009, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/29ac3ed8564fe715ca256943002c4e3c!OpenDocument>>

¹⁹ NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, cited in ADHC 2008, *Annual Report 2007/08*, p. 244

²⁰ ADHC Annual EEO Workforce data June 2009

²¹ Op cit.

2. Aboriginal Employment and Capabilities Framework Action Plan;
3. Action Plan for Employment and Development of People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds; and
4. Action plan for Employment and Development of People with a Disability.

The action plans include planning, action and program outcomes to address access and equity issues in both strategic and operational areas of ADHC.

Outcomes Since the 2000-2002 Disability Action Plan

A review of ADHC's *Disability Action Plan 2000 – 2002* indicates that positive steps have been taken to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to equal opportunity for people with a disability. Highlights and recent activities are outlined below.

Physical access improvements

- \$64 million was allocated to capital works, including \$50 million on specialist accommodation support.
- Following access audits completed in Central Office in 2000 and in Regional offices in 2001, modifications were undertaken to several premises.
- A review of emergency and fire drill procedures and training was conducted at Central Office to ensure appropriate support for people with a disability.
- ADHC's Return to Work Policy is committed to providing and maintaining a work environment that ensures the health, safety and welfare of employees. A key principle of this policy is ensuring that any injured employee will not be disadvantaged because of an injury or by participating in a return to work program.

Customer service and communication access improvements

- ADHC policies and program information were provided in a range of different formats.
- In January 2009, a fact sheet entitled '*How to create accessible documents*' was made available on ADHC's Intranet for use by all staff.
- All ADHC offices were provided with copies of a handbook outlining good practice in organising meetings for people with a disability.
- More than 1,000 staff received Inclusive Communication and Behaviour Support (ICABS) training between 2007 and 2009.
- An options paper was prepared that mapped current information available and existing complaints processes within ADHC.
- Between 2005 to mid 2009, 91 percent of all ADHC funded service providers were monitored using the Integrated Monitoring Framework (IMF) where over 4,000 outlets received an on site visit and were rated against 23 key performance indicators using the IMF Service Review Instrument (SRI). The review indicated that service providers are performing well in most areas, with

at least two thirds of all outlets, fully meeting the requirements of each key performance indicator.

- Major policy frameworks such as the ADHC's *Valuing and Managing Diversity: Cultural Strategic Framework 2010-2013* were developed with people with a disability through consultation with peak bodies such as NSW Disability Council and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA).
- In 2008/2009, the Industry Development fund was established to assist the NGO sector to implement service improvements and reforms.
- In 2010, eight regional workshops will be delivered to ADHC staff to promote the *Language Services Policy and Guidelines* to inform and support staff to provide language and interpreter services when communicating with clients and carers with limited English language proficiency.
- In 2008/2009, a number of information kits and resource guides were launched targeting Aboriginal and non English speaking cultural groups to break down identified barriers to these groups in accessing services, including:
 - *Shoulder to Shoulder* which provides information for Aboriginal families who have a child or young person with a disability about services and Aboriginal support organisations; and
 - *Raising Kids Together* which provides information for families from Afghanistan, Iraq or Sudan who have a child or young person with a disability, written/voiced in English, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka and Juba Arabic.

Employment Strategies

As the lead agency for *the NSW State Plan* goal aimed at reducing unemployment for people with a disability, ADHC is committed to closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016. This is equivalent to approximately 6,000 jobs.

It is anticipated that at least half the *State Plan* target for employment will be met through successful TTW outcomes.

- 745 school leavers were approved to enter TTW in 2010. Currently about 50 percent of participants in TTW successfully make the transition to employment or further education.
- Training was delivered to 57 TTW providers to improve their networks with private sector employers and boost their capacity to place clients in work.
- The remainder of the employment target for the *State Plan* is being met through the following new strategies targeting public and private sectors:
 - ADHC has implemented a pilot project engaging six Australian Disability Enterprises to provide lawn and garden maintenance services for 13 properties over a 12 month period.
 - The Australian Employers' Network on Disability was funded to produce a booklet informing businesses about the benefits of employing people with disabilities and of delivering services that are accessible to customers that may have a disability.

- In 2008/2009, 51 NSW Government agencies were trained in developing Disability Action Plans and strategies to ensure that people with a disability are able to access services and facilities on an equitable basis.
- From December 2009, the NSW Government enabled public sector agencies to purchase goods and services from organisations that predominantly employ people with a disability without going to open tender. This has given such organisations an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet government requirements without requiring them to compete in an open market.
- ADHC's commitment to employment strategies for people with a disability is further demonstrated through the following initiatives:
 - A review and adjustment of ADHC's recruitment procedures was undertaken to ensure people with a disability were not disadvantaged. The review covered position descriptions; advertising of positions; receipt of applications; interview techniques and staff selection panels.
 - In 2006/2007, ADHC implemented a new process for recruitment of positions that provide direct care to clients such as those in accommodation, respite and Home Care. This process allowed increased marketing of ADHC vacancies and the development of a simplified application process that reduced the reliance on extensive written applications.
 - Workshops for ADHC staff that focused on diversity, discrimination and ADHC's Code of Conduct and Ethics were conducted across NSW to further embed a discrimination free and inclusive culture, aligning with the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter.
 - The ability to report EEO data online was promoted across ADHC to allow ADHC staff to access information to assist in human resource planning and support, including reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Improvements in Service Delivery

Substantial improvements have been made in service delivery to people with a disability, their families and carers through the implementation of *Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2016* and *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011*.

ADHC's progress in the delivery of better specialist services for people with a disability and their families is set out in the 2008/09 annual report.

Stronger Together is delivering \$1.3 billion in extra funding over its first five years, which equates to approximately \$1.5 billion in 2010/11 dollar terms. This money is already making a real difference for people with a disability, their families and their carers.

Some of the major achievements from the first four years of *Stronger Together* include:

- The recruitment of 169 new case managers to guide and support families through the mainstream and specialist service systems;

- Over 3,100 extra therapy places for children and adults with a disability rolled out in the first four years;
- An increase of over 4,000 respite places including flexible and centre-based options, as well as innovative services to meet the needs of families such as after-school and weekend options;
- Over 1,000 flexible and centre-based respite packages and support coordination for over 2,100 families with ageing parent carers;
- Funding provided to over 6,400 families to buy items they need to make life easier such as whitegoods, communications software and play equipment;
- New information and support networks including resources for families with a child with a disability translated into five languages and distributed across the state and a resource to support siblings of a child with a disability;
- Delivery of over 4,700 new skill development and day program places;
- Increased support for young people in the Community Participation Program;
- Great success with post school programs with over 1,100 successful applications made to either the Transition to Work or Community Participation Program;
- An increase of over 810 day program places for adults;
- Doubling the size of the Attendant Care Program which now supports over 700 people;
- Providing \$1 million to pilot programs for people with acquired brain injury and motor neurone disease;
- Establishing disability housing and support initiatives to support up to 50 people with an intellectual disability or acquired brain injury in partnership with Housing NSW; and
- Creating 670 new accommodation places, rising to 990 by June 2011.

Better Together has delivered:

- *NSW Carers Action Plan 2007 – 2012*, which outlines a whole-of-government policy commitment to recognising and supporting carers. It includes strategies to increase the respect for and recognition of carers, reach out to family members who may not perceive themselves as carers, improve service to carers and the people for whom they care, encourage agencies to view carers as partners in care and support carers to combine working and caring;
- Additional resources for Carers NSW to help develop the capacity of non-government organisations to respond to carers;
- A more flexible support system focused on early intervention for children and young people with autism spectrum disorder and their families;
- Four additional Aboriginal intensive family support services;
- Improved training and information for carers including funding of \$150,000 to develop an information kit for families with children with autism spectrum disorder; and

- \$1.7 billion to be spent between 2006 and 2011 on capital works to improve access to transport, schools, social housing and group homes for people with a disability.

Monitoring and Review

ADHC's core business is to plan for inclusive services that meet the needs of people with a disability and acknowledges that the process of improving service delivery through ongoing monitoring and review as a crucial component of an efficient service system.

Communication Strategy

The ADHC *Disability Action Plan 2010 – 2013* (DAP) will be incorporated into the DHS DAP. Once the DHS DAP has been adopted across the cluster of agencies, the Director-General DHS will communicate this to all DHS staff via the *DHS Directions* e-newsletter. The DHS DAP will be posted on ADHC's intranet for staff use.

The responsibility for implementing the plan will lie with ADHC's Executive, Regional Directors, Central Office Executive Directors and other senior managers. The actions in this plan are intended to be incorporated into ADHC's strategic and operational plans for implementation by all staff.

Governance and oversight

ADHC will utilise existing regional and central governance structures to monitor the progress of implementation of the DAP with the aim of maximising outcomes for employees with a disability and all clients.

Formal reporting

The Community Access Directorate will monitor the implementation of the DAP, provide advice to the Executive and report on outcomes in ADHC's annual report. This annual review will report against specific performance indicators included in the plan. A number of these indicators are targets that all NSW Government departments are expected to report against²²; others are specific to ADHC's roles and responsibilities.

Future Planning

ADHC will review its DAP according to the timeframes established by the DHS DAP steering committee. By 2013, the DHS DAP will become a more consolidated document with the background information common to each of the DHS agencies contained at the beginning of the document. This will allow ADHC to focus on reviewing the implementation strategies to achieve the seven outcomes as listed in the *Guidelines for disability action planning*²³.

²² ADHC (2009) Disability Action Planning Performance Reporting and Evaluation Framework

²³ DADHC Sept 2008 Guidelines for disability action planning

Consultation Process

The development of the DAP builds on intensive consultation processes undertaken to develop the *Stronger Together* policy framework. Consultations with people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocates, academics, peak bodies and community members have informed *Stronger Together*. This has been complemented by consultation with staff and with disability peak organisations.

Meetings with ADHC Representatives

Consultation was undertaken with managers and key staff within ADHC. Interviews were conducted to obtain information about existing policies and practices in place to promote access for people with a disability. The interviewees were asked to identify existing initiatives that could contribute to the plan and strategies that could further improve access and/or provide a more inclusive workplace.

Four focus groups for non-managerial employees were conducted. These groups, involving a mix of direct care, policy and administrative staff, were intended to give a broader platform for discussion of disability access issues in ADHC. Issues explored included knowledge of disability access issues and training needs, customer service and information provision, and accessible employment within ADHC. Meetings were held in Central Office, Dubbo, Queanbeyan and Coffs Harbour.

Consultation with People with a Disability

Consultation was conducted with the following disability peak organisations:

- People with Disability Australia Inc;
- Brain Injury Association of NSW Inc;
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) Inc;
- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability;
- Physical Disability Council of NSW;
- Carers NSW Inc; and
- NSW Council on the Ageing.

Action Measures

Disability Action Planning supports the objectives of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* which provide protection for all Australians against discrimination based on disability.

The *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* requires that all government agencies prepare and implement a disability action plan applying the principles of the Act. Following a recent review of disability action planning, the NSW Government

Disability Policy Framework was developed. The framework includes three levels of planning:

Level 1: Planning to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination in universal mainstream services, programs and facilities and public sector employment for people with a disability.

Level 2: Planning which will assist and influence other government agencies and sectors to improve infrastructure and services for people with a disability.

Level 3: Planning for specialist and adapted services for people with a disability. As the principal agency in NSW with responsibility for disability services, ADHC is committed to addressing all three levels of planning. The priorities for action listed below outlines how the Agency will address this.

The areas below form the basis of the strategies identified in the ADHC DAP:

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to ADHC funded and provided services for people with a disability.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation for people with a disability in the NSW Public Sector.

Outcome 6: Using government decision making, programs and operations to influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability.

Outcome 7: Providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Action Plan

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to ADHC funded and provided services for people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.1 ADHC employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding access and equity; privacy legislation and informed consent in relation to protection of client records; and diversity issues in relation to ADHC's operations			
1.1.1 Ensure employee induction programs have consistent message about staff responsibilities and rights in relation to access, equity and diversity	Standardised induction program finalised and implemented Performance/reporting through SAP T&D	2010 – 2012	Learning and Development
1.2 Barriers of access to services are reduced or eliminated			
1.2.1 Continue to improve the capacity of current service models to deliver appropriate services to Aboriginal and CALD clients with a disability	Implementation of Access and Equity Plan: Strengthening Services for Aboriginal people 2009-2011 and Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework 2010-2013	2010 – 2013	Regions and Directorates Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery
1.2.2 Continue removing barriers to services for people with adult onset disabilities such as an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) ²⁴	Implementation of Interagency Agreement of the Care and Support Clear pathways developed for people with an ABI	2010 – 2013	Attendant Care and Physical Disability Unit, Home Care Branch
1.3. ADHC's complaint system is accessible to people with a disability, their families and carers and is considered in strategic planning			

²⁴ This involves implementation of the tasks in the Interagency Agreement on the Care and Support Pathways for people with an ABI (a cross-government Memorandum of Understanding between ADHC, NSW Health, Housing NSW and the Lifetime Care and Support Authority).

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.3.1 Translate <i>Feedback and complaints handling information sheet</i> into various languages, provide in accessible formats	Information sheet translated and available in accessible formats	2010 – 2012	Corporate Communications
1.3.2 Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in the feedback and complaints handling process	Feedback and complaint handling process incorporated into staff induction process	2010 – 2011	Learning and Development
1.3.3 Enable online feedback via the ADHC website	Website capability reviewed and updated	2010 – 2011	Corporate Communications Information Technology
1.3.4 Monitor feedback and complaints incidents	Feedback and complaints incidents monitored Feedback/complaints sent to regions / business units to improve service delivery and access	Every quarter	Public Accountability Branch Regions and directorates

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.1 Information products developed by ADHC are available to people with a disability			
2.1.1 Ensure ADHC Branding and Publishing Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate effectively with regard to making information accessible - incorporate information about legislative/technological changes (as required) in relation to accessibility 	Guidelines reviewed and required changes incorporated	2010 then annually, subject to legislative requirements	Corporate Communications
2.1.2 Ensure the ADHC website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incorporates all accessibility options for people with a disability - complies with Level "AA" in World Wide Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - provides statement on accessibility 	Website progressively updated to W3C "AA" compliance Accessibility certificate achieved and maintained. Easy read fact sheets uploaded	2010 – 2011	Corporate Communications
2.2 ADHC staff have the necessary skills and tools to communicate and work effectively with people with a disability			
2.2.1 Review relevant staff training programs including:	Training programs reviewed Appropriate disability content incorporated into	2010 2011	Learning and Development

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - induction programs - clinical report writing - management development 	training programs		
2.2.2 Review and update the Home Care guidelines Communicating in alternative formats with people with a disability: Policy and procedures 2002	Policy and guidelines are reviewed, updated and circulated	2010 – 2011	Home Care Service
2.2.3 Ensure teletypewriter (TTY) equipment is installed in regional offices as required. Provide staff training on the use of TTY Equipment and the National Relay Service	TTY available and staff are trained in its use as required	2010 – 2011	Regional Directors Learning and Development
2.2.4 Embed Integrated Communication and Behaviour Support (ICABS) training in regional plans to assist direct care staff to better meet the needs of clients who struggle to communicate via speech	ICABS training is available in all regions Number of staff in each region who receive training is recorded	2010 – 2012	Learning and Development Regional Directors
2.3 ADHC's information products are culturally appropriate			
2.3.1 Produce information about ADHC services and policies in languages other than English which incorporate culturally appropriate communication strategies such as visual and media formats	Language services policy developed ADHC services and relevant policies translated into key languages	2010 – 2013	Community Access Regions and Directorates

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.3.2 Develop/implement communication plan to provide Aboriginal communities with relevant information on ADHC services and policies	Communication plan developed Communication plan implemented	2011 2012	Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery

Outcome 3: Making government building and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
3.1 Development of agreed minimum criteria and performance standards for ADHC premises across all business stream			
3.1.1 Finalise ADHC's Office Accommodation Manual, design guidelines for ADHC offices	Baseline information is available on ADHC's compliance with codes and standards relating to access to Government premises	2010	Strategic Asset Management & Procurement (SAMP)
3.1.2 Finalise ADHC's Supported Accommodation design guidelines	Baseline information is available on ADHC's compliance with codes and standards relating to access to Government premises	2010	SAMP
3.1.3 Benchmark group homes and large residences against guidelines, integrate findings in Reconfiguration of Community Living Assets Business Case	A benchmark is established which guides decision making in relation to ADHC assets	2010	SAMP
3.2 ADHC premises including fit out should comply with Australian Standards for disability access			
3.2.1 Develop a staged audit program to measure the performance of ADHC group homes and large residential centres	All ADHC premises comply with relevant standards such as the Building Code of Australia, <i>Disability Discrimination Act (1992)</i>	2010 – 2012	SAMP
3.2.2 Improve signage in ADHC offices for people with intellectual and/or sensory disabilities, including culturally appropriate signage for Aboriginal and CALD people	Signage manual completed Implementation of improved signage across all ADHC premises	2011 2011 – 2012	SAMP
3.2.3 Ensure disability parking is available at all ADHC office premises, at set down zones or	Compliance verified through access audit of ADHC premises (refer 3.2.1)	2011	SAMP

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
within a reasonable distance of offices	Audit outcomes inform planning to ensure compliance	2012	Regions
3.2.4 Emergency evacuation and fire drill procedures are reviewed to ensure staff, clients and visitors with a disability can be safely and efficiently evacuated	Evacuation plans reviewed and displayed in all premises Evacuation drills conducted on a regular basis	2011 At least annually	Strategic Human Resources/OH&S Regional Directors/Senior Managers

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
4.1 Participation of people with a disability and carers on ADHC's committees and advisory groups is increased (including representation from CALD and Aboriginal people)			
4.1.1 Prepare guidelines for selection of representatives on departmental committees and advisory groups to boost participation by people with a disability and their carers	Guidelines finalised and implemented Communication and awareness plan developed and implemented	2012	Sector Development Community Access
4.2 Participation of people with a disability, their families and carer in service development			
4.2.1 Develop strategy and approaches to include people with a disability in service development and planning	Best practice strategies from programs and regions identified and disseminated across ADHC	2011	Sector Development Regions and Directorates

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
5.1 Improve accuracy of data about numbers of ADHC employees with a disability			
5.1.1 Establish benchmarks of staff who have identified their disability	Benchmarks established Measure effectiveness to inform campaign (5.1.2) and ADHC employment strategies	2010 then annually	Strategic Human Resources
5.1.2 Undertake campaign to encourage ADHC staff to identify their disability	Campaign rolled out	2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.2 ADHC's employment policies and procedure support access by people with a disability			
5.2.1 Develop reasonable adjustment guidelines to provide managers and supervisors with guidance and consistency on work-related adjustments available to people with a disability	Staff with a disability are provided reasonable work-related adjustments required to conduct their work	2010 – 2011	Strategic Human Resources SAMP
5.2.2 Review and update Employment and Equity and Diversity Management Plan (2008-2009)	Plan review and implement Human Resources Equity and Diversity Plan	2010 – 2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.3 Barriers to recruitment of people with a disability are reduced or eliminated			
5.3.1 Provide recruitment information in accessible formats	All recruitment information available in accessible formats	2011	Strategic Human Resources Information Technology

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
5.3.2 Include a person with a disability on interview selection panels where appropriate	Tool developed to provide guidelines re inclusion of a person with a disability	2011	Regions and Directorates
	Tool to be included in ADHC Selection Guidelines for Convenors and Panel Members	2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.3.3 Recruitment strategies encourage applications from people with a disability	<p>Recruitment information is accessible</p> <p>Recruitment panels include a person with a disability where appropriate (refer 5.3.2)</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>	Strategic Human Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.4 Consult with Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to explore ADHC's participation in the NSW Traineeships for People with a Disability Program. 	<p>Consultations held with DPC</p> <p>Strategies identified and implemented</p> <p>Participation in initiatives developed</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2012</p> <p>2012</p>	Strategic Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.5. Include organisations which employ people with a disability in tenders for services. 	<p>Develop and implement plan to communicate strategy to officers undertaking procurement</p> <p>Increase number of contracts let to organisations that employ people with a disability</p>	2011	<p>SAMP</p> <p>Regions and Directorates</p>

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.6 Work with training organisations and other government agencies to facilitate apprenticeship opportunities for people with a disability on construction projects 	Consultation undertaken and strategy developed	2012	Community Access SAMP
5.4 ADHC provides a safe and supportive work environment for all employees			
5.4.1 Provide support for line managers in assessment, control and consultation on safety including reasonable adjustment	Current mandatory line manager OHS training program updated	2011 then annually	Strategic Human Resource Regions and Directorates
5.5 ADHC to increase support to existing employees with a disability			
5.5.1 Consult with staff with disabilities to identify issues and barriers in employment advancement	Consultation carried out and feedback incorporated in ADHC <i>Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan</i>	2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.5.2 Develop information on supports available to employees with a disability	Information brochure developed and available in appropriate formats	2011	Strategic Human Resources
	Intranet updated and maintained to include support information for staff with a disability	2011	Corporate Communications

Outcome 6: Using government decision-making, programs and operations to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.1. ADHC will work in partnership with NSW Government agencies, funded NGOs and business partners to engage in disability action planning			
6.1.1 Support/monitor development of disability action plans by all government agencies	All NSW Government Departments submit a DAP to ADHC by April 2010	2010	Prevention and Pathways
6.2 Cross-government efforts are in place to meet State Plan employment and community participation targets for people with a disability			
6.2.1 Delivery of training plans to TTW service providers through the Australian Employers Network on Disability (AEND) to develop better business networks	Maintain and/or increase the number of training plans delivered (currently 63)	Annually from 2010	Community Access
6.2.2 Promote the implementation of the Public Service Management (Goods and Services) Regulation 2009 relating to contracts with organisations which employ people with a disability within ADHC and other government agencies	Consultations held with other government agencies Suitable contracts identified Number of contracts let to registered disability employment enterprises	2010 – 2011	SAMP Community Access
6.2.3 Engage with DPC to develop a cross-government disability employment action plan	Cross-government action plan developed Work commenced towards action plan targets	2011 – 2012 2012	Community Access
6.3 ADHC will work with other agencies and sectors to improve access to mainstream services for people with a disability			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.3.1 Continue to develop cross-agency projects at the regional level to build on the <i>Better Together</i> framework	Each region to provide best practice examples of interagency projects which increase access for people with a disability to mainstream services	Annually through life of DAP	Regions Prevention & Pathways
6.3.2 Support work of the Ministry of Transport and the Australian Government regarding access to transport services by people with a disability, their families and carers, including people in isolated communities	Representative from ADHC to participate in working groups/committees which have governance responsibilities for accessible transport services	2010 – 2013	Prevention & Pathways
6.3.3 Work in partnership with NSW Health to develop Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) Protocol	Protocol between ADHC and Health endorsed	2011 – 2012	Accommodation Policy & Development
6.3.4 Work in partnership with NSW Health and Community Services to improve physical, developmental and emotional health outcomes for children and young persons in out of home care	Participate in Out of Home Care Health Assessment Reference group	2010 onwards	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.5 Work in partnership with Community Services to deliver Joint Practice Framework in Case Management	Joint Practice Framework implemented, monitored and reviewed Framework monitored and reviewed	2010 2012	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.6 Partner with Community Services to develop accommodation models for Children/Young People with a disability	Suitable accommodation models developed	2011	Prevention and Pathways

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.3.7 Finalise Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Intellectual Disability and Mental Health, between ADHC and NSW Health	MoU is endorsed Monitoring and evaluation process undertaken	2010 2012	Office of the Senior Practitioner
6.3.8 Work in partnership with Housing NSW to ensure that people with a disability are appropriately supported in public housing tenancies	Input into the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord and other joint projects	2010 - 2013	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.9 Implement ADHC's commitments as lead agency under the NSW Interagency Service Principles and Protocols for People with an Intellectual Disability in the Justice System	ADHC's commitments are delivered	2011 – 2012	Office of the Senior Practitioner

Outcome 7: Providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.1 ADHC's labour force skills and capacity are increased			
7.1.1 Orientation for Home Care workers includes a disability awareness component including CALD and Aboriginal cultural competency	All new care workers receive pre-service training	2010	Home Care
7.1.2 Ensure OHS systems for staff in Home Care, accommodation and respite services are appropriate for dealing with high risk activities such as manual handling	High risk strategies, programs and guidelines reviewed and updated as required	2010	Strategic Human Resources Regional Learning & Development Regional OH&S
7.1.3 Build on strategies for attracting and retaining Aboriginal and CALD staff to provide culturally appropriate services including: - Aboriginal Employment & Capability Framework (AECF) - Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan	AECF Action plans developed and implemented Employment Equity and Diversity Management plan developed and implemented	Annually from 2011	Regions and directorates Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery Strategic Human Resources
7.2 Skills are enhanced across the disability and community care sector			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.2.1 Practice Leaders to support and deliver on evidence based practice to ensure better outcomes for people with a disability	Nursing & Health Care Practice Leader recruited Linkages with universities developed Increased research by staff	2011 – 2012 2010 2010	Office of the Senior Practitioner
7.2.2 Develop practice guidelines to support consistent best practice for ADHC Community Support Teams	Case Management, Therapy and Behaviour Support Guidelines produced	2010	Community Access Office of the Senior Practitioner
7.2.3 Support non-government agencies in board management and governance knowledge through the “It’s your business” initiative	Implementation, monitoring and review of initiative	2010 – 2011	Sector Development
7.3 Increase the capacity of the disability service system to meet the needs of people with a disability their families and carers			
7.3.1 Adopt a person centred approach to support people with a disability in all program areas	Implementation, monitoring and review of person centred approach	2010 – 2013	Prevention and Pathways
7.3.2 Services and programs to maximise a focus on prevention and early intervention	Implementation, monitoring and review of <i>EarlyStart</i> initiative	2010 – 2011	Prevention and Pathways
7.3.3 Work with National Disability Services to promote careers in community care and disability sector through the ‘Care Career’ initiative	Implement, monitoring and review of initiative to inform future planning and policy development	2010 – 2013	Sector Development
7.4 Strengthening quality assurance in ADHC operated and funded services			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.4.1 Implementation of a new quality and performance monitoring framework for all funded services	Implementation rolled out in all regions	2010 – 2012	Sector Development
7.4.2 Provide ADHC direct care and Home Care clients with an individual plan and/or service agreement contract to ensure that the services to be provided are clearly identified and understood	All clients have a service agreement that is regularly reviewed	2011	Regions and Directorates
7.4.3 Develop the use of the Service Providers Portal to promote new policies, guidelines and best practice information	Information disseminated through the Portal	2011	Sector Development

Businesslink Disability Action Plan 2009-2012

Policy Statement

NSW Businesslink is committed to fostering a workplace that treats people with a disability fairly and equitably and to ensuring that all employees enjoy equality of opportunity and a work environment free from harassment and discrimination.

By promoting the entitlement of people with disabilities to experiences and outcomes equivalent to those available to the wider community, Businesslink will help to develop a climate in which people with disabilities feel confident and valued.

This Disability Action Plan offers staff a succinct statement of Businesslink's goals, strategies and targets for assisting staff and clients with disability over the next three years.

Legislative Basis

NSW Businesslink's obligation to address equity issues for people with disabilities is contained in three pieces of legislation:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)

Definition of Disability

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA) contains the broadest definitions of disability. It defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability:

- which he or she has
- which he or she used to have
- which he or she may have in the future

- which is imputed to him or her.

Both permanent and temporary disabilities are covered under the DDA.

It should be noted that this definition does not attempt to place some people with a disability outside its coverage by virtue of the perceived minimal effect of some disabilities. This definition seeks to include all people with a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability or the extent of its effect.

Overview of NSW Businesslink

NSW Businesslink Pty Ltd (Businesslink) is a Proprietary Limited Company delivering shared services within the framework of the NSW Government shared services reform strategy. Businesslink provides a broad range of operational and organisational infrastructure services and facilities to its clients, so as to enable them to deliver their core frontline services in a cost effective manner.

Businesslink services over 22,000 staff across three client agencies, which in turn provide services to more than 250,000 citizens of NSW.

The shared services model seeks to create value for Shareholders by generating economies of scale through the implementation of optimal common, consistent, repeatable transactional activities, information flows and business processes. It creates value for clients by delivering efficient and cost effective services.

Workforce Profile

The NSW Businesslink Annual Report 2007/2008 reported that the percentage of staff who identified themselves as a person with a disability was 6% (with 1.5% of staff requiring workplace adjustments). This is a reduction of 2% compared with data from the 2006/2007 Annual Report.

All staff reporting with a disability are employed on a permanent, fulltime basis.

Consultation Process

Businesslink has consulted with stakeholders regarding the development of the Disability Action Plan 2009 -2012. These stakeholders include staff who have a disability, or are carers of someone with a disability, or who are interested in disability issues, Human Resources, Industrial Relations, the PSA, and Management.

Achievements of the 2006 – 2008 Disability Action Plan

Businesslink's Disability Action Plan 2006-2008 continued to assist staff, clients and suppliers with a disability in the key areas of access, information and employment.

Some key achievements included:

- The Liverpool car park provides six disabled car park spaces
- Entry to the building is level and free of any steps
- Entry and egress for the building and access within the building is wheelchair friendly
- Security swipe card points are considerate to wheelchair bound staff/visitors

- Workstations are designed to facilitate height adjustment of the workstation. There are currently several modified workstations within the Liverpool building to accommodate staff of various heights
- Toilets with disability access are available on the ground floor, level 6 and the ladies toilet level 10
- Toilets with disability access have medical waste disposal bins for those with special medical requirements
- Toilets with disability access on level 6 and level 10 are fitted with electric opening doors
- Two evacuation chairs are located within the Liverpool building to facilitate physically disabled people to be exited from the building during an evacuation, power outage or lift failure
- The Evacuation Plan and training considers and caters for immobile and disabled staff and visitors in the building in the event of an emergency
- Hearing impaired staff are provided with a person to translate using sign language during large meetings and conferences
- Training rooms are designed to accommodate wheelchair access and people with limited mobility
- Security staff are available during office hours to assist where possible
- Use of a weekly email newsletter as the preferred means of distributing information to staff
- Allocation of Telephone typewriters (TTY) to staff with hearing impairments
- Disability access considered in the location and design of Regional Service Centres in Queanbeyan, Orange, Newcastle and Lismore, and the Parramatta office.
- The Disability Action Plan 2009–2012 aims to build on these achievements and further enable people with a disability to access services and employment. In particular attention will be paid to our off-site offices.

Monitoring and Review

The initiatives of the Disability Action Plan will be monitored on an annual basis by the People and Culture Group. It will be reviewed by Senior Management and the relevant Business Unit Managers with responsibilities within the plan to ensure that all action measures are evaluated on a half-yearly basis.

A report evaluating implementation of the Disability Action Plan will be incorporated into Businesslink's Annual Report.

Level of Planning Required for 2009 -2012 Plan

The *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies* developed by DADHC outlines three tiers of service delivery - Level 1 covers universal mainstream services, Level 2 covers adaptive services, and Level 3 covers specialised disability services.

NSW Businesslink has been assessed as falling within the Level 1 tier of service delivery. An outline of the requirements of Level 1 planning follows.

Level 1 Planning

Planning to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination in universal mainstream services, programs and facilities and public sector employment for people with a disability.

Specific outcomes required in the Disability Action Plan are:

- Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability
- Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability
- Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability
- Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultation and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees
- Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Implementation

Responsibility for the implementation of this plan resides with the People and Culture Group.

Outcomes, Actions and Performance Indicators

Outcome 1: Identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
<p>1.1 Conduct a review of issues of access to the Business Service Centre (BSC) for people with disabilities to ensure that people with disabilities from our client agencies can access the BSC</p>	<p>BSC</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p>Adoption of appropriate review recommendations</p> <p>Indicators for improvements could include:</p> <p>Promotion of accessible self-service options</p> <p>Utilisation of new and emerging technology to best assist client access</p> <p>Communication or advertising of BSC email address for IT, payroll and HR related matters as an alternate means to contact rather than telephone</p> <p>Communication or advertising 53999 for IT, payroll and HR related matters as an alternate to contact via email</p> <p>BSC staff provided with training / briefing in responding to clients needs with disabilities</p> <p>Review IVR recordings and menu options to provide ease of access to selected services</p>

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
1.2 Conduct a training needs analysis (TNA) to identify training needs of BSC staff in disability awareness	Learning and Development	2010	TNA conducted
1.3 Schedule and conduct disability awareness training for client contact staff to improve awareness of needs of clients and staff with disabilities	Learning and Development	2010	Training conducted
1.4 Review accessibility to services provided by Businesslink by incorporating disability access into current customer satisfaction surveys administered by Businesslink	Product Management Group	2011	Disability access question/s included in the 2011 Customer satisfaction survey
1.5 Communicate Businesslink's commitment to supporting staff with disabilities and communicate Businesslink's privacy policy and commitment to confidentiality to encourage disclosure of disability and accuracy of EEO data in SAPHR.	Communication & Marketing	2010	Increase in the number of staff who disclose
1.6 Promote disability awareness through publicising and celebrating International Day of People with a Disability annually.	Employee Development & Communication and Marketing	Annually	Celebration and communications strategies enacted

Outcome 2: Provide information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
2.1 Ensure web communications strategies are in line with W3C's Web Content Accessibility guidelines	Communication & Marketing Web Services	2010	Guidelines adhered to
2.2 Continue to provide an Auslan interpreter for staff for all key Businesslink presentations when required	Communication & Marketing	As required	Interpreter provided if necessary

Outcome 3: Make Businesslink buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
3.1 Audit Parramatta and Regional Office sites to ensure emergency evacuation procedures comply with the same standards implemented in the Liverpool office.	Business Services	2010	Audit completed and improvements made if necessary
3.2 Review Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures for relevant sites to ensure processes are in place for people with a disability including providing the necessary education and training to relevant persons	Business Services	2010	Review completed and appropriate actions taken
3.3 Include disabled access and facilities in criteria for selection of new premises both for Businesslink and our client agencies - Building Code of Australia, Disability Access - part 1428.1 and 1428.2.	P&PS	2010	Criteria included in standard facilities procurement documentation
3.4 Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Policy	People and Culture	2010	Policy developed
3.5 Consult with staff with a disability and provide appropriate workplace adjustments as required in line with the Reasonable Adjustment Policy	People and Culture	As required	Adjustments made when required

Outcome 4: Assist people with a disability to participate in public consultation and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
4.1 Invite applications from staff members with a disability to join appropriate committees. Two levels of participations are envisaged – full member and/or subject matter expert	People and Culture	Ongoing	Invitation made

Outcome 5: Increase employment participation of people with a disability in NSW Businesslink

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
5.1 Develop a set of mandatory questions both on the application form and as part of the invitation to interview process – e.g. Do you have a disability? Do you have any special interview requirements? Please specify?	Recruitment Solutions	2010	Mandatory set of questions developed and implemented
Where necessary and reasonable the workplace will be adjusted to accommodate preferred applicants with disabilities.	Managers	As needed	Necessary adjustments made
Conduct a review of the Merit Selection Training course to ensure it includes sections on equitable practices in relation to people with disabilities in all aspects of recruitment.	Learning and Development & People and Culture	Annually	Annual review conducted
Explore the implementation of a traineeship program for people with disabilities	People and Culture	2010	Research completed and program commenced if appropriate

Community Services

Disability Action Plan 2010-2014

Commitment

In Australia, one in five of us lives with a disability of some kind²⁵. Whether it is physical, intellectual, illness related or psychological, disability affects not only individuals but their families and their communities.

At Community Services we know that where there are other risk factors, including isolation and economic disadvantage, disability can contribute to families reaching crisis point.

Community Services is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of children and young people with disabilities and supporting families to overcome the difficulties of living with disability. This is part of our overall priority that children, families and communities are safe, healthy and resilient.

This plan outlines our commitment to ensuring that our services are accessible, appropriate and responsive to the needs of people with a disability, and our strategies to achieve this commitment for the next five years. We also look forward to strengthening our partnerships with government agencies and non-government organisations to ensure that there is a continuum of quality service provision across NSW.

Annette Gallard

Chief Executive

²⁵ ABS cat.no. 4430.0 2003

Policy context

In addition to the legislative responsibilities outlined in the DHS DAP executive summary, Community Services has responsibilities in accordance with a number of NSW government policies. This Disability Action Plan represents the Agency's commitment to these policies and its practical strategies.

NSW State Plan 2010

The *NSW State Plan 2010* is the NSW Government's long term plan to deliver the best possible services to the people of NSW. Community Services, as part of the Department of Human Services, has particular responsibility for strengthening communities and for improving child wellbeing, health and safety and ensuring children have the skills for learning by school entry, with a focus on those most vulnerable. The principles which underpin the State Plan 2010 include the adoption of early intervention and prevention strategies to stop existing problems from getting worse and prevent problems from developing whenever possible, and effective collaboration between all levels of government and its partners.

Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011

Better Together identifies how NSW Government agencies will work together to improve planning and service delivery to ensure appropriate access for people with a disability and that only those with the greatest need will have to use special facilities or programs. It also outlines practical strategies for achieving the State Plan target of increasing employment and community participation for people with a disability.

NSW Government provides services for people with a disability in three tiers – universal services, adapted services and specialised services. Community Services provides universal services which are used by large numbers of people, including people with disabilities.

Integration into agency planning

The Disability Action Plan will be integrated into Community Services planning processes and documents.

Role of Community Services

Community Services works in cooperation with other government and community groups to help build a safer and stronger community for everyone. The agency's core role is to ensure that children and young people receive the best possible start in life by providing a range of services and supports to them and their families.

Community Services provides a range of services that reflect the diverse needs of the community.

- Prevention and early intervention strategies provide targeted support to vulnerable children and families to prevent them from entering or escalating in the child protection system. Programs such as Brighter Futures address immediate problems as well as the underlying factors that contribute to them.
- Working closely with government, non-government and community groups as well as the public to develop a framework for regulation, policy, licensing and compliance monitoring to help keep children and young people safe and give them a good start in life.
- Children at risk of significant harm are identified and appropriate intervention measures are taken to ensure their safety.
- Arranging appropriate care for children and young people who cannot safely live at home. Out-of-home care may be provided by extended family, foster care, residential care or in independent living arrangements. Community Services also funds and supports other organisations that provide out-of-home care.
- Offering a number of services designed to encourage community development and address issues that lead to family breakdown, including alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, and homelessness.
- Working with a number of non-government organisations to provide disaster readiness planning, disaster recovery services and evacuation and emergency accommodation in the event of a disaster.

Prevalence of disability among Community Services clients

It is reported in *Better Together* that one in five people in NSW has a disability. Although the vast majority of these people go about their lives without needing additional support, around 190,000 people have a moderate disability and a further 200,000 people have a severe or profound disability which impacts significantly on their ability to communicate, to care for themselves or to move about in the community. Projections indicate that this number will increase, especially as the population agesⁱ. A report in 2003 indicated that four per cent of children aged 0-4 years had a disability, with the proportion increasing to just over 51 per cent of people aged 60 years and olderⁱⁱ. NSW Health estimated that in 2005/06 there were 1.1 million people in New South Wales who experienced a mental illness, with around 170,000 (2-3 per cent) experiencing a severe mental illnessⁱⁱⁱ.

When a parent has a disability, particularly a mental disability, this can affect family wellbeing and the development of children and young people. A 2005 study estimated that between 21-23 per cent of children lived in Australian households where at least one parent had a mental illness, equating to just over a million children under the age of 18 years^{iv}.

The additional challenges which may be faced by parents with a disability need to be fully acknowledged. For example, the practicalities of transporting babies and small children in cars or public transport. Parents with a mental or intellectual disability may well need significant ongoing support to understand the needs of babies and small children and how to respond.

The 2005 study concluded that up to 60 per cent of the children and young people from families affected by parental mental illness, or over half a million Australian children, are more likely to experience mental health problems than other children. Research suggests that children with disabilities are at higher risk of abuse than non-disabled children^v. This may occur through isolation from support networks, or because children with a disability (particularly those with an intellectual disability) may lack the strategies and communication skills to protect themselves from abuse. It is also possible that children with disabilities are at higher risk because caring for them can be more stressful for parents who may already be struggling to cope. In some instances disability can also be the result of abuse, either directly or indirectly.

The Supporting Children with Additional Needs (SCAN) scheme helps give children with additional needs equal access to funded licensed children's services and activities. Community Services funds training for child care staff, travel to specialist services, and the employment of support workers at Community Services-funded preschools, vacation care and occasional care services. During a one week survey in September 2008, 5,218 children with a disability accessed funded licensed children's services^{vi}.

Revised program guidelines were published in January 2010 with the revised program focusing on supporting mainstream children's services which have children with additional needs, particularly those with a disability and/or challenging behaviours.

Parents with significant learning difficulties and/or intellectual disability and child behaviour management problems are two of the vulnerabilities that qualify families for the Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program.

When it is not possible to help keep families together, Community Services ensures that children and young people are cared for in a safe environment by foster carers or through other arrangements. Some of these children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) have high and complex needs that bring them within the definition of disability in the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

Children and young people in out-of-home care as at 30 June 2008 and 2009^{vii}

	As at 30/06/09	As at 30/06/08
Number of children and young people in OOHC	16,524 (100%)	14,667 (100%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC identified as having high and complex needs	379 (2.3%)	347 (2.4%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC who are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,307 (32.1%)	4,575 (31.2%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC who are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and who are also identified as having high and complex needs	81 (1.5%)	77 (1.7%)

Community Services staff

Community Services employs about 4,500 staff located in approximately 110 offices, including community services centres, across NSW.

The agency's *Annual Report 2008/09* includes information on the representation of EEO groups among staff, including data on those people who identify themselves as having a disability. The tables include the benchmark or target for employment and for the salary level of people with a disability and are based on staff numbers as at 30 June each year.

Trends in the employment of staff with a disability, 2005/06 – 2008/09

	Percentage of total staff				
	Benchmark or target	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
People with a disability	12.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustments	7.0	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.5

Trends in the distribution index of salary levels for staff with a disability, 2005/06 – 2008/09

	Distribution index				
	Benchmark or Target	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
People with a disability	100	101	105	102	102
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment	100	97	102	103	104

Note: A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of the distribution of the EEO group across salary levels is equivalent to that of other staff. Values less than 100 mean that the EEO group tends to be more concentrated at lower salary levels than is the case for other staff. This distribution index does not include casual staff.

Based on the best available information, while Community Services has not reached the target for employment opportunities for people with a disability, particularly people needing work-related adjustments, in any of the last five years, the distribution of salary levels indicates that people with a disability are generally employed at salary levels equivalent to all other staff. Community Services continues to encourage all staff to supply equal employment opportunity information for statistical purposes.

Reviewing the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006

Six priority areas for action were included in *Community Services Disability Act Plan 2004-2006* in line with NSW Government priorities. Significant achievements in these areas underpin the development of a Disability Action Plan 2010-2014 and they are outlined below.

Physical access

Community Services continues to review and assess all its owned sites for physical accessibility as part of the Total Asset Management (TAM) planning process.

Community Services continues to upgrade all of its property portfolio to meet all relevant statutory building and disability codes (at the time of fit-out construction) which incorporate physical accessibility requirements. All site upgrades ensure

- all reception/waiting rooms are designed for wheelchair access and, where possible, accessible toilets are nearby
- reception counters allow for disability access
- workstations and shelving units are height adjustable.

Community Services produced an Emergency Management policy, guide and reference manual to guide staff in ensuring arrangements for staff and visitors with a disability are addressed.

Promoting positive community attitudes

Community Services positively promoted the inclusion of people with disabilities through publications and resources such as the *Good practice guidelines for DoCS funded services manual* and *Wraparound support services for children and young people* (integral to the provision of out-of-home care services). Both publications and associated resources were developed and piloted in consultation with a range of non-government sector agencies.

Community Services provided training for staff, volunteers and management committee members of funded services to further develop awareness of best practice for disability access and service provision (associated with the implementation of the *Good practice guidelines*).

Training of staff

Information about disability awareness is included in online and face-to-face staff induction and orientation courses.

Caseworker Development Program modules include disability-specific content on

- working with families where a member has a disability, including placement needs and leaving care needs for a young person with an intellectual disability
- working with parents with an intellectual disability in child protection
- communicating with children and young people who may have a disability
- assessing risk of harm, child protection dynamics and interagency guidelines.

A Dual Diagnosis Resource kit, developed in partnership with the Mental Health Coordinating Council, is available on the Community Services intranet to assist staff working with parents with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance use. An information booklet for parents and two illustrated books written for children are also available to download from the Community Services website.

Community Services introduced instructions on interviewing adults and young people with physical, sensory and/or intellectual disabilities in the Joint Investigation Response Team training.

Accessible information about services

Community Services included teletypewriter (TTY) phone numbers on all new and reprinted publications produced during the year and on the website. TTY services installed at the Helpline and Domestic Violence Line continued to be operational and all new staff employed at these sites receiving training on TTY use during their induction training.

Accessibility to the Community Services website has been improved by adding a skip to content link that allows visitors that use a screen reader to skip the

long list of navigation options for each page – it skips straight to the main content, adding ‘access keys’ that allow the visitor to just press a key to access ‘search’, ‘site index’, ‘home’ or ‘contact us’. The site achieved an AA rating for website accessibility. Users can navigate the site using the tab key if they are not able to use a mouse. The new design incorporates a different system of navigation that will work on a wide range of devices, including those used by people with a disability.

The *Supporting Children with Additional Needs* brochures have been published on the website in six community languages.

Employment in Community Services

Applicants for positions in Community Services are asked to advise of any particular needs for access or support during the assessment process. All candidates are given an opportunity to bring additional equipment or have it provided for them for the completion of tasks, including written exercises, computer skills and presentations.

All new staff are asked to complete a health declaration to identify any requirements for workplace modifications. Workplace assessments are then completed.

JAWS (Jobs Access With Speech) screen reader technology is available for identified users who are visually impaired. This software is approved by Vision Australia and works for all the agency’s standard desktop software applications.

Accessibility to the intranet has been improved by replacing the design and navigation tools with a more useable interface. The intranet complies with W3C standards, which is over and above the minimum requirement for government intranets.

Complaints procedures

Grievances and feedback to Community Services can be made by way of mail, fax, telephone, email or in person at an office. Complainants have the right to choose the format which is the most convenient and suitable to them.

Two principles of the *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993* are particularly relevant to complaints made by, or on behalf of, people with disabilities:

- a service provider is to enable a complaint about the service to be dealt with fairly, informally and quickly and at a place convenient to the complainant
- a complaint about the provision of a service is to be dealt with even if it is made by another person on behalf of the person eligible to receive, or receiving, the service.

Community Services continues to review complaints procedures to ensure that complaints are resolved in an inclusive way. The procedures ensure that assistance is provided to enable complainants to express their views and participate in the complaints process.

Developing a new plan

Consultation

Staff from each of Community Services Regions were consulted and provided advice on a range of disability issues. Submissions from advocacy and peak bodies to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW were also analysed.

There will be ongoing communication about progress on the implementation of the DAP with stakeholders, both outside and within Government.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability

Community Services recognises that people with a disability may be faced with particular barriers that could limit their access to the services provided by the Agency.

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Revise and implement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Community Services (CS) and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) for clients with a disability	Improved coordination of service delivery Improve information sharing between CS and ADHC in relation to children and young people with a disability	New MOU signed March 2010 Implementation ongoing	Operations	MOU implemented
2.	Develop knowledge and skills of CS staff in relation to working with children and young people with a disability	Relevant staff receive training and development in relation to working with children and young people with a disability	Commencing December 2010 and ongoing	Operations and Learning and Development	Proportion of relevant staff trained
3.	Improve the quality of out-of-home care KiDS data and NGO Minimum Data Set (MDS) to ensure data on children with a disability is accurate and reliable	Increased OOHC options for placement of children and young people with a disability	Commencing December 2010 (development of plan) and ongoing	Planning & Corporate Performance, Business Improvement and Corporate Services	Accuracy and reliability of out-of-home care KiDS data and NGO MDS is improved
4.	Implement new SCAN program guidelines	Children with additional support needs have increased	Commencing 2010 and ongoing	F&CSR	Number of children with a disability accessing CS

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
		<p>opportunities to access eligible CS funded preschool, vacation care and occasional care services</p> <p>Eligible CS funded children's services are responsive to the needs of children with additional support needs</p>			funded preschool, vacation care and occasional care services (during one survey week in August/September of each year)
5.	Work to improve access to services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) for people with physical disabilities	Increased number of SAAP/CAP crisis services are accessible to people with disabilities	Commencing 2010/11	Funding Support Unit in conjunction with Housing NSW	Upgrading of 20 SAAP/CAP properties to include modifications enabling access for people with disabilities
6.	Strengthen communications about supports and services for families with parent(s) with learning difficulties/intellectual disability	Increased access to a range of services provided under the Brighter Futures Program that respond to identified individual and family needs for families with parent(s) with learning difficulties/intellectual disability and have children aged under 9 years, or who are expecting a child	Ongoing	Operations Corporate Information for publication of material	Number of families where the parent(s) have learning difficulties/intellectual disability entering the Brighter Futures Program

Outcome 2: Providing information in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Providing information about Community Services in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability is an essential component of improving access to services

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Ensure mechanisms for making complaints or lodging grievances are accessible in a range of formats and that appropriate support is made available to complainants	CS website is updated to ensure information about how to make a complaint and the availability of support and assistance is accurate and accessible	Before January 2011	Investigation and Review Branch Corporate Information for web publication	Web site updated
2.	Ensure CS website continues to comply with the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	Full compliance with guidelines	Ongoing	Corporate Information	Website complies
3.	Ensure information about CS is available through other government and non-government agencies	Building and maintaining strong cooperative links with other government and NGO groups	Ongoing	Operations, Major Change Program Unit Corporate Information for web and print publication	Links to CS on other sites. Brochures etc available at a range of outlets
4.	Use of accredited interpreters to communicate with a person with a disability who speaks a language other than English	Communication needs met for people with languages other than English	Ongoing	All units	Suitable interpreters used
5.	Consideration will be given to promoting CS support and services more actively through existing platforms already reaching families with disability	Information available to all families who may benefit from it	Ongoing	All units responsible for advising Corporate Information of services offered and source of funding	New promotions commenced

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
6.	Consideration will be given to reproducing existing resources in Braille and audio formats	Initially, information most likely to be of use to families of people with visual impairments available in accessible formats	2011/12	All units responsible for reviewing resources and advising Corporate Information of requirements. Corporate Information for publication, subject to availability of funding	Brochures produced in audio and Braille formats

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Ensuring the buildings and facilities used by Community Services are physically accessible to people with a disability is essential to ensuring access to services

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Ensure CS property portfolio complies with relevant disability legislation / building codes	100% of CS property portfolio complies with relevant disability legislation / building codes	Ongoing	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
2.	Ensure appropriate office accommodation is leased which will enable disability access	100% of CS property portfolio provides disability access	Ongoing	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
3.	Provide reception counters that will enable disability access	100% of CS property portfolio includes reception counters that enable disability access	30 June 2012	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
4.	Provide height adjustable workstations	100% of the workstations in CS property portfolio are height adjustable	30 June 2013	Corporate Services	% of workstations that comply

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Encouraging and facilitating the participation of people with a disability in public forums and other consultation processes is important for ensuring not only the provision of opportunities to participate as equal citizens but also that disability issues are included for consideration where appropriate.

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Information about public forums and membership of CS committees is made available in audio and Braille formats	Information about attendance at public forums and participation in CS committees and boards is available to all people	July 2010 and ongoing	All units need to advise Corporate Information about public forums and committees Corporate Information responsible for publication, subject to availability of funding	Information published in range of appropriate formats
2.	Public forums and committee meetings are held in locations with disability access	People with a disability are able to attend public forums and participate in CS committees	Ongoing	All units	All public meetings held in locations with disability access

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Providing a work environment that is accessible and attractive for people with a disability ensures that Community Services is a supportive, diverse and flexible workplace that encourages all qualified applicants to seek employment with the Agency.

[Note: The guidelines for disability action planning advise that inclusion of this outcome in the DAP is not mandatory as it covers targets in EEO management plans. Community Services does not have an EEO management plan. Further the inclusion of this outcome in the DAP ensures a comprehensive profile of CS initiatives for people with a disability is available in one comprehensive document]

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Refer Health Declarations provided in recruitment process to HR/OHS staff to advise on reasonable adjustments that may be required	All applicant Health Declarations that identify a medical or other disability are referred for advice prior to entry on duty	By December 2010	Corporate Services	% of requested work place adjustments completed
2.	Nominate a Disability Contact Officer in Head Office to provide advice/support to managers and staff regarding issues of disability and reasonable adjustment	Nominated position and contact details available on the intranet and advised to managers and staff	By December 2010	Corporate Services	Contact person details available on intranet
3.	Promote a commitment to consider reasonable adjustments for applicants with a disability (in non-caseworker roles) in all recruitment packages	Statement of commitment linked to Health Declaration included in recruitment packages	By December 2010	Corporate Services	% of recruitment packages including a statement of commitment to consider reasonable adjustments

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
4.	Develop a strategy to improve access to employment with Community Services for people with disabilities	Employment with Community Services is more accessible to people with disabilities	Commencing 2011	Corporate Human Resources	Strategy developed to improve access to employment with Community Services for people with disabilities

Implementation

Integration into planning

This Disability Action Plan will be integrated into Community Services main planning processes, in particular the annual statement of Agency Directions and business plans.

The endorsed plan will be widely promoted through Community Services website, intranet and community networks.

Review and reporting framework

In line with the Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies a copy of the Community Services Disability Action Plan 2010-2014 will be submitted to Ageing, Disability and Home Care. A copy will also be provided to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Community Services will review its progress towards achieving the outcomes it has identified as part of this Disability Action Plan. A report on this review will be included in the Community Services Annual Report.

By the end of 2014 this Disability Action Plan will be reviewed and updated.

Housing NSW Disability Action Plan 2009-2013

Foreword

People with a disability make up about one in three of current public housing tenants and about one in five of tenants in community housing organisations. They have diverse needs with some living independently and actively participating in the community, while others have complex needs and require support to sustain their tenancies and connect with their community. Some may live in rural, regional or remote communities, others may come from diverse cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal Australians. The important role of advocates, carers and support workers who assist people with a disability must also be recognised.

Housing NSW is committed to assisting people with a disability who are most in need to access and sustain social housing and, where appropriate, to provide them with private rent assistance. We continue to work with our government and non-government partners to ensure people with a disability who need support to sustain their tenancy are able to access the support services they need.

Our staff who have a disability are a valuable asset to our organisation. We are committed to ensuring that our workforce policies and practices enable the recruitment and retention of staff with a disability.

This plan outlines strategies over the next five years to ensure housing assistance and related support is accessible and appropriate to the needs of people with a disability.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our tenants, staff and government and non-government partners who provided valuable input into this plan. I look forward to your continued feedback and to working with you to deliver on its priorities.

Mike Allen

Chief Executive

Our commitment

Housing NSW is committed to assisting people with a disability who are most in need to access and sustain social housing and private rent assistance.

We are committed to working with our government and non-government stakeholders towards understanding future demand for housing assistance and to identifying strategies to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Housing NSW is committed to promoting tenant participation and engagement and to working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that people with a disability who need support to sustain their tenancy are able to access the support services they need.

Housing NSW is committed to working with the community housing sector to ensure that community housing providers continue to provide housing assistance to those most in need, including people with a disability.

Staff working in Housing NSW can expect to work in an environment free from discrimination and where staff members with disability are supported with the necessary workplace adjustments that enable them to perform their duties. Housing NSW aims to increase the proportion of staff with a disability that are recruited and retained within its workforce.

The Housing NSW Disability Action Plan 2009 – 2013 (the plan) reflects the commitments of Housing NSW to providing affordable and accessible housing assistance to people with a disability. It outlines strategies that promote social inclusion and access to support needed to help clients with a disability to sustain their tenancies.

This plan is guided by the following principles:

- our services should respond fairly to the diverse needs of clients
- our clients can expect to have access to quality information and are involved in decision making
- our client networks and relationships are valued and supported
- we work collaboratively with other agencies to develop and deliver housing services linked to support when needed
- we strive to maintain a high standard of service to clients with diverse needs.

Disability action planning outcome areas

The plan is one of Housing NSW's obligations under the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*. Consistent with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies*, the plan focuses on seven priority areas:

- ensuring people with a disability are able to access housing services and products
- providing information in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability
- improving physical accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with a disability
- assisting the participation of people with a disability in public consultations and on Housing NSW advisory boards and committees
- increasing employment participation of people with a disability in Housing NSW

- influencing other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing; and
- providing quality specialist and adapted services to meet the needs of people with a disability

For the purpose of housing needs assessment, Housing NSW considers a person to have a disability if their ability to function is impaired or if they have a medical condition due to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical condition or combination of conditions, which is permanent or likely to be permanent. Housing NSW also recognises that disability exists within a social context where attitudes of some institutions and individuals towards disability can create further barriers to access to services, opportunities and social inclusion.

Development of the plan

The plan was informed by consultation with key stakeholders including:

- Housing NSW tenants
- Housing NSW staff
- Disability peak organisations
- Housing Partners Non-Government Organisation Reference Group
- Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee
- Tenants Union of NSW; and
- Housing and Human Services Senior Officers Group.

The plan was made available for public comment for the period June 2009 on the Housing NSW website. Advice and direction was also provided by an internal Steering Committee comprising Housing NSW and Aboriginal Housing Office representatives, and the Disability Reference Group, which is made up of Housing NSW staff that have a disability or are carers of a person with a disability.

This plan is informed by the Housing NSW *Corporate Plan* and complements a range of strategies that focus on specific client groups, including *New Directions in Social Housing for Older People* and the *Housing and Human Services Accord*.

Policy context

The majority of NSW Government agencies have a legislative responsibility under the NSW *Disability Services Act 1993* to develop a Disability Action Plan. In addition, all agencies have obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the NSW *Disability Discrimination Act 1977* which recognise the right of people with a disability to equality before the law and make discrimination on the grounds of disability unlawful. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more information.

The NSW Government recognises the need to improve the services provided to people with a disability and their carers across all three tiers of service delivery – universal services,

adapted services and specialist services. This ensures the notions of better services, fairness and opportunity for all citizens, as outlined in the *NSW State Plan*,²⁶ are upheld.

The NSW Government recognises there is an increasing demand for more, higher quality services from the specialist disability support system. A growing elderly population, combined with an increasing number of people with a disability living in the community, is placing pressure both on the service system and carers. To meet these needs, the Government is realigning the disability support system to become more flexible and innovative. Among the changes in specialist service provision proposed in *Stronger Together: A New Direction for Disability Services in NSW 2006-2016*, the Government has a commitment to deliver services that have greater predictability, clear entry and exit points and that offer a range of options most suitable to the needs of the people concerned.²⁷

Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families: 2007 – 2011 more specifically identifies how NSW Government agencies work together to improve planning and service delivery. Housing NSW is a partner in some key initiatives under this strategy which are being implemented under the Housing and Human Services Accord (Accord).

Commonwealth/State partnerships related to housing also provide a policy context for responding to the needs of people with a disability. For example, the National Affordable Housing Agreement and related partnership plans identify a number of outcomes that will improve service and opportunities for people with a disability. These include:

- supporting vulnerable groups, including people with a disability to access services;
- designing housing to meet the needs of elderly people and people with a disability; and
- improving tenancy management and maintenance standards

The *Homelessness White Paper: the Road Home 2008* outlines the Commonwealth Government's strategy to tackling homelessness. It recognises that people who are homeless often have complex problems including substance abuse, mental illness, developmental disabilities and chronic physical illnesses. The *NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009 – 2014* contains a range of partnerships that will help strengthen responses to homelessness.

Another related reform is the growth of the community housing sector in NSW as outlined in *Planning for the Future: New directions for community housing in New South Wales 2007/08 – 2012/13*. Under this strategy the community housing sector will play an increasingly important role in delivering a diverse and flexible response to clients most in need, including those with a disability.

There are various State and Commonwealth policy contexts that inform the current approach to providing housing assistance for people with a disability described in the Disability Action Plan.

Demand

²⁶ NSW Government (2006). *State Plan*, NSW Government, Sydney.

²⁷ NSW Government (2006) *Stronger Together: A New Direction for Disability Services in NSW 2006-2016*, NSW Government, Sydney.

Policy shifts, demographic trends, and increasing disadvantage experienced by people with a disability contribute towards higher demand for social housing.

Policy shifts

The disability service system has shifted over time, leading to more people with a disability seeking social housing:

- The NSW social housing system has evolved from providing housing to low income working families to providing housing for the most disadvantaged, predominantly those dependent on social security payments, resulting in a growing proportion of social housing households that include a person with a disability. Approximately one-third of social housing applicants receive the Disability Support Pension (DSP).
- A changing policy environment with strategies such as *Better Together* and *Stronger Together* is ensuring the most appropriate accommodation is available for people with a disability by providing a wide range of options that suit the location and changing needs of the individual.
- The availability of other services has an impact on the demand for social housing. For example there has been a notable decline in the number of boarding houses which are often used by people with a disability as an affordable housing option.
- Deinstitutionalisation of care since the 1980s and the 1990s has meant many people with a disability are now moving back into their communities. This has been accompanied by income support payments such as the Disability Support Pension as well as the need for a range of support services including flexible accommodation options.²⁸
- In other jurisdictions, there is an increasing trend towards separating the provision of housing from the provision of support services for people with a disability so that the conflicts of interest experienced with the roles of the landlord and support provider are minimised.

Demographics

Demand for disability related housing services is expected to be driven by an increasing ageing population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics *2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* notes:²⁹

- a demographic shift towards an ageing population and an increase in the number of people with complex needs requiring support
- the number of individuals in NSW with a severe or profound core activity limitation is expected to increase by 7.7 per cent between 2006-2010 based on ABS population projections. Growth is predominantly in the age category of 65 years and over (11.6 per cent)

²⁸ *Australia's Welfare 2007 – Housing for Health and Welfare* (2007), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra p 214.

²⁹ *Survey of disability, ageing and carers* (2003), Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

- life expectancy of people with a disability is becoming increasingly closer to the general population as provision of care and medical treatment improves.

Financial disadvantage

People with a disability are likely to experience greater financial disadvantage and hence place a higher demand on social housing. In 2005, 19 per cent of the population in Australia had a disability. This proportion is not reflected in home ownership where only 12 per cent of all home purchasers had a disability.³⁰ The following list describes factors that contribute towards the financial disadvantage of people with a disability:

- in line with national trends, workforce participation rates (53 per cent) are lower in NSW for people with a disability compared with the wider population (six per cent) resulting in a reliance on welfare payments. As housing affordability deteriorates, more people with a disability are likely to require social housing
- higher than average living costs,³¹ combined with deteriorating housing affordability, leads to more people with a disability experiencing financial difficulty
- with the 2006b changes to Disability Support Pension eligibility, some people have been placed on alternative, lower benefits such as Newstart, further reducing their capacity to afford suitable accommodation
- there is currently limited funding to assist people in the private rental market who wish to maintain their independence, so social housing often becomes a long term rental option
- people with a disability frequently face discrimination and are excluded from the private rental market
- many properties, particularly in the private market, are inappropriate and inaccessible for use by people with a disability
- an inability to access information can inhibit some people with a disability from fully participating in the private purchase or rental markets.

³⁰ *Australia's welfare 2007 – Disability and disability services* (2007, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, p 189.

³¹ Saunders, Peter, *The cost of disability and the incidence of poverty*, Social Policy Research Centre Discussion Paper No. 147, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007.

Supply

In NSW the supply of low cost rental stock has been declining with most growth focused on the high end of the market. Of the low rental stock that is available, only 11 per cent is being occupied by low income private renters in Sydney.³²

The proportion of dwellings constructed for public housing purposes has declined over the same period. Across Australia, it is recognised that public housing has been under-maintained until recently with extensive renewal programs now in place.³³ In NSW, a major maintenance reform program is starting to address the maintenance backlog.

Drivers affecting supply

- Until recently, there was a reduction in real terms in Commonwealth Government funding for social housing through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). The recent injection of Commonwealth funding under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan will help increase the supply of additional social housing dwellings
- The price of land within metropolitan areas has increased, diminishing the ability for Housing NSW to purchase and maintain social housing dwellings in these areas. This is particularly relevant to people who require easy access to public transport and disability related services in the community
- Thirty per cent of the existing public housing stock in NSW is located in housing developments which have limited accessibility,³⁴
- Changing composition of households requires a change in the social housing portfolio and, in particular, a need for smaller properties that will accommodate single people and smaller families
- Competition from others in greatest need due to demographic changes and housing affordability means limited resources are under pressure to adequately meet the needs of people with a disability.

Role of Housing NSW

Housing NSW is governed by the *NSW Housing Act 2001* to manage the NSW Government's housing portfolio and develop broader housing strategies. It provides:

- Public housing – property and tenancy management for households living in over 124,000 public housing homes
- Community housing – funding and regulation of not-for-profit organisations to provide property and tenancy management currently for more than 17,500 properties (including crisis accommodation). This is set to increase under the current growth strategy

³² *Improving housing affordability in NSW*, National Council of Social Services, Sydney 2005.

³³ Lawson, Julie and Milligan, Vivienne, *international trends in housing and policy responses*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Sydney 2007.

³⁴ Housing NSW (1999) *Fact sheet-Community Renewal in Goonellabah*, Housing NSW.

- Aboriginal public housing – property and tenancy management for more than 4,300 properties owned by the Aboriginal Housing Office
- Links to support services – partnerships with other government agencies and community organisations to support households with special needs living in social housing
- Private rental assistance – the provision of financial assistance to low-income households renting in the private sector
- Special assistance – the provision of subsidies for people with a disability or living with HIV/ AIDS who rent in the private market
- Home purchase assistance – advice and financial assistance for home buyers
- Affordable housing – the development of low-cost housing options with the private sector and not-for-profit organisations
- Community regeneration – the development of cross-agency strategies to support the reduction of social, environmental and economic disadvantage within some social housing and other communities
- Housing policy development and overall regulation of community housing and performance monitoring of public housing in NSW.

Housing NSW employs approximately 2,500 staff in 90 offices across NSW. Our staff work with community housing providers, the Aboriginal Housing Office, Commonwealth and State government agencies, non-government organisations and community organisations to meet the housing needs of tenants and the community.

Housing NSW funds and regulates the community housing sector, through its Community Housing Division. Community housing providers are independent, autonomous non-government providers that utilise government assistance and private investment to provide housing for people on very low to moderate incomes and those with complex needs. Housing NSW works closely with the sector to provide guidance on implementing strategies that support clients with complex needs, including those with a disability.

The strategies outlined in this Plan may refer to the social housing sector³⁵ as a whole or separately to public housing or community housing or Aboriginal housing managed by Housing NSW, as indicated.

It is noted that the Aboriginal Housing Office is developing its own Disability Action Plan, using Housing NSW's Plan as a guide.

People with a disability in social housing

Assessment of the housing needs of people with a disability is based on a functional approach. This focuses on the effect a disability has on a client's ability to find and keep suitable and affordable housing located near necessary health or support facilities such as specialist hospitals, disability and home support services or special schools for children with a disability.

³⁵ Social housing includes public housing, community housing and Aboriginal housing managed by Housing NSW

When providing housing assistance, Housing NSW considers a person to have a disability if their ability to function is impaired or they have a medical condition due to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical condition or combination of conditions, and is permanent or likely to be permanent, resulting in:

- a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility
- the need for ongoing support services
- an inability to obtain housing from the private rental market.

Currently the receipt of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) or the Carers Payment is used by Housing NSW as a proxy indicator of disability for public housing tenant households (including those in Aboriginal Housing Office properties). Housing NSW collects data on applicants, tenants and other household members receiving the DSP and Carers Payment.

At 30 June 2009, 34 per cent of current public housing tenants (including those in Aboriginal Housing Office properties) had a household member with a significant disability (where at least one household member is receiving the DSP or the Carers Payment and the household income is below the public housing lease review income limits).

Of new tenants (housed during 2008-09) 36 per cent were people with a significant disability. This is an increase of eight per cent since 2001.

Data shows an average increase in the proportion of tenants with a disability of one per cent per year since 2001. If this trend continues there will be an additional 1,000 tenants with a disability each year, with an increase of 5,200 by the end of 2013.

Data is not currently available on applicants/tenants with a disability who are not receiving DSP or the Carers Payment. Often tenants and applicants do not disclose disability information to client service staff. This could be due to a number of issues including concerns about their privacy. Numbers are therefore likely to be under-represented. In addition, there is currently no data on the range and nature of disabilities of applicants or tenants.

Community housing providers provide information on the number of tenants (and tenants newly housed during the year) where at least one member of the household has a disability. When collecting this information, Community Housing defines "disability" as including anything which restricts the person's everyday activities or otherwise limits their ability to function within the range considered normal for a human being. However, they do not collect data on whether their tenants receive DSP.

As at June 2009, there were a total of 16,600 community housing households, and 25 per cent of these included a member with a disability. In 2008/09, 29 per cent of the 3,300 new community housing households included a member with a disability.

Staff with a disability

In keeping with NSW State Plan commitments, Housing NSW reports annually to the Department of Premier and Cabinet through the Office of Employment Equity and Diversity, Public Employment Office on the diversity of its workforce.

As at June 2009 the total proportion of Housing NSW staff with a disability was seven per cent (an estimated 191 people). Although this represents a decrease from 11 per cent in 2004, the distribution of staff with a disability across all salary levels has increased from 95 in 2004 to 99, indicating that the salaries of officers with a disability are more closely equivalent to the salaries of other staff.³⁶

Forty-nine people, 1.9% of Housing NSW staff, required workplace adjustment as at June 2009.³⁷ This represents a decrease from 79 people, or 2.9%, in 2004. However, the distribution index for officers requiring workplace adjustment has risen from 93 in 2004 to 99 in 2009.

Priority action areas

This section identifies current achievements against each priority action area and indicates broad actions for future implementation. A detailed implementation plan will be prepared to support this, identifying internal responsibilities and timeframes.

Ensure people with a disability are able to access housing services and products

Housing NSW recognises that people with a disability may be confronted with particular barriers that affect their access to appropriate housing products and services.

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has implemented a range of initiatives to identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability.

Disability modifications program

Through an ongoing program of modifications to existing and new dwellings, Housing NSW provides housing for people with a mobility related disability. Work carried out includes modifications, such as hand-rails and ramps for physical access, and may include minor alterations to kitchens and doorways to ensure homes meet the functional requirements of people with a disability. In 2008/09 Housing NSW spent \$5.16 million to modify around 1,900 dwellings.

Property assessment

³⁶ A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of distribution of the group across salary levels is the same as for other staff. Values greater than 100 mean that the group tends to be concentrated at higher salary levels than is the case for other staff; values less than 100 indicate that the group tends to be concentrated at lower salary levels.

³⁷ Workplace adjustments are changes made or provisions offered in the work environment to enable a person with a disability to do their job. An example is providing a parking space close to the place of employment for an employee in a wheelchair.

Since 2000 Housing NSW has undertaken a number of property assessment surveys to gather information on the condition of all properties, including any disability modifications. This assists in the allocation of appropriate properties to people with a disability. In late 2008 Housing NSW began the current round of surveying to update property data including collecting further information on the level (low, medium or high) of modification in properties modified for people with a disability. Low level modifications may include the installation of grip rails, medium level modifications include the widening of door ways or installing ramp access, and high level modifications involve major structural modifications to a house.

Income eligibility

Special income eligibility provisions are granted to households that include a person who has incurred expenses as a result of a medical condition, disability or permanent injury.

Priority housing transfers

Priority housing transfers are considered where the client's disability or medical condition means that their current housing circumstances are unsuitable, regardless of income eligibility or other eligibility requirements.

Bedroom entitlement

Tenants with a disability may be entitled to an extra bedroom above their minimum bedroom entitlement if they require:

- storage space for medical equipment
- room for a family member or carer to stay when short term support is required due to hospitalisation or illness
- a separate room for their partner if their disability or routines associated with their disability require the couple to sleep separately.

Design requirements

Housing NSW is developing design requirements for social housing in line with the principles of universal design, which means the housing can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal housing design principles have been included in some pilot housing projects to test costs and amenity. Features include accessible entries, wider doorways, accessible bathrooms and internal features such as low placed light and power switches. Two projects are due for completion and occupancy in early 2009 when their performance will be evaluated.

The application of universal design requirements within the community housing sector is being explored.

Older persons design guidelines

As part of the New Directions in Social Housing for Older People Plan, Housing NSW has also developed guidelines for best practice design of social housing to improve suitability of housing to meet the needs of older people. The guidelines integrate physical (accessibility and security) and social (social participation and interaction) design aspects.

Training

The *Certificate IV in Social Housing* introduced in 2006 for Housing NSW client service officers provides greater focus on the assessment and support of clients with complex

needs, including people with a disability, and the role of Housing NSW in working with other service providers who provide specialist support.

Recent enhancements to the Certificate content include:

- Housing NSW in collaboration with the NSW Federation of Housing Associations has introduced a 'Partnership Training course' for client service staff under the Housing and Human Services Accord to develop partnerships to assist people with complex needs including people with a disability.
- A revised module has been developed to address the needs of clients with complex needs.

Community housing staff may also access training packages delivered by the Federation.

Complaints mechanisms

Clients have a range of options available to provide feedback to Housing NSW:

- calling the free phone number
- completing a Client Feedback Form online at our website
- requesting a form by post, or
- collecting a form from a branch office
- sending a general letter.

Clients who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can access the Telephone Translating and Interpreter Service using the AUSLAN (sign language) interpreters or using a Teletypewriter (TTY) through the Telephone National Relay Service (NRS) to make a complaint.

Community housing clients can make complaints to the community housing provider, the Federation of Housing Associations or the NSW Community Housing Registrar.

All social housing clients can make an appeal on decisions made about their applications to the Housing Appeals Committee.

Why do we need further action?

Research and advice from tenants and staff with a disability and disability peak groups indicated that:

- Housing NSW needs to gather more accurate information on applicants and tenants with a disability to improve its asset and service delivery planning
- Housing NSW can improve its capacity to match modified properties to the needs of clients
- There are inconsistencies in the customer service provided to tenants and applicants with a disability
- Many Housing NSW properties require further work in order to be accessible to people with a range of disabilities
- Currently there is no data system to record modifications of properties in the community housing sector

- Housing in the private rental and home ownership market is becoming less affordable or difficult to source for people with a disability
- The Housing NSW complaints system needs to recognise the differing capabilities of people with a disability
- Recognition that disability and the types of support required may be perceived differently by people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- People with a disability living in rural, regional or remote communities may have difficulties accessing the supports or services they require
- Recognition and support for advocates or carers of people with a disability.

Proposed headline strategies

- Increase the number of social housing homes (public and community housing) that meet universal design principles
- Increase the number of public housing homes that are modified to meet the needs of people with a disability

Other proposed strategies

- Review Housing NSW data collection and analysis systems to ensure that functional disability data is used to inform asset and service planning in addition to data on Disability Support Pension recipients
- Develop and conduct ongoing training for all Housing NSW staff and community housing providers to work with people who may have a range of disabilities
- Continue to include the disability allowance in income eligibility criteria
- Improve public housing information systems to identify assets with disability modifications and to allocate properties to people with a disability (this involves linking allocation to Housing NSW's property assessment survey data)
- Adapt public housing complaints management systems to accept complaints from tenants and applicants in a range of formats
- Discuss with the Real Estate Institute of Australia the need to include the housing needs of people with a disability in accredited training of real estate agents

Provide information in a range of accessible formats

Providing information about Housing NSW services and products in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability is essential in improving access to housing assistance.

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has introduced a range of initiatives to improve the accessibility of information.

Information about services

In line with NSW State Government website standards, the Housing NSW website has undergone development to improve its accessibility including user friendliness for people with a disability.

Housing NSW is currently developing a Service Delivery Channel Strategy to improve access to Housing NSW products and services for clients and applicants. This strategy will incorporate the provision of information on housing products and services in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability.

Housing NSW provides two communication channels to clients with hearing difficulties to ensure they have equal access to public housing services and information – access to AUSLAN interpreters and the Telephone Typewrite Service through the Australian Communication Exchange's National Relay Service for those with hearing and speech impairments. These services are provided at no cost to clients and can be used when applying for housing assistance, making other enquiries and requesting home repairs.

Housing NSW has been piloting an audio version (CD) of the tenant newsletter for clients with visual impairments since June 2008.

Other important sources of information for clients with disability and housing needs are the Community Housing Division website and the website of the Federation of Housing Associations, which provide resources for the community housing sector and for people interested in finding out more about community housing.

Why do we need further action?

Many social housing tenants or applicants are unaware of the services available and how to access them. This is particularly problematic for people with a disability who require support to access housing assistance. Information needs to be available in alternative formats suitable for people with a disability. For example in large print, Braille, audio and electronic formats including email and electronic attachments such as PDF.

The Housing NSW website meets NSW Government and W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) standards for people with a disability. This website, and Housing NSW's Intranet site, provides information on services for people with a disability and their support organisations.

Proposed headline strategy

- Develop information on public housing services and products in a range of appropriate formats for people with a range of disabilities

Proposed strategies

- Ensure information about Housing NSW services and products is available through other government agencies and non-government organisations
- Continue to maintain compliance with the W3C's Web Content Accessibility and NSW Government guidelines
- Ensure Housing NSW Service Delivery channels respond to the needs and capacities of people with a range of disabilities
- Discuss with the Real Estate Institute the provision of online access to information about modified properties in the private housing market

Improve physical accessibility of buildings and facilities

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has worked on the following initiatives to improve the physical accessibility of buildings and facilities:

Office accommodation strategy

Housing NSW is developing a five year Office Accommodation Strategy to comply with the provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and, over time, the *Disability Discrimination Act*. The BCA contains specific provisions for access to and within buildings, for people with a disability. It applies to building work on both new and existing buildings.

Housing NSW is also developing Office Accommodation Guidelines to ensure Housing NSW offices and facilities meet Occupational Health and Safety standards for staff, promote the physical wellbeing of staff and are adaptable to future needs and changing delivery and service methods.

Why do we need further action?

Not all Housing NSW office buildings are accessible for people with a disability. Some have poor wheelchair access, no lifts and toilets and limited or no car parking facilities for people with a disability. Signage can be hard to read and poorly placed. Clear signage considering location, lighting and size benefits all visitors.

Proposed headline strategy

- Housing NSW continues to develop office accommodation strategies to comply with national standards

Assist participation in public consultations, government advisory boards and committees

Current focus

Housing NSW convenes a number of forums to encourage and facilitate the participation of tenants. Some of these are described below.

Tenant and community initiatives program: In recent years Housing NSW established the Tenant and Community Initiatives Program to fund regionally-based tenant participation, resource centres and local community development projects. There are nine Tenant Participation Resource Services, each ensuring people with a disability have equal opportunities to participate. Meetings are held in accessible venues and assistance provided to people with a disability who attend. Some services have identified and will facilitate opportunities for people with disabilities to access support services such as mental health services, drug and alcohol services, disability services and family support.

Housing NSW is encouraging tenants with a disability to participate in the **Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee** (SHTAC). The SHTAC was established as a pilot project in 2008 and is currently under review. The SHTAC is a state wide tenant participation structure providing advice to Housing NSW on policy and service development, with membership including representation from both public and community housing. All committee members received leadership and committee skills training.

Building stronger communities strategy: The *Building Stronger Communities Strategy 2007-10* is being implemented by Housing NSW in seven priority locations to bring about long term sustained social and economic improvement. In all Building Stronger Communities locations disability access and mobility is considered when consulting the community. Many of the Community Centres have ramp access and disabled toilet facilities. Specific examples of community engagement initiatives in these locations include:

- In Dubbo Housing NSW works closely with the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to ensure people with a disability are consulted and involved in social inclusion activities.
- In Macquarie Fields, three of the five residents on the Neighbourhood Advisory Board have a disability. They also have a program running in partnership with Diabetes Australia and Hearing Australia that targets Aboriginal residents and is structured around a lunch gathering with information provision on health issues.
- In Orange/Bathurst, Housing NSW is working in partnership with a local company, Wangarang Industries, which provide employment to recipients of a Disability Support Pension. This provides the opportunity for tenants with a disability to gain meaningful

employment as either a stepping stone to re-enter the workforce or work with assistance.

- In Mt Druitt, work is underway to upgrade public spaces to increase access and use of these areas by children, families, young people and people with a disability, and in partnership with other government agencies to strengthen and/or develop transition to work options including pre-employment courses for a range of target groups including people with a disability.
- Neighbourhood Advisory Boards have been established in some Building Stronger Communities locations with applications open to tenants with a disability.

Other locations: Housing NSW has a number of other locations building participation of the community including people with a disability. Examples include:

- In the Bonnyrigg Living Community Project and Airds Bradbury Renewal Project, people with a disability are included in consultation and advisory capacities.
- At Bonnyrigg an advocate was employed to assist people with a disability, older people and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with housing issues. Specific outreach activities were undertaken to meet people with a disability in their homes. Housing NSW provided special information and consultation sessions for people with a disability and their carers, and provided consultation processes in accessible community locations.
- In the Minto Community Renewal Project a network of residents, NGOs and government agencies undertake formal and informal community renewal activities and coordinate participation in consultations. All activities and consultations are required to be accessible for participants, including the people with a disability, the elderly and mothers with prams. The groups are to consider transport to the site, cost, time of day, translation needs and the provision of childcare.

Non-Government Organisation (NGO) housing partners reference group: Housing NSW convenes the NGO Housing Partners Reference Group to provide advice on policies and programs across a range of areas. Participation on this group includes organisations that represent people with disabilities.

Community housing tenants network: The community housing sector convenes the Community Housing Tenants Network which may include representation of people with disabilities.

Why do we need further action?

Many social housing tenants consulted during the development of this Plan told us they wanted to be more involved in Housing NSW's decision making processes, including participating in other public consultations, advisory boards and committees.

Proposed headline strategy

- Ensure tenant participation program guidelines encourage diverse participation including people with a disability

Other proposed strategies

- Monitor and encourage participation of people with a disability in social housing tenant participation and consultation structures including the Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee

Increased employment participation of people with a disability in Housing NSW

This section discusses actions in relation to Housing NSW staff only and does not apply to community housing providers, as Housing NSW does not have jurisdiction over employment practices in the community housing sector.

Current focus

Providing a work environment that is accessible and attractive for people with a disability allows Housing NSW to tap into a pool of increasingly qualified applicants. It also encourages a supportive, diverse and flexible workplace.

The NSW State Plan commits government agencies to targets of 12 per cent employment of people with a disability and seven per cent employment of people requiring work-related adjustment. Housing NSW employs a large number of staff throughout the State and supports the employment of people with disabilities within Housing NSW, as well as retaining and enhancing career opportunities through the initiatives outlined below.

Disability reference group

An internal Housing NSW staff Disability Reference Group was established in June 2008. This reference group provides a forum for the identification and discussion of issues facing Housing NSW staff and clients with a disability. In line with State Government priorities, this group will also consider strategies to increase employment opportunities in Housing NSW for people with a disability.

Human resource management

Housing NSW is currently reviewing its flexible work practices and investigating approaches to improving workplace flexibility. This will be particularly beneficial for people with health or disability needs or those caring for people with a disability.

Why do we need further action?

Labour force participation by people with a disability in Housing NSW is lower than for people without a disability and decreased from 11 per cent in 2004 to seven per cent in 2008.

Proposed headline strategy

- Improve Housing NSW management practices in relation to staff with a disability through workplace adjustment including flexible work practices and job design, and disability awareness training

Other proposed strategies

- Ensure Housing NSW recruitment and employment policies are appropriate to attracting employment participation of people with a disability
- Improve Housing NSW recruitment practices for people with a disability, for example by increasing the use of disability employment agencies and developing brochures for use at career expos
- Ensure Housing NSW employees with a disability are well-informed of their rights
- Establish a mentoring program for staff with a disability

Influence other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life

Housing NSW is committed to working in partnerships with other government and non-government agencies and tenants to use our influence to improve the delivery of State Government services to people with a disability.

Current focus

Housing and Human Services Accord partnerships

The Housing and Human Services Accord was established to ensure that people with complex needs are able to access the support they need to sustain their tenancies. One of the priority target groups under the Accord is low income people with a disability (psychiatric, physical and/ or intellectual).

Some current partnerships and initiatives for tenants with a disability under the Accord include:

- an Independent Living Program in Western Sydney, a partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to assist adults with an intellectual disability with ageing carers to live independently
- an initiative for Young People With a Disability Leaving Out of Home Care for young people with physical or intellectual disabilities, a state wide partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care
- the Parolee Support Initiative in Western Sydney for ex-prisoners with mental health problems and/or an intellectual disability, a partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Health, and Department of Corrective Services

- Offenders with Co-existing Disorders pilots in four locations to assist ex-prisoners with substance abuse, mental health problems and/or an intellectual disability. This partnership involves Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Health, and Department of Corrective Services.

The Disability Housing and Support initiative (DHASI) is a state wide partnership with the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the NGO sector as part of the Stronger Together strategy. It provides housing linked to support for people with an intellectual disability.

Housing and accommodation support initiative

The Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) is an innovative partnership program between NSW Health, Housing NSW and the non-government sector that provides housing linked to clinical and psychosocial rehabilitation services for people with mental health issues.

HASI is designed to assist people with mental health problems and disorders, who require accommodation support to participate in the community. It allows people with mental health issues to maintain successful tenancies, improve their quality of life and, to assist in the management of their illness.

Joint guarantee of service for people with mental health problems and disorders living in aboriginal, community and public housing (JGOS)

The Joint Guarantee of Service is a partnership between Housing NSW, NSW Health, Department of Community Services, Aboriginal Housing Office, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW, Aboriginal and mainstream community housing providers and non-government mental health service providers to coordinate the delivery of mental health support and housing services to people with mental health problems and disorders, living in social housing. The JGOS has recently been reviewed by the NSW Ombudsman's Office. Housing NSW will review and incorporate findings from the Ombudsman's Office in late 2009.

Housing and mental health agreement: Under the Accord, a Housing and Mental Health Agreement is being developed to form an overarching strategic approach to meeting the housing and support needs of people with mental illness. The Agreement will incorporate HASI and JGOS and other programs.

Working with the NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian

Under the Accord, Housing NSW is working in partnership with the NSW Trustee and Guardian / the Public Guardian to ensure that service delivery for their clients (many of whom have intellectual or psychiatric disability) takes into account the role of NSW Trustee and Guardian/The Public Guardian in managing their affairs. The partnership will also ensure that when tenancies are at risk, NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian are able to intervene early to provide assistance.

Improving access to occupational therapist assessments

Under current Housing NSW policy for undertaking disability modifications to properties, an occupational therapy (OT) assessment is required. Due to a shortage of OT services in many locations, this often delays modifications for clients. Housing NSW has developed local service agreements with OT services to improve the process for having requests for disability modifications assessed and approved.

Community housing

Community housing providers regularly work in partnership with support providers to ensure that clients with a disability are able to sustain their tenancies. Examples include:

- Affordable Community Housing in Parramatta provides low-level supported, secure housing for people suffering from chronic schizophrenia with support provided by the Schizophrenia Fellowship
- Care-n-Co is a housing cooperative providing affordable accessible housing to low income people with physical disabilities in a complex with fully modified villas in Minto. Provision is made for live-in carers. Additional support is provided by Home Care and other community networks.

Why do we need further action?

There are a number of Accord partnerships and initiatives currently underway to assist tenants with a disability to sustain their tenancies. However these initiatives involve a small number of tenants and need to be expanded as well as developing other new initiatives.

There is also a need for further improvement in the process for approving and undertaking disability modifications of properties for people with a disability.

There is an opportunity to work strategically with the community housing sector to ensure a whole of social housing system approach to meeting the needs of people with a disability.

Proposed headline strategy

- Work with NSW Health and the NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to improve access to Occupational Therapists' assessment and reporting for disability modifications

Other proposed strategies

- Review the evaluation of Accord initiatives and determine future opportunities for replication and/or expansion
- Finalise the implementation of the Accord partnership with the NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian
- Work with the Federation of Housing Associations to improve planning and service delivery for people with a disability across the community housing sector

Provide quality specialist and adapted services to meet the special needs of people with a disability

People with a disability are able to access mainstream Housing NSW services however these services may not always meet their needs effectively. To cater for this group and their carers, Housing NSW has a number of targeted housing assistance initiatives.

Current focus

Private rent assistance

The *Special Assistance Subsidy - Disability (SAS-D)* is paid to people with a disability who are approved for Priority Housing, or have reached their turn on the public housing list but need to rent in the private market while they wait for a suitable Housing NSW property. This ensures they are not financially disadvantaged in the private rental market while they wait for an accessible house that meets their needs. The amount of rent a client pays is similar to the amount they would pay as a public housing tenant. The client must provide proof of income for members of their household aged 18 years and over. Housing NSW pays the balance of a benchmark rent charge. As at 30 June 2009, 1,133 subsidies were provided under this program at a cost of \$7.65 million.

Housing NSW has a number of other products designed to assist people to enter the private rental market – these are targeted at people with complex needs and are accessed by people with disabilities:

The *Tenancy Guarantee Program* – guarantees are provided to private landlords for clients who have faced difficulties securing a private tenancy, e.g. because of discrimination. The Guarantees are available through Housing NSW offices and ten community housing providers across the state. In the year 2008/09, Housing NSW approved 87 new Tenancy Guarantees applications to people who were experiencing difficulty in obtaining appropriate accommodation because of a disability or illness, and 29 of these were activated.

The *Private Rental Brokerage Service (PRBS)* assists homeless people with complex needs (intellectual disability, physical disability, mental illness and physical illness), including those with a disability who have support arrangements in place, to find and sustain private market tenancies. PRBS provides coaching, advocacy, and assists tenants to build relationships with real estate agents, landlords and support agencies.

In the year 2008/09, Housing NSW approved 864 new PRBS applications. Of these new applications, 205 were approved for people living with a mental illness, 25 were for people with a physical disability, 20 were for people with an intellectual disability and 16 were for people with a physical illness.

Special Assistance Subsidy

The Special Assistance Subsidy provides eligible clients who have a mental or physical disability with a rental subsidy so they can rent in the private market. In the year to 30 June 2009 this program provided 1,133 subsidies totalling \$7.65 million.

Partnerships

Recognising that Housing NSW's role is not to provide specialised support services, Housing NSW has established a number of support partnerships to assist clients with disability to enter and sustain tenancies, including HASI, DHASI and JGOS. These partnerships and others are described in Section 4.6.

Why do we need further action?

As the demand for social housing and the complexities of housing need increase, it is important for Housing NSW to continue to consider new and innovative initiatives for people

with a disability. This must include investigating options for financial assistance for people with a disability to gain further access to the private rental market and home ownership.

Also, Housing NSW recognises that carers of people with a disability may also require enhanced support.

Proposed headline strategy

- Share good practice in asset design responses by reviewing the Older Persons Design Guidelines to broaden their focus to include people with a disability

Proposed strategies

- Explore financial products to assist people with disability to gain access to low cost housing
- Better identify the housing needs of carers of people with a disability and explore partnerships to support carers

Implementation

An Implementation Plan will be developed to further detail the strategies outlined in this Plan, including responsibilities, timeframes and performance indicators.

Integration into planning

This Disability Action Plan will be integrated into the following Housing NSW planning processes:

- Corporate Plan
- Housing Service Divisions' Business Plans and related Area Action Plans
- Multicultural Framework
- Other service improvement plans that are developed for other client groups.

Business planning guidelines will be developed to direct the integration of the Plan into the Corporate and other business/ service improvement plans.

Communication strategy

Once endorsed, the Plan will be launched and widely promoted through the Housing NSW tenant and staff newsletters, website, intranet and community networks. Information will be provided in a range of alternate formats for people with a disability, as well as people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

All business units will be provided with a copy for implementation through business plans. Presentations will be undertaken in Housing NSW Divisions to promote the Plan.

A copy of the Plan will also be sent to the Federation of Housing Associations for communication to community housing providers.

Consultation will be held with the community housing sector to review the integration of elements of this Disability Action Plan into overall social housing system planning and service delivery.

Formal reporting and monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Plan will be undertaken by the Housing NSW Disability Reference Group as a standing agenda item. The Disability Reference Group is made up of Housing NSW staff with a disability. The Group provides a forum to identify and discuss issues facing staff and clients with a disability, with the aim of increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability and in improving Housing NSW service delivery to people with a disability.

Internally, Housing NSW business units will report on their progress towards implementing the actions on an annual basis. A format for this report will be provided.

Consistent with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies* a copy of the Housing NSW Disability Action Plan will be submitted to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. A copy will also be provided to the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. Progress against performance measures and timelines will be reported in the Housing NSW Annual Report. Employment

outcomes will also be reported through the Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) report.

At the end of 2013 the Plan will be reviewed and updated. As part of the review process, consultation will be undertaken with Housing NSW tenants, staff, disability peak organisations and other key stakeholders.

Appendix

1. Legislation

Australian Government

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is the main Australian legislation providing for the rights of people with a disability.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of disability. This definition is broad-ranging and covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities. The DDA includes:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or results in disturbed behaviour.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability they may have, have had, or may have in the future. This applies to all government agencies, including those providing housing or other accommodation options.

The DDA also makes it illegal for accommodation providers to discriminate against a person because of a disability. This means that providers of accommodation cannot:

- refuse an application for accommodation from a person with a disability
- provide a person with a disability with accommodation on less favourable terms and conditions; or
- give an application of a person with a disability a lower priority. For example, put an application on the bottom of the list because it is assumed the person with a disability will be a less stable tenant.

NSW Government

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Part 4A of the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW ADA) establishes a complaints-based system that aims to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability.

The definition of disability contained in the NSW ADA is very similar to that contained in the DDA. The only difference between the definitions is the inclusion in the DDA of a reference to the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body as constituting a disability which broadens the definition.

NSW Disability Services Act 1993

The main principle of the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* (NSW DSA) is that people with a disability should be provided with services to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as members of their community. This Act demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to improving the life experiences of people with a disability.

The NSW DSA defines the target group for disability services as people with a disability that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments. In this way, disability is defined more by behaviour that manifests as a result of a disability, rather than the disability itself.

The NSW DSA focuses on service delivery outcomes for people with a disability.

Consistent with the principles of the Act, the NSW Government has adopted the following related objectives:

- The achievement of a planned, coordinated and flexible approach to policy and service provision in NSW for and with people with a disability and their carers
- The creation and promotion of opportunities, services and facilities which enable people with a disability and their carers to participate in the wider community and to attain a better quality of life; and
- The provision of ways for NSW Government service providers to measure and report on their progress in increasing access to government services for people with a disability.

Juvenile Justice Disability Action Plan 2007-2011

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of young offenders with disabilities to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending and their further entrenchment in the criminal justice system.

Commitment

The Department of Juvenile Justice recognises that, as a proportion of the general population, people with disabilities are over-represented in the criminal justice system, both as offenders and as victims.³⁸

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of young offenders with disabilities to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending and their further entrenchment in the criminal justice system.

International research clearly indicates that detention of young offenders is *not* the most effective strategy, and that it may actually increase the risks associated with re-offending. Detention is also far more expensive.³⁹ Research instead indicates that strategically targeted community-based interventions are far more effective and cost efficient.

There are significant and particular challenges in reducing recidivism by juvenile offenders, particularly given the high levels of intellectual disability, mental illness and drug use among juvenile offenders.

Additionally, the Department is committed to fulfilling its obligations under both State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These laws require the Department to eliminate practices that may discriminate against people with disabilities and to assist young people with disabilities who are in contact with the juvenile justice system to gain full and equitable access to Departmental services.

In line with the Department's **Statement of Purpose:**

To provide services to young offenders to decrease their re-offending and increase their capacity to successfully reintegrate into their communities.⁴⁰

³⁸ 2003 Young People in Custody Health Survey and the 2006 Young People on Community Orders Health Survey

³⁹ *Effective Practice in Offending Behaviour Programmes – Literature Review*. Prepared for the Youth Justice Board (UK) by James McGuire, Peter Kinderman, Carol Hughes, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Liverpool

⁴⁰ Department of Juvenile Justice, 2007-2011, *Corporate Plan*

Specifically the Department will:

- Assess young people entering the juvenile justice system to identify those with disabilities;
- Develop individual case plans to address the identified offending related needs of young offenders with disabilities;
- Provide services and programs designed to be responsive to the needs of young offenders with disabilities;
- Provide appropriate support and linkages to other services for young offenders within the community and on discharge from custody within the ambit of the Department's mandate; and
- Work in collaboration with other agencies to ensure that young offenders with disabilities involved in the juvenile justice system receive the level of support and services they require to live successfully in the community without offending.

Defining disability

For the purposes of this Plan, the Department has adopted the definition of disability used by the *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* as follows:

- For the purposes of this Act, a person is in the target group if the person has a disability (however arising and whether or not of a chronic episodic nature):
- that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments, and

that is permanent or is likely to be permanent, and that results in:

- a significant reduced capacity in one or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, mobility, decision-making or self-care, and the need for support, whether or not of an ongoing nature.

Legislative framework for equity of access

The Department of Juvenile Justice's obligations to address equity of access for people with disabilities is contained within three Acts of Parliament:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'th);
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW);
- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW).

The Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* and the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act* make it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in matters such as employment, premises and access to goods and services. The legislation covers people who have a physical, sensory, intellectual or psychiatric disability.

The *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* requires the development of a *Disability Action Plan* by all NSW Government agencies using the *Disability Policy Framework 1998* as the guideline. Consequently, the Department has observed section 9 of the *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* in formulating this *Disability Action Plan 2007-2011*.

Departmental legislative framework

The work of the Department of Juvenile Justice is authorised under five Acts of the NSW Parliament:

1. Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987;
2. Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987;
3. Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987;
4. Young Offenders Act 1997;
5. Children (Interstate Transfer of Offenders) Act 1988.

Within the terms of this Disability Action Plan, equity of access is applied equally to the young offenders referred to a youth justice conference or whom the courts require the Department to supervise or detain.

Policy framework

Policy guidance in the formulation of the Disability Action Plan comes from the following three Plans:

NSW Government State Plan 2006-2016

The NSW Government established the *State Plan, A New Direction for NSW* as a foundation document for setting the priorities and targets for government services in NSW over the next ten years.

This Plan identifies three key priority areas aimed at improving outcomes for people with disabilities (including those with a mental illness) to reduce the risks of re-offending.

- F2 Increased employment and community participation by people with disabilities
- F3 Improved outcomes in mental health
- R2 Reduced re-offending

The strategies and actions of the DAP set out how the Department of Juvenile Justice is addressing the three key priority areas outlined above.

Increasing support for young offenders with disabilities will not only help achieve State Plan priority R2 *Reducing Re-offending*, but also F2 *Increased employment and community participation for people with a disability* by providing a basis from which young offenders with disabilities can engage in community activities and employment. It will also work

towards meeting increased support and access targets for people with a disability, as set out in *Stronger Together: a new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2010*.

NSW Department of Juvenile Justice Corporate Plan 2007-2011

The Corporate Plan has targeted strategies specifically to support young offenders with disabilities in Outcome 3.3:

Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.

The achievement of Outcome 3.3 is supported by:

- Developing and implementing a Comprehensive Assessment Framework that covers disability and mental health issues.
- Measuring the percentage of young offenders assessed as having mental health and/or disability issues upon commencement of Community Supervision.
- Measuring the percentage of referrals for mental health and/or disability assessments that are accepted.
- Measuring the percentage of case plans that address disability issues identified through assessment.

NSW Department of Juvenile Justice Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011

The Department's Aboriginal Strategic Plan focuses on a range of issues affecting Aboriginal young people within the juvenile justice system. One of the specific goals of this Plan is to improve the effective management of Aboriginal young people with mental health and/or disability issues.

Organisational context

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with young offenders who, at the time of their offences, were between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Young people serviced by the Department include those referred and accepted for youth justice conferences, those who are remanded in custody pending appearance at court and those who have been sentenced by a court to community-based supervision or to a period in custody in a juvenile justice centre.

The work of the Department can be divided into three main service areas:

Youth Justice Conferencing (YJC): Is available for offences committed by eligible young people that are considered too serious to be dealt with by police cautions or formal warnings. Conferences are based on the principles of restorative justice.

Community-based Services: Include all services provided to offenders in the community, such as court-ordered supervision and offender assessments prepared for the courts.

Custodial Services: Include all services to young people directed by the courts to be placed in detention.

Profile of Young Offenders

In 2006-2007, there were 4403 admissions to juvenile justice centres in NSW (both remand and control). During the same period, 3121 community supervision orders were commenced and 1185 youth justice conferences facilitated. The overwhelming majority of juveniles in contact with the justice system (across all program areas) are male. In 2006-2007 this proportion ranged from 80.7% (Youth Justice Conferencing) to 95.1% (sentenced to detention). Just over 50.5% of young people attending youth justice conferences in 2006-2007 were aged less than 15 years. The majority of those receiving community-based supervision orders, remand or control orders were aged between 16-18 years (61.9%, 52.9% and 68% respectively).

Aboriginal young people represented 54.7% of those sentenced to detention, 37.8% on remand, 39.5% on community-based supervision and 27.2% participating in a youth justice conference in 2006-2007.⁴¹

⁴¹ 2006-2007 Annual Report of the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice pp.13-19.
http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_html/publications/annualreport/AnnualReport0506.pdf

Prevalence of Disability

The 2003 *Young People in Custody Health Survey*⁴² and the 2006 *Young People on Community Orders Health Survey*⁴³ are the most comprehensive studies undertaken in Australia on the physical, intellectual and mental health of young people in contact with the juvenile justice system. These Health Surveys identified a number of significant issues for the young people serviced by the Department:

Summary Findings of Health Surveys	Custody (YPiCHS)	Community (YPoCOHS)
Symptoms consistent with a clinical diagnosis of mental illness	88%	40%
Symptoms consistent with Schizophrenia	21%	3%
Intellectual disability (prevalence)	10-13%	8-11%
Mild or severe hearing loss	33%	Not tested
Experienced abuse and/or neglect	68%	72%
Reading scores below low average	40%	21%
Left School by Year 9	33%	32%
Suspended from school at some time	91%	90%
Special education	40%	36%
History of parental/ step parental imprisonment	43%	27%
History of out of home care	28%	24%
Not living in the family home	33%	36%

⁴²http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/general/2003YoungPeopleInCustody.pdf

⁴³http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/research/2006YoungPeopleCommunityOrders_KeyFindingsReport.pdf

Consultation

The Department receives advice on a range of disability issues (including input into the Disability Action Plan) within the justice system through its involvement with the Justice Disability Advisory Council that reports to the NSW Attorney General. The Council includes representation from disability advocacy groups and non-government service delivery organisations.

Reviewing the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006

The Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2004-2006 focussed on increasing the disability competence and confidence of the staff of the Department and ensuring better supports for young people with disabilities who are in contact with the juvenile justice system.

The significant achievements of the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006 underpinning the Disability Action Plan 2007-2011 are:

- Development of an information and training package (including a *Checklist*) to assist convenors identify participants in youth justice conferences who may have disabilities;
- Executive Committee approval for use of the *Checklist for Additional Support Needs in Youth Justice Conferencing* to be rolled out to YJC operations across NSW;
- The multi-faceted, cross-agency Orana Joint Case Management Project targeting four Aboriginal young people who presented with a range of issues including intellectual disabilities, mental illness and physical health problems;
- The availability of *Accesslink* (a database of disability and contact information developed by the Attorney General's Department), and other disability resources and links through the Departmental intranet, which are regularly featured along with other disability issues in *Jigsaw* (the internal fortnightly staff newsletter);
- Links with external agencies such as Justice Health, DADHC, DET, DoH and the Criminal Justice Support Network (CJSN) as well as advocacy groups and non-government organisations have been established providing essential support for Department of Juvenile Justice staff to assist young people with disabilities; and
- Participation in DADHC's Intellectual Disability (ID) & Criminal Justice Senior Officers' Group with development of a key project under this auspice.

Overall, the DAP 2004-2006 has played an instrumental role in increasing awareness of, and responsiveness to, disability issues across the Department's service areas.

Evaluation framework

The Department will:

- Undertake an annual stock take of disability programs and strategies across the Department's operations;
- Review and evaluate progress with JDAC and advocacy groups at the end of each calendar year throughout the life of the DAP 2007-2011; and

Relationship to other access and equity initiatives

The DAP is one of a number of Departmental access and equity initiatives. Many of the strategies in the DAP complement those outlined in the following Departmental Plans:

Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement Forward Plan

The Department of Juvenile Justice ethnic affairs priorities include enhancing the cultural appropriateness of services to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups in juvenile justice centres and community offices.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to the principles of EEO and recognises that although people have different abilities, qualifications and experience, everyone should be given an equal chance to reach their potential and utilise their talents.

Tiers of service delivery

The NSW government publication *Better Together* indicates that a key policy principle in NSW is that government services to people with a disability are to be provided in three tiers: Universal, Adapted and Specialist. The Department of Juvenile Justice comes within the Universal tier which has four main Outcome areas:

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for young offenders with a disability.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations, and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

A fifth Outcome concerning increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector is not required to be reported in this Disability Action Plan. This matter is reported in the Departmental EEO Management Plan and in the Annual Report.

The Departmental targets for each of the above four Outcomes are listed on the following pages.

This Disability Action Plan 2007-2011 was revised in September 2008 to bring the document into line with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies* published by DADHC in September 2008.

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for young offenders with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	R2. Reducing re-offending. F3. Improved outcomes in mental health. F4. Embedding the principle of prevention and early intervention into government service delivery in NSW.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	3.3 Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 2. Our staff have the capacity to identify the needs of, and work effectively with, Aboriginal young people and communities. Outcome 4. Aboriginal young people have access to the least restrictive and most appropriate intervention.

Actions		Targets
1.1	Ensure that all young offenders entering juvenile justice jurisdiction are screened for physical and intellectual disabilities, and mental health issues.	All young offenders to be screened by use of an approved assessment tool. Annual target to reduce the duration between entry into juvenile justice jurisdiction and disabilities screening.
1.2	Maintain formal linkages with Justice Health's Adolescent Court and Community Services for access to adequate screening/assessment of young offenders with mental health problems and intellectual disability for appropriate diversion to mental health treatment or DADHC support.	Compare the number of young offenders with identified intellectual/mental health problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverted from court under Section 32 and 33 • Assessed in the community • Appropriately case managed and care co-ordinated in the community.
1.3	Encourage disability awareness amongst staff.	All Detention Centre and Community Service staff to receive disability awareness training in their Induction. All Community Service

		staff to have available to them local registers of community-based disability services.
1.4	Develop protocols with Justice Health to ensure continuity of care for young people with identified disabilities on release from custody.	All young offenders with identified mental health problems and other forms of disability leaving Juvenile Justice Centres and Community Care Services to have targeted continuity-of-care plans.
1.5	Participation in the Senior Officers' Group On Intellectual Disability & The Criminal Justice System.	Lodge annual report on time with DADHC concerning the Interagency Service Principles and Protocols for the criminal justice system.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	R2. Reducing re-offending. F4. Embedding the principle of prevention and early intervention into government service delivery in NSW.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	1.7 Research and evaluation functions are enhanced.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 3. Delivery of programs and services that are supported by evidence based research and proven to be successful in reducing the risk, severity and frequency of re-offending for Aboriginal young people.

Actions		Targets
2.1	Assist Youth Justice Conferencing participants with disabilities to fully participate in the conferencing proceedings.	All Youth Justice Conferencing participants with disabilities to be provided with the necessary equipment and/or services to allow them to fully engage in proceedings.
2.2	Ensure Attorney General's Department is advised when hearing impairment support is required in Children's' Court Rooms.	All young offenders with hearing impairments to have audio assistance technology (if required) during their Children's' Court appearances
2.3	Incorporate the needs of young offenders with disabilities into the standards for community-based and custodial services.	Full adherence to the Australian Juvenile Justice Administrators' (AJJA) Standards for Custodial and Community Juvenile Justice services for young offenders with disabilities.
2.4	Meeting the information needs of Indigenous people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse	Provision of culturally appropriate materials for all young offenders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translated official documents

	backgrounds who have a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to translations of official documents on the Departmental website• Access to accredited translators• Access provisions for people with disabilities to the Departmental website.
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Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	F2 Increased employment and community participation by people with disabilities.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	1.8 Research and evaluation functions are enhanced. 4.3 New and refurbished Juvenile Justice Centres are fit-for-purpose and completed on schedule.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 2. Our staff have the capacity to identify the needs of, and work effectively with, Aboriginal young people and communities.

3.1	Conduct annual audit of existing Departmental properties to determine accessibility of facilities for people with disabilities.	All Departmental facilities audited to have met accessibility standards, and those that do not to have a plan in place to meet this target.
3.2	Incorporate the physical accessibility of each property, including the accessibility of public transport, into future building standards and into the selection criteria for properties.	Mandatory consideration of accessibility issues for all Departmental facilities.
3.3	The Department and DADHC develop youth appropriate models of accommodation under the Criminal Justice Program to ensure the needs of young people with disabilities are met.	Departmental representatives on the Criminal Justice Program's Review and Assessment Panel (RAP) to monitor the effectiveness of referrals/assessments/progress of young offenders with disabilities accepted into the Criminal Justice Program.
3.4	Develop innovative housing options with appropriate supports for young people in partnership with the DoH, Justice Health, DoCS and community-funded partners through the interagency Housing Accord Shared	Effective housing options with support are in place -- trials evaluated.

	Access Trials.	
3.5	Specify safe evacuation of people with disabilities in all emergency procedures for Departmental offices and detention centres.	All staff to be trained in emergency procedures; including those procedures for staff, young offenders and visitors with disabilities.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	F4. Improved outcomes in mental health.
Corporate Plan	1.2 Staff are trained, resourced and supported in the performance of their work. 3.3 Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 1: Aboriginal young people are equipped to make choices that promote positive life development. Outcome 3: Delivery of programs and services that are supported

Actions		Targets
4.1	Incorporate coverage of disability issues in all recruitment information and induction sessions, including those for recruitment and training of Youth Justice Conferencing convenors.	All recruitment information contains information relating to disability issues.
4.2	Conducting consultations in accessible venues and providing appropriate supports and assistance for people with a disability	All Departmental consultations to take place in accessible venues with appropriate assistance for people with a disability. •
4.3	Manage an Implementation Plan for the <i>People with an Intellectual Disability and Criminal Justice - Service Principles and Protocols</i> and regularly report on progress in achieving the aims, outcomes and principles set out in the Service Principles and Protocols Agreement.	Regularly report to DADHC as part of the Disability Action Plan reporting process.

4.4	Maintain liaison with disability groups or peak organisations to discuss justice disability issues.	Annual meetings of the Department's Justice Disability Advisory Council to review and evaluate the Disability Action Plan 2007-2011.
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ⁱ NSW Government, *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011*, NSW Government, (2007).

ⁱⁱ ABS *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2003*, Australian Bureau of Statistics [available online at www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/Latestproducts/4430.0].

ⁱⁱⁱ New South Wales: *A New Direction for Mental Health*, NSW Health (2006).

^{iv} VicHealth, *Research Report on Children at Risk in Families affected by Parental Mental Illness* (2005).

^v See for example, Barker, J & Hodes D.T *Abuse of Children With Disabilities, The Child in Mind: A Child Protection Handbook*, Routledge, UK, 2004.

^{vi} NSW Department of Community Services, *NSW Department of Community Services Annual Report 2007/08*, pp34-35.

^{vii} Community Services KiDS-CIW annual data (unpublished).



Disability Action Plan

2010 – 2013

October 2010

Foreword from the Director General

The work of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is guided by the aspiration and principle that all people of NSW should have the opportunity and support they need to live as good a life as possible with dignity, independence, and a strong feeling of wellbeing.

As a new department in the NSW public sector we know that the divisions which form the department have worked hard to be more inclusive for all people, but we can do more to reduce the barriers people with a disability face when working in the department or accessing services provided by the department. We can learn to be more inclusive.

As the department works to improve outcomes for our clients through better planning, resourcing and integrated delivery of services, it is important we build on the past success of our divisions. Over the last three years divisions have reviewed policies and procedures to make sure that they are an accessible and supportive employer.

In this new departmental three year plan we affirm our commitment to an inclusive workplace, and strengthen our focus on the services we deliver.

This plan sets out our goals and actions for the next three years. Actions will be further refined on a year-by-year basis to ensure they remain relevant to our changing society and the work we do. This plan will be refined over the next 12 months, with a view to further integrating the plans of each division and establishing some clear whole-of-Department priorities.

Responsibility for the cultural change required to reach our aspiration belongs to us all and I look forward to working towards a truly inclusive organisation.

Jennifer Mason

Director General

Executive summary

Our vision

The Department of Human Services (DHS) aims to be an employer of first choice for people with a disability and to lead the public sector in building a workforce that more truly reflects and values the diversity of our society.

This DHS Disability Action Plan 2010-2013 seeks to continue the development of a workplace and service delivery culture where inclusive behaviour comes naturally, where people feel confident to interact with a client or a colleague with a disability and where the leadership, tools and resources are available to guide and support access and inclusion.

The Disability Action Plan also aligns with *EmployABILITY*, a disability employment strategy for the NSW public sector to meet its commitments as a major employer and contribute to the achievement of State Plan targets.

Within DHS, the Ageing, Disability and Home Care agency has played a key role in the development of the *EmployABILITY* strategy, which encourages agencies, managers and employees at every level to focus on ability, not disability, and to explore opportunities to value and build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our society.

Achievements to date

DHS' three year Disability Action Plan for the period July 2010 to June 2013 builds on the actions undertaken by divisions over the previous years to reduce barriers and enhance opportunities for people with a disability, both as clients and employees.

Previous plans developed by the divisions that now make up DHS focused on the development, review and promotion of whole-of-agency policies and procedures that underpin our work and improved approaches for our own employees or potential employees.

To date, key achievements have included:

- development and review of policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive of people with a disability
- work to improve the employment, support and retention of staff with a disability
- access audits of front end service delivery sites
- development and implementation of accessible communication standards and products
- strong efforts to raise awareness amongst staff of approaches, policies, procedures and practical resources available throughout the department.

The next three years

The DHS Disability Action Plan 2010-2013 (DHS DAP) builds on the foundations laid by divisions in planning and implementing service strategies for people with a disability. Over the next three years, we will continue to build on those foundations and achievements and broaden our focus to explore ways to improve how our clients experience our services.

The people of NSW have access to a range of human services from a variety of sources across government and non-government providers. While this Plan focuses on improving client access to and experience of the services that our staff provide, DHS will also play a role in modelling, promoting and influencing the delivery of more accessible and inclusive services to shared clients of our community sector partners. This will be achieved in part through our strong working relationship with all Government agencies and our non-government partners. All government departments will implement disability action plans over the next three years and these complement the already well established working arrangements we have through the various Memoranda of Understanding and agency working agreements.

We will also promote the objectives set out in this document as part of our ongoing working relationship with the non-government community sector. For example, the NSW Disability Services Sector - Directions for Industry Development highlights the partnership between the community sector and government to achieve wellbeing and social inclusion opportunities for people with a disability.

Who is this document for?

All staff and the department as a whole has a responsibility to ensure the goals and strategies of the Disability Action Plan are incorporated into the way we work. DHS' leaders and managers share a direct responsibility to ensure they drive the required organisational change in the department by committing to actions in this Plan and by leading by example. Each staff member has a direct responsibility to ensure they are aware of disability issues and that their workplace practices are non-discriminatory.

Context

People with a disability

Both State and Federal legislation have varying definitions of disability. A definition for disability is detailed in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and in the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (ADA). The *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* (DSA) defines the target groupings for disability services.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of disability, which covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities including:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing (or capable of causing) disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- 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:
 - presently exists; or
 - previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - may exist in the future; or
 - is imputed to a person.

Disability is part of human diversity. In fact one in five Australians have one or more disabilities (ABS, 2003) and this proportion is expected to increase with the ageing of the population. Disability can result from accident, illness, congenital and genetic disorders or the ageing process. It may be visible or hidden, permanent or temporary, and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's mobility, cognitive, sensory and interpersonal functions.

The number of people with a disability has increased over time, as has the proportion of the Australian population with disability. The reasons for the increase include:

- people are generally living longer and acquiring disabilities as they age - as the population ages, the number of people with a disability is expected to rise
- people who already have a disability are living longer
- as community attitudes become more accepting of people with a disability, people may be more willing to identify as having a disability.

Legislation and Disability Action Plans

Disability Action Plans support the principles articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and the *Disability Services Act 1993*. They further support the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*.

Departmental staff have an obligation to uphold the principles of the *Disability Services Act 1993*. These principles state that:

Persons with disabilities have the same basic human rights as other members of Australian society. Their rights, which apply irrespective of the nature, origin, type or degree of disability, include the following:

- persons with disabilities are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity
- persons with disabilities have the right to live in and be part of the community
- persons with disabilities have the right to realise their individual capacities for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development
- persons with disabilities have the same rights as other members of Australian society to services which will support their attaining a reasonable quality of life
- persons with disabilities have the right to choose their own lifestyle and to have access to information, provided in a manner appropriate to their disability and cultural background, necessary to allow informed choice
- persons with disabilities have the same right as other members of Australian society to participate in the decisions which affect their lives
- persons with disabilities receiving services have the same right as other members of Australian society to receive those services in a manner which results in the least restriction of their rights and opportunities.

Discrimination legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because they have a disability, had a disability in the past, or another person assumes they have a disability and discriminates against them for that reason. People who are relatives, friends and carers of people with a disability are also protected from discrimination by these laws.

Discrimination laws apply to public behaviour, not to private conduct. Discrimination laws require that people with a disability be given equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to a full range of activities in their lives. This includes the opportunity to seek access to goods, services and facilities provided by government departments.

It is a legislative requirement under Section 9 of the *Disability Services Act* (DSA) that all NSW Government agencies listed in Schedule 1 Parts 1 and 2 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002* are obliged to prepare a Disability Action Plan. The DSA covers all services, whether or not they are provided predominately for people with a disability.

Section 9 of the *Disability Services Act (1993)* requires NSW Government agencies to:

- prepare a Disability Action Plan showing how they propose to meet the needs of people with a disability
- periodically review and report on their progress in implementing the plan
- make the plan and any subsequent amendments available to the public.

The NSW Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Regulation 1995 currently requires agencies to report on implementation of Disability Action Plans in each annual report.

The NSW State Plan

The NSW State Plan: A new direction for NSW highlights the importance of building inclusive communities so that people with a disability have the same opportunities as other citizens of New South Wales to participate in the life of the community. The NSW State Plan not only commits the NSW Government to the achievement of key social objectives for people with a disability, but also prioritises increased customer satisfaction with government services.

Specific State Plan targets are to:

- measure, report and improve customer satisfaction with government services' key social objectives
- close the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016
- increase the out-of-home participation rate of people with a severe or profound disability to at least 85 percent.

Department of Human Services

Disability Action Plan

DHS employs staff to provide frontline services in the areas of disability, juvenile justice, Aboriginal services, housing and support for children, youth and families. The department coordinates the delivery of its services through rural and metropolitan regions.

Given the size and range of functions of the department, the DHS DAP takes a staged, strategic approach over several years. This approach will enable the department to identify and systematically address barriers to people with a disability across all agencies and regions. Within DHS, the Ageing, Disability and Home Care division will lead the development, implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

The DHS DAP consolidates previous agency Disability Action Plans. Over the next three years further work will be undertaken to incorporate all previous goals and actions into a consolidated and comprehensive plan.

These previous Disability Action Plans of agencies addressed the key areas of employment, information and communication, consultation and decision making, physical access to buildings and facilities, staff awareness and understanding the needs of people with a disability. The DHS DAP continues and expands this focus to include the department's direct service delivery functions. Key considerations will be:

- maximising knowledge gained from the development and implementation of the previous Disability Action Plans
- ensuring a strong emphasis on achieving a cultural shift in the organisation
- ensuring that actions are meaningful and achievable
- exploring and implementing mechanisms for involving people with a disability in the further development, implementation and monitoring of the Plan.

The DHS DAP takes an incremental and sequential approach with some of our Year 1 actions implementing or consolidating the achievements over the last three years.

Some of the work undertaken in previous Disability Action Plans will continue where it requires further work to make it part of ongoing practice. These ongoing activities are noted in each division's action plan. Each agency is working towards the following outcomes:

1. identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability
2. providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability
3. making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

4. assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees
5. increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector
6. using government decision-making, programs and operations to influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability
7. providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not responsive or adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Our priorities and goals

The DHS DAP maintains the key priorities and goals determined by individual agencies' disability action plans prior to 2010. To achieve these goals we continue to explore and implement changes internally. As DHS further develops, common priorities and goals will be synthesised for future Disability Action Plans.

Several Year 1 actions address the key areas of employment, information and communication, consultation and decision making, physical access to buildings and facilities, staff awareness and understanding of the needs of people with a disability, as well as moving towards an increased emphasis on the department's direct service delivery functions.

Some specific examples of the strategies that divisions have identified to address key areas are:

- including within the induction Program a Disability Awareness Training for all new staff when joining Aboriginal Affairs
- creating an identified position for an Aboriginal person with a disability in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (Aboriginal Housing Office)
- including a person with a disability on interview selection panels where appropriate (Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- conducting a training needs analysis to identify training needs of BSC staff in disability awareness (Businesslink)
- recruiting staff with a disability to advisory boards and committees as appropriate (Community Services)
- improving management practices in relation to staff with a disability through workplace adjustment including flexible work practices and job design, and disability awareness training (Housing NSW)
- Incorporating the physical accessibility of each property, including the accessibility of public transport, into future building standards and into the selection criteria for properties (Juvenile Justice).

In Year 2 and Year 3 of the Plan the focus will shift to actions that have a more direct impact on service delivery. Examples include:

- All information published on the DAA's website and Bayalagu to comply with Accessibility Guidelines and government requirements (Aboriginal Affairs);
- fund modifications for Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to suit needs of occupants with disability (Aboriginal Housing Office);
- developing strategy and approaches to include people with a disability in service development and planning (Ageing, Disability and Home Care)
- reviewing accessibility to services provided by incorporating disability access into current customer satisfaction surveys administered by Businesslink (Businesslink);

- strengthening communications about supports for families where a child has a disability. Increased access to a range of services provided under the Brighter Futures Program that respond to identified individual and family needs for families with children under nine years, or who are expecting a child (Community Services)
- working with NSW Health and Ageing, Disability and Home Care to improve access to Occupational Therapists' assessment and reporting for disability modifications (Housing NSW)
- incorporating the needs of young offenders with disabilities into the standards for community based and custodial services (Juvenile Justice).

Governance

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Ageing, Disability and Home care will lead the development of the DHS DAP.

Divisional DAPs

Each division will continue to use their existing structures to develop, implement and review their Action Plan.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care will provide support and advice to divisions in the development of their DAP.

Consultation

All divisions have undertaken consultation in the development of their respective Disability Action Plans. These consultations also provided an opportunity for discussions about the work the department collectively does well and for identifying actions to improve public access to services. The outcomes of these agency consultations informed the development of this Plan.

The Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies, September 2008, recommends agencies consult with external stakeholders to:

- identify the most effective means of providing equitable services to people with a disability
- determine any specific barriers people with a disability may encounter in relation to their dealings with the agency
- set priorities and identify solutions to concerns raised
- assess and review the effectiveness of previous measures taken.¹

¹ NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care *Guidelines for disability action planning* September 2008

Divisional Disability Action Plans

The following section contains each division's Disability Action Plan detailing the strategies to be used to achieve the planning outcomes as described in the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies*².

Aboriginal Affairs

Aboriginal Housing Office

Ageing, Disability and Home Care

Businesslink Pty Ltd

Community Services

Housing NSW

Juvenile Justice

² NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care *Guidelines for disability action planning* September 2008

Aboriginal Affairs Disability Action Plan 2008-2010

Introduction

Scope

This Disability Action Plan has been developed within the New South Wales (NSW) Government's *Disability Policy Framework*. The *Disability Policy Framework* translates into action the Government's commitment to improving the opportunities for people with disabilities to share fully in community life. NSW Government agencies are required under the framework to prepare a plan, which is to be submitted to the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and reported against in the Annual Report.

The framework provides an opportunity for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to measure and record its achievements whilst demonstrating its ongoing commitment to equity and access in all aspects of service provision.

As required by the framework, the first section of this plan provides the context in which planning has been undertaken. The framework also requires the identification of tangible and measurable actions in a range of nominated areas considered having the greatest potential to improve access in all areas of provision of public services.

This Disability Action Plan sets the agenda for mainstreaming disability issues in the planning and on-going development within the organisation. The tasks identified in 'Priority Areas for Action' set clear and achievable priorities for 2008-2010. Successful implementation of these areas for action will integrate access into the Department's strategic, budget and operational planning processes.

Executive Summary

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) has produced this Disability Action Plan 2008 to 2010 as required by the New South Wales Disability Policy Framework. The Plan was developed by a Human Resources working group. The working group identified barriers to access to the Department's services, facilities and resources and developed the Plan.

The Plan was endorsed by DAA's Executive in April 2008.

Objective

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is committed to improving access to DAA information and its offices throughout New South Wales, for clients and stakeholders with a disability and to providing employment and career opportunities for people with a disability.

DAA is committed to supporting and meeting the needs of people and stakeholders with disabilities who are in contact with DAA services.

DAA is also committed to fully meeting its obligations under the State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These laws require the Department to eliminate practices which may discriminate against people with disabilities, and to assist people who are in contact with DAA in gaining full and equal access to departmental services.

The Disability Action Plan 2008-2010 is a working document which is intended to develop the disability competence and confidence of the Department, and ensure better support for people with disabilities who are in contact with DAA.

Definition of Disability

The NSW Disability Services Act 1993, defines its target group as people with a disability:

- a) that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments, and
- b) that is permanent or is likely to be permanent, and
- c) that results in:
 - i. a significantly reduced capacity in one or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, mobility, decision making or self-care, and
 - ii. the need for support, whether or not of an ongoing nature.

Workforce Profile

DAA has a workforce profile of approximately 97 established positions consisting of a mix of permanent and temporary staff. A significant proportion of these staff are temporary based on the nature of the funding provided for specific program delivery across the State.

DAA provides a State-Wide regional presence with positions located in rural centres to be able to more effectively liaise with regional stakeholders

The DAA's staff are critical to the success of the organisation. Staff appointments are on the basis of merit to ensure the best people are recruited and promoted. A strong emphasis is placed on staff involvement in the operation of the Department through participation, teamwork and effective communication. Employees enjoy equality of opportunity in employment, and a work environment, which is free from harassment and bullying.

Approach to disability Issues

The Department's Corporate Plan, Results and Services Plan set the agenda organisational commitment to high levels of accessibility for people with disabilities through the following strategies:

- Ensuring all staff are conversant with the Department's commitment to accessibility;
- Ensuring accessibility to all Aboriginal Affairs stakeholders and the community is available at all our regional offices and head office;
- Ensuring the Department's event and operational activities include access requirements.

Organisational Context

DAA, through the partnership between the Government and the Aboriginal people of New South Wales, is the lead agency for driving positive change and achievements in Aboriginal affairs and strengthening Aboriginal communities.

The Department is also responsible for the administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*.

In this role DAA has lead agency responsibility for coordinating with partner agencies to ensure delivery of the State Plan Priority: F1: Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people.

The Department achieves this and the strengthening of Aboriginal communities by working towards the following results:

- Aboriginal communities are socially, economically and culturally strong;
- NSW Government agencies are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal people, and cooperate on Aboriginal issues;
- Aboriginal people and communities are engaged in developing and implementing government policies and programs on Aboriginal issues; and
- Aboriginal people have access to culturally appropriate services.

Key services provided by the Department to contribute to these results include:

- Providing clear and appropriate policy advice to the Minister on the impact of government programs, services and decisions on Aboriginal people;

Promoting and advocating Aboriginal culture through administration of the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983*, support for local projects and events and maintenance of the Aboriginal family records database;

Coordinating the F1 Priority Delivery Plan "Improved health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people" and NSW Government Aboriginal Affairs Plan 2003-2012 - Two Ways Together which achieves a collaborative approach by relevant agencies in addressing Aboriginal issues;

Supporting Aboriginal participation in decision making at State, Regional and Local levels;

Coordinating the work of agencies addressing access for Aboriginal communities to satisfactory environmental health infrastructure through the Aboriginal Communities Development Program;

Advising and influencing government agencies in their development of policies and delivery of services to overcome Aboriginal disadvantage.

The Department's focus for the next three years is on the following priority areas:

- ▶ 1 Support, strengthen and promote culture and heritage
- ▶ 2 Strengthen governance and community resilience
- ▶ 3 Support and build healthy, prosperous and safer families and communities
- ▶ 4 Coordinate and lead government policy and service delivery

Our Clients (Aboriginal people and communities and other stakeholders)

The Government of NSW has committed to help build healthier, safer and more prosperous Aboriginal communities. The Department will support this commitment by taking a strategic approach that reflects the interrelated and complex causes of Aboriginal disadvantage.

The Department can achieve its goal of supporting Aboriginal communities and government to work together, we will influence the way Government programs and services are coordinated and how well these are matched to the needs of Aboriginal people. The Department's policy leadership under *Two Ways Together* is made more effective combined with the Government's developed range of specific programs to improve the lives of Aboriginal people. These include Job Compacts, Aboriginal Communities Development Program, development of environmental health infrastructure (water and sewerage), Safe Families Program, support for carbon sequestration and other commercial ventures.

The Department will continue to deliver on the NSW Government's commitment to represent the interests of the State's Aboriginal people in the national agenda, when:

- • the Director-General supports the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the Ministerial Council on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (MCATSIA);
- • the Department provides advice to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), and administers COAG policies to close the gap;
- • the Department influences policy through the State/Federal bilateral agreement by providing analysis and advice.

DAA will continue to strengthen government and community engagement by providing expert advice and support to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The Department will also continue to provide publicity for key issues, arrange Ministerial visits to Aboriginal communities, and to seek the Minister's support for local *Two Ways Together* initiatives.

Implementation of the Disability Action Plan

To ensure an integrated approach to service planning and delivery, the Disability Action Plan will be incorporated into the department's Corporate Plan and all Divisional business planning. This process will help ensure that the

strategies and actions detailed in the Disability Action Plan become a part of our business.

The **HR Working Party** will monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and will report to the Executive Committee.

The Disability Action Plan will be promoted and disseminated as follows:

- Distribution of copies to peak disability organisations and making copies available to all stakeholders, with alternative formats available on request and in a timely manner;
- Summary to be circulated to staff and available for general distribution with the full document being available through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs website; and Intranet “Bayalagu”
- Report on implementation to be included in the Department’s Annual Report, which will be forwarded to the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care.

Evaluation

Senior Executives ensure all policies and practices comply with anti-discrimination and occupational health, safety and rehabilitation legislation and promote the establishment of equal employment opportunity and adherence to the Charter of Principles for a culturally diverse society in accordance with Government Policy.

The Executive Director Business Strategy and Support will take responsibility for the evaluation, review and monitoring of the Disability Action Plan.

‘Priority Areas for Action’ identify key performance indicators, timelines and resources that relate to strategies for overcoming those barriers already identified. The success of this Disability Action Plan will be determined by measuring achievement against these performance indicators and commitments made within the body of this document.

The following evaluation procedures will be adopted:

- Six monthly progress reports from key areas will be provided to the Executive Committee.
- The Disability Action Plan will be reviewed annually, with a report provided to the Executive Committee.
- Results of the DAP will be published in the Department’s Annual Report.
- Evaluation procedures will include the capacity to involve other government agencies, the Aboriginal community and other major stakeholders.

Priority Areas for Action

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs Disability Action Plan focuses on three priorities, in accordance with the Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies:

- Physical Access

- Promoting Positive Community Attitudes
- Information about Services
- Training of Staff
- Employment in the Public Sector of People with Disabilities
- Complaints Procedures

The table below identifies those priorities and the designated Units within DAA with primary responsibility for the carriage of issues responding to the priority areas for action.

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Physical Access

OBJECTIVE: DAA offices and facilities to ensure that people with a disability do not experience discrimination as either users of services or as staff, and have their particular needs for services and support acknowledged and met.

OUTCOME: Our offices and facilities are adapted to enable effective and equitable access by people with a disability.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
1. Maintain offices and facilities to comply with the requirements of relevant Building Code of Australia and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.	All fit-outs and refurbishments comply with requirements of Building Code of Australia; Australian Standards; Disability Discrimination Act 1992	2008-2010	Corporate Services Manager, Project Managers & Executive	Within budget	

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Training of Staff

OBJECTIVE: Ensure that DAA staff are adequately trained to provide effective services and access to employment for people with a disability.

OUTCOME: Staff are confident and competent in providing services to people with disabilities in a manner which acknowledges the rights of people with a disability.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
2. Include within the Induction Program a Disability Awareness Training for all new staff when joining DAA.	100% of all new staff recorded as having attended disability awareness training.	Ongoing	Human Resources	Within budget	

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Information about Services

OBJECTIVE: Provide information about DAA services in accessible manner to all clients and stakeholders.

OUTCOME: Information about our services and programs are communicated in a range of methods to accommodate the needs of a range of disabilities.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
3. All information published on the DAA's website and Bayalagu comply with Accessibility Guidelines and government requirements.	All information supplied on the web meets guidelines and government requirements. Compliance with W3C Web Accessibility Guidelines Access to electronic commerce and new service information technologies for older Australians and people with a disability	Ongoing	Executive Director E&BS	Within budget	Bayalagu updated in 2008 and 2009 with all relevant policies

PRIORITY AREA FOR ACTION: Employment in DAA

OBJECTIVE: Ensure policies and practices which meet the Department's responsibilities as an EEO employer, comply with the requirements of the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*, and actively encourage employment, career opportunities and career progression for people with a disability.

OUTCOME: People with a disability are actively encouraged to work at DAA and their career progress is comparable to other staff with similar knowledge, skills and experience.

STRATEGY/TASK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES/ BUDGET	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
4. Selection Committees trained in the responsibilities of DAA as an EEO employer for selection and interview processes in relation to people with a disability.	Disability requirements included in selection techniques training.	2008-2010	Human Resources Officer	Within budget	

Aboriginal Housing Office Disability Action Plan 2009-2013

Policy Statement

The NSW Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) is committed to:

- ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (hereafter referred to as Aboriginal) with disabilities have full access to all our services;
- ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to apply their skills and abilities within the AHO as every other person, and,
- providing appropriate adjustments for staff with disabilities.

The AHO will work with the Aboriginal community housing sector to ensure that processes are in place to address the needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities as tenants, employees or both.

People with disabilities may require special facilities or modified equipment to assist them to access employment within the AHO, and to access services provided and delivered by the AHO. Such facilities may include handrails, ramps, elevators, specific ergonomically designed work spaces, modified toilet facilities or technical equipment such as closed circuit television, Braille word processors and telephone typewriters.

To comply with the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, AHO management and staff must be aware of their responsibilities to ensure that people with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect. Management and staff will deliver upon any adjustment required for disabled people and ensure that all reasonable adjustments are made, either to AHO dwellings or within the workplace.

The AHO will also work with Housing NSW (HNSW), Department of Aboriginal Affairs and other relevant government departments, and community housing providers, as required to ensure that Aboriginal people with disabilities who are social housing tenants or applicants for social housing are able to access accommodation which is appropriate for their needs.

Introduction

The AHO Disability Action Plan 2009-2013 details the AHO's commitment to providing appropriate affordable and accessible housing services to Aboriginal people with a disability, and providing employment opportunities to disabled applicants and staff.

The Plan was developed in accordance with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies* and under the guidance of the AHO Board and senior management.

An overview of the AHO

The AHO is a statutory authority established by the NSW Government in 1998 to assist Aboriginal people to meet their housing needs and to increase the range of housing choices, especially for those most in need.

The AHO has 69 staff, as detailed in the AHO Annual report 2007/08.³ Of this, approximately 60% are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. 3% of staff have identified as having a disability.

As well as its head office in Parramatta, the AHO has offices within 3 regions:



Northern Region, covers approx 170,000 square kilometres. The major services and housing demand centres for Aboriginal families are Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Lismore, Newcastle, Moree, Port Macquarie, Tamworth and Tweed heads. There are some 1,685 properties owned by ACHPs and 1,570 owned by the AHO within the Region.⁴ Currently approximately 40% of Aboriginal people in NSW live in the Northern region. (See appendix 1)

Sydney/South Eastern Region: The Sydney/South Eastern Region covers some 69,150 square kilometers. Thirty six percent of Aboriginal people living

³ Aboriginal Housing Office Annual Report 2007-2008 p 50

⁴ Ibid p. 20

in NSW live in this region. (See appendix 1) Although small in geographical comparison with other Regions, Sydney has the highest Aboriginal population in NSW (around 31%) while the South Eastern area has the smallest percentage of 6%⁵.

Western Region: The Western Region covers approximately two thirds of NSW on a land mass extending from the Queensland border to the Victorian and South Australian borders, including a number of significant remote Indigenous communities. More than 23% of the NSW Aboriginal population lives in Western Region. (See Appendix 1)

Aboriginal Housing

In pursuing its vision for Aboriginal people living in NSW to live in culturally appropriate, affordable quality housing and undertaking its role of developing a viable Aboriginal housing sector, the AHO has developed and implemented a number of housing assistance projects which are supported by both State and Australian Government funding.

The AHO is committed to the primary aim of *The State Plan – A new direction for NSW* to deliver better results for the people of NSW. The *Plan* is committed to ‘strengthening Aboriginal communities’ and provides an overarching influence and direction in all planning and service delivery.⁶

The AHO Capital Works Program includes dwellings acquired or constructed for use by Aboriginal people that are funded under the various National Agreements. These dwellings are owned by the AHO, and typically managed by HNSW under a fee-for-service basis.

The AHO maintenance program provides repairs and maintenance of properties owned by the AHO, as well properties owned by Aboriginal community housing providers. The maintenance program ensures that all Aboriginal housing meets public housing standards and aligns those standards with mainstream community housing.

Meeting the Needs of Disabled people

The needs of disabled people are one of the criteria taken into account in the development of both the capital and maintenance programs. Improved capacity within the Aboriginal community housing sector will also enhance the ability to meet the needs of disabled people within the overall tenant group.

Definition of Disability

Both State and Federal legislation have varying definitions of “disability”. A definition for “disability” is detailed in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and in the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

⁵ ibid p. 21

⁶ Ibid p. 3

(ADA). The NSW Disability Services Act 1993 (DSA) defines the target groupings for disability services.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of “disability”, which covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities, including

- total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2003 Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey, defined disability as;

“..... a person has a disability if they report that they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. This includes:

- loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses)
- loss of hearing where communication is restricted, or an aid to assist with, or substitute for, hearing is used
- speech difficulties
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties causing restriction
- chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort causing restriction
- blackouts, fits, or loss of consciousness
- difficulty learning or understanding
- incomplete use of arms or fingers
- difficulty gripping or holding things
- incomplete use of feet or legs
- nervous or emotional condition causing restriction
- restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work
- disfigurement or deformity
- mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision
- long-term effects of head injury, stroke or other brain damage causing restriction

- receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term conditions or ailments and still restricted
- any other long-term conditions resulting in a restriction”⁷

ABS data indicates the under-representation of Aboriginal people in the user population of disability services. This is despite the incidences of disability in the Aboriginal population being higher than in the Australian population as a whole.⁸

Publications from the Aboriginal Disability Network⁹ and the National Disability Network¹⁰ agree that many NSW Aboriginal communities have differing understandings and interpretations of ‘disability’; often not able to differentiate between ageing, disability and mental illness.

Aboriginal Population with Disabilities

The *Two Ways Together Report on Indicators 2007*¹¹ found that, when compared to Non-Aboriginal people,

- Aboriginal people are more likely to describe their health as fair or poor.
- Aboriginal people are more likely to report three or more long term medical conditions, including kidney disease, results of injuries or accidents, asthma, bronchitis, migraine, diabetes, high cholesterol, cancers and infections diseases.

The Report also found that hospitalisations rates for diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dialysis, are higher for Aboriginal people than for the total population. Between 2000-01 and 2005-6 the hospitalisation rates for cardiovascular disease fell for the total population; however the rate rose for Aboriginal males.

The Commonwealth Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2005 Report* notes that:

"The proportion of the Indigenous population 15 years and over, reporting a disability or long term health condition was 37 per cent (102 900 people). The proportions were similar in remote and non-remote areas."¹²

⁷ ABS, Disability, Ageing & Carers: Summary of Findings, Australia 2003 (cat. No. 4430.0)

⁸ John Gilroy, [Service Delivery for Aboriginal People with a Disability and their Families](#), *Disparity*, Vol. 5 No 1 pp24-27, 2008

⁹ Aboriginal Disability Network Telling it Like It is: a report on community consultation with Aboriginal people with disability and their associates throughout NSW 2004-2005 September 2007

¹⁰ John Gilroy, [Service Delivery for Aboriginal People with a Disability and their Families](#), *Disparity*, Vol. 5 No 1 pp24-27, 2008

¹¹ NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs, *Two Ways together Report on Indicators 2007* p. 19-20

According to the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Report 2005, “disability or long-term health condition” includes a greater range of conditions than disability and core activity restriction. It could include individuals whose disability does not result in specific limitations. “Disability or core activity restriction” as used in the Report refers to ‘limitation, restriction, impairment, disease or disorder, which has lasted, or was likely to last for six months or more, and which restricted a person’s ability to perform everyday activities’.

It can be cautiously inferred that, based on the trend within the Indigenous population, at a minimum, 1 in 3 AHO tenants have a disability or long-term health condition. As it is considered that social housing tenants could be over represented with tenants with complex needs, the proportion can be expected to be higher.

In 2007, an updated Review of the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage (OID) Report indicated that health issues and disability were not decreasing, and in many instances were worsening.¹³

AHO Households and Tenants

A HNSW report indicates that, in March 2009, 30 per cent of tenants who receive rental subsidy also receive payments of Disability Support Pension (DSP) or Carer Payment through Centrelink. Subsidised tenants make up 80% of AHO tenants.

HNSW, as manager of AHO properties, does not obtain detail on the type of disabilities of tenants. Also, Aboriginal Community Housing Providers do not maintain data on disabled tenants. Therefore the AHO is currently only able to report on a proportion of its tenants, rather than all of its tenants.

AHO Staff with Disabilities

NSW Government has a global target of 12 percent of staff having a disability and 7% for people with a disability who require work-related adjustments.

The 2007/08 AHO Annual Report indicates that the AHO has 3 per cent of staff with a disability¹⁴, which was an increase on previous years. The AHO has not completed a comprehensive disability survey of its staff in recent years, and acknowledges that the information held regarding its disabled staff may not be accurate. To correct this, the AHO plans to conduct a comprehensive Disability Survey of all Staff in 2009/10. This survey will provide more accurate information on staff with disabilities.

Disability Action Plan Consultation

¹² Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2005 Report Commonwealth of Australia, p.3.6

¹³ Overview, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators Report, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007. p4

¹⁴ NSW Aboriginal Housing Office *Annual Report 2007/2008*, p. 51.

The development of this Action Plan involved consultations with:

- Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- AHO Board
- Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC) members
- Aboriginal Disability Network
- NSWALC
- HNSW and
- AHO staff.

The Plan also refers to research and reports completed by

- AHO
- Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics
- Department of aboriginal Affairs
- KPMG on behalf of HNSW
- National Disability Services

Communication Strategies

The Disability Action Plan will be provided to all staff, Board members, members of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees (RAHCs) and ACHPs. The Plan will be accessed on the AHO website.

Distribution of the Plan will enable staff, tenants and members of the community to become familiar with the actions outlined in the Plan and increase awareness of the AHO's commitment to meeting the housing needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities, as well as providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities.

Priorities for Action

The AHO Disability Action plan focuses on 7 priorities, in accordance with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies*:

1. Identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability
2. Provide information in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability
3. Improve physical accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with a disability
4. Assist the participation of people with a disability in public consultations and on AHO advisory boards and committees
5. Increase employment participation of people with a disability in the AHO
6. Influence other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing

7. Provide quality specialist and adapted services to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan

The plan will be monitored and evaluated by the Director corporate Services every 12 months through the life of the plan (5 years).

Reporting

Progress against Performance Indicators will be reported on in the AHO's Annual Report every three years. A copy of the DAP will be submitted to the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for publication on their web site. The Director Corporate Services will report to the AHO Executive every 12 months.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 1 Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability	Improve information collection, analysis and use of disability data in asset and service planning.	Manager, Planning and Reporting	2009 and ongoing	Improved quality of data collected on tenants with disability.
	Identify disability awareness training for all AHO staff who work with people who may have a range of disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Course/s identified.
	The provision of Disability Awareness training included in AHO Induction Program	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Disability Awareness Training detailed on Induction checklist for all new staff.
	Disability Awareness training provided for all AHO staff	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010 and ongoing	All AHO staff complete training
	Specific Disability Awareness training provided for AHO staff who work with people who have a range of disabilities	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Staff complete training as required
	Develop information systems to identify assets with	Director Statewide Housing Services	2009 and ongoing	System developed and implemented.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
	disability modifications.			
	Adapt complaints management systems to accept complaints from tenants and applicants in a range of formats.	Director Corporate Services	2009	Complaints Policy updated and distributed in a range of formats.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 2 Providing information and services in a range of acceptable formats	Develop and update fact sheets and brochures on a range of housing assistance and other communication, including electronic communication, for people with a range of disabilities	Director Policy and Strategic Development AHIS	2010 and ongoing	Fact sheets reviewed and updated Range of formats developed, used and distributed.
	AHO Website upgraded to meet requirements	Director Corporate Services	July 2009	By July 2009 the AHO website will comply with level 'Double A' in W3C's web Content Accessibility Guidelines and will provide a statement on accessibility
	Update information on AHO website and presented in format relevant to people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Director Statewide Housing Services Director Policy and Strategic Development	2009 and ongoing	Website updated.
	Annual reporting of Disability Action plan in AHO Annual Report	Director Corporate Services	2009 and ongoing	AHO Annual Report includes updated review of Plan progress
Outcome 3	Develop long term office	Director Corporate	2010 and ongoing	All buildings newly acquired by

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Making buildings and facilities physically accessible	accommodation strategy to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.	Services Office Manager		AHO comply, or plan to comply, with the disability Components of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the relevant parts of the Australian Building standards 1428: Design for Access and Mobility All AHO offices physically accessible
	Audit AHO offices to assess accessibility for people with disability and modify accordingly.	Director Corporate Services Office Manager	2009	All AHO offices are accessible to people with disabilities.

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
Outcome 5	Complete Staff Survey to	Director Corporate	December 2009	Survey completed and results

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
Increasing	identify staff with disabilities	Services Human Resources		analysed

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
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	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
employment participation in AHO		Manager		
	Improve AHO recruitment	Director Corporate	2009 and ongoing	Employment for people with a

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	practices for people with a disability by increasing the use of disability employment	Services Human Resources		disability is 12% of all employees

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	agencies	Manager		Employment for people with a disability who require work-place adjustment is 7% of all

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
				employees
	Managers to complete	Director Corporate	2010 and ongoing	Managers complete training

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	disability training to empower managers to work effectively and confidently with people	Services Human Resources		

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	with a disability.	Manager		
	AHO to provide training for	Director Corporate	2009 and ongoing	Training courses provided as

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	staff and managers on specific health/ disability issues relevant to staff within	Services Human Resources		required

OUTCOME DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 4 Assisting participation in public consultations, AHO advisory boards and committees	Create an identified AHO Board position for a disabled Aboriginal person	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Board
	Monitor and encourage participation of Aboriginal people with disability in AHO Board and other consultation structures	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people
	Create an identified position for a disabled Aboriginal person in each Regional Aboriginal Housing Committee (RAHC)	Chief Executive Officer	2010 and ongoing	Aboriginal person with disability becomes member of the Regional Aboriginal Housing Committees
	Monitor participation of Aboriginal people with disability in RAHC and encourage participation through various communication strategies	Chief Executive Officer Director Statewide Housing Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Advertising encourages applications from disabled Aboriginal people Aboriginal people with a disability join RAHC
	Review AHO recruitment and selection policies and procedures to ensure employment participation of people with disabilities.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009 and ongoing	Policies reviewed and updated as required
	a business unit	Manager		

OUTCOME DECSRIPTION	PROJECT	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	ACTIONS AND TIMEFRAMES	OUTCOMES AND BENCHMARKS
Outcome 5 Increasing employment participation in AHO (cont.)	AHO employees are informed of the rights of disabled persons.	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2009	Induction Program updated
	Investigate the establishment of an inter-agency mentoring program for staff with a disability	Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010-2011	Mentoring program investigated
Outcome 6 Influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing	Assist Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to provide training to assist staff working with people who may have a range of disabilities	Director Statewide Housing Services Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager Regional Managers	2010 and ongoing	Training course identified Training completed
	Develop and promote partnerships with other government agencies to share resources and expertise.	Director Statewide Housing Services Director Corporate Services Human Resources Manager	2010 and ongoing	Partnerships developed and promoted, improving access for people with a disability.

		Regional Managers		
Outcome 7	Identify need for dwelling modifications	Director Statewide Housing Services	Ongoing 2010	Data compiled and updated
Providing specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not responsive or adequate to meet the needs	Fund modifications for Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to suit needs of occupants with disability	Director Statewide Housing Services	Commence 2009 Complete 2013	Modifications completed
	Analyse alternative means of providing full access to dwellings using current technologies	Director Statewide Housing Services	2011	Analysis complete New technologies adopted where appropriate

Appendix 1: NSW INDIGENOUS POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2006-2009

DAA RCMG	2006	2009	% NSW	% NSW	Average Annual Growth Rate
REGIONS			2006	2009	
AHO NORTHERN REGION					
Males	29,998	32,456	39.4%	39.9%	2.41%
Females	30,527	32,811	39.9%	40.2%	2.37%
Total	60,526	65,267	39.6%	40.1%	2.39%
AHO SYDNEY SOUTH-EAST REGION					
Males	28,192	29,836	37.0%	36.7%	1.98%
Females	27,903	29,705	36.5%	36.4%	2.03%
Total	56,095	59,541	36.7%	36.6%	2.01%
AHO WESTERN REGION					
Males	18,039	19,021	23.7%	23.4%	1.96%
Females	18,026	19,043	23.6%	23.3%	1.90%
Total	36,065	38,064	23.6%	23.4%	1.93%
TOTAL NSW					
Males	76,229	81,312	100.0%	100.0%	2.15%
Females	76,456	81,559	100.0%	100.0%	2.14%
Total	152,685	162,871	100.0%	100.0%	2.15%

Source: Derived using population projections data presented in: Noor A Khalidi, Aboriginal Population Projections, NSW 2006 to 2021, DAA, 2009.

Ageing, Disability and Home Care Disability Action Plan 2010-2013

Introduction

Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) *Disability Action Plan 2010 – 2013* identifies activities and outcomes for the Agency to ensure that, as far as possible, people with a disability are able to access services and facilities on an equitable basis, without facing discrimination or barriers. The implementation of this plan continues ADHC's work to review and improve services for people with a disability; develop more appropriate and sustainable public services; and reduce barriers for people with a disability.

ADHC's plan builds on the work of the previous *Disability Action Plan* for 2000-2002 and has been developed in accordance with the *Guidelines for Disability Action Planning by NSW Government agencies*, released by ADHC in September 2008. The plan involves new and existing strategies across ADHC and aims to link with business planning and complement key initiatives such as *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011* and *Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2016*.

The plan is informed by consultations conducted for *Stronger Together* planning involving people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocates, academics, peak bodies and the community. Further consultations with staff and disability peak organisations were conducted to refine the actions, responsibilities and timeframes within the plan.

Policy Statement

ADHC is committed to creating, promoting and sustaining opportunities and services that allow people with a disability, older people and their carers to participate in the wider community and to live as full a life as possible. The experiences and perspectives of people with a disability are diverse and effective strategies for improving outcomes for people with a disability will need to be varied and flexible. Strengthening available supports is a primary focus of ADHC and a crucial part of an early intervention and prevention approach that aims to assist people to stay in their own homes with their families wherever possible.

Effective planning to meet the needs of people with a disability requires a community-wide, whole-of-government approach. The Australian Government has set the framework for a new national disability reform agenda that places people with a disability, their families and carers at the centre of services across Australia. The NSW Government and ADHC have a number of policy commitments that support planning for inclusive services to meet the needs of people with a disability.

United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people with disability, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Australia ratified the Convention on 17 July 2008.
National Disability Agreement 2009	<p>The Council of Australian Governments' national framework commits government agencies to a new national disability reform agenda.</p> <p>The objective of the Agreement is to create an effective, efficient and equitable disability service system which places the individual at the centre of service delivery and enhances the well-being, contribution and inclusion of people with a disability. The Agreement also aims to support families and carers.</p>
NSW State Plan: A New Direction for NSW	<p>Relevant targets for the state include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ measuring, reporting and improving customer satisfaction with government services' key social objectives; ■ closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016; ■ increasing the out-of-home participation rate for people with a severe or profound disability to at least 85 percent; and ■ improved health outcomes for Aboriginal people.
Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006 - 2016	A 10-year plan to improve specialist disability services for people with severe or profound disabilities. It involves real increases in funding of over \$1.3 billion in its first five years of which \$270 million is for expanding programs that specifically target improving opportunities for community participation and transition to work.
Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011	ADHC is the lead agency for the whole-of-government plan for disability services. <i>Better Together</i> extends the commitments of <i>Stronger Together</i> by emphasising a cross-agency approach to promoting and improving access for people with a disability to government services available to the rest of the community.
ADHC Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2008 – 2009	This plan underpins reporting on Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) strategies to Department of Premier and Cabinet (annually) and covers a range of ADHC specific EEO programs targeting disability, cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD), discrimination and Aboriginal employment.

Overview of ADHC Functions and Services

ADHC is one of the largest human service organisations in NSW and is now one of a cluster of other agencies, including Community Services, Housing NSW and Juvenile Justice that forms the Department of Human Services NSW (DHS).

ADHC provides strategic policy advice, planning, funding, quality assurance, evaluation and monitoring services for older people and people with a disability, as well as providing direct assistance to people with a disability and their carers.

ADHC has a regional structure comprising a central office located in the Central Business District of Sydney, six regions and sixteen local planning areas. ADHC's regional offices are located in Burwood, Parramatta, Newcastle, Lismore, Queanbeyan and Dubbo. The Office for Ageing is located in Tweed Heads. In addition, each region has extensive service outlets in different locations. There are 198 offices across the state. In 2008/09, ADHC had a total budget of \$2.1 billion. The NSW Home and Community Care (HACC) budget in 2008/2009 was \$546.3 million, an increase of 7.13 percent over 2007/08.

NSW State Plan

As the lead agency for *the NSW State Plan* goal of increasing employment and community participation for people with disabilities, ADHC is committed to closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016. This is the equivalent of around 6,000 jobs.

- The Transition to Work Program (TTW) was introduced in 2005 to assist school leavers with a disability to develop skills that enable them to transition to employment or further education within two years. It is anticipated that at least half the *State Plan* target for employment will be met through successful TTW employment outcomes.

Stronger Together

Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW: 2006-2016 is the NSW Government's 10-year plan to provide greater assistance and long-term practical solutions for people with a disability and their families. The plan includes \$1.3 billion in new funding over its first five years.

Stronger Together aims to strengthen the disability sector by the following enhancements:

- Strengthening families – enabling children with a disability to grow up in a family and participate in the community;
- Count me in – supporting adults with a disability to live in and be part of the community; and
- Improving the system's capacity and accountability – fairer and clearer ways to access services, greater accountability and more opportunities for innovation.
- ADHC is committed to leading the implementation of this plan and working in partnership with non-government organisations to ensure positive outcomes are achieved.

Services

ADHC comprises 19 program and corporate support directorates and six regions that undertake its core functions:

- Strategic planning and policy development on disability and ageing issues, including 'whole-of-government' strategic frameworks;
- Leading the development of an evidence base to support ADHC strategic policy and service planning through research, evaluation and data analysis;
- Provision of funding to non-government service providers for delivery of services targeted mainly to people with a disability and older people through disability services programs and the HACC program;
- Monitoring to ensure that contracted service providers are delivering high quality services relevant to the needs of a particular area and that the maximum benefit is obtained in the use of Government resources;
- Delivering a range of community support services, respite care and supported accommodation services for children and adults, as well as early intervention services to young children who have a developmental delay;
- Delivering inclusive services for Aboriginal and CALD communities; and
- Assisting frail older, younger people with a disability and their carers to live independently in their own homes by providing domestic assistance, personal care, respite and other home based services through the Home Care Service of NSW (HCS) which includes Aboriginal Home Care (AHC).
- ADHC funds and delivers an extensive and diverse range of services which are consistent with the policy commitment of the DAP. These include:
- TTW program to improve the transition to employment outcomes for school leavers who are able to move to employment within two years;
- The preferred supplier program which has enabled public sector agencies to purchase goods and services from organisations that predominantly employ people with a disability without going to open tender. This has given such organisations an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet government requirements without requiring them to compete in an open market;
- Community Participation, Life Choices, Active Ageing programs to provide long term funding and innovative support to improve community participation for school leavers and adults who cannot transition readily to full time employment or employment programs;
- Respite services that are flexible and responsive to carers' needs and which support families to stay together;
- Managing and administering the HACC program service to enable frail older people and people with a disability to remain in their own homes;
- Young People In Residential Aged Care Program (YPIRAC) to provide support and better meet the needs of young people with a disability who are living in a residential aged care facility;

- Emergency Response project to provide short term funding to meet the immediate crisis induced needs of people with a disability;
- Culturally appropriate Aboriginal and CALD drop-in support services;
- Disability Housing and Support Initiative (DHASI) to provide drop-in support in a social housing setting;
- Early intervention and community support – including Community Support Teams, Local Support Coordination and Information, Referral and Intake (IRI) services for people with a disability;
- HCS delivers services to more than 50,000 clients a year, helping them to live independently in their own homes. The majority of HCS funding is from the HACC program. HCS is also funded to provide a range of other services including Veterans' Home Care, Community Aged Care packages, National Respite for Carers and ComPaks;
- Community Justice Program is funded for the provision of accommodation and support services for people with an intellectual disability exiting the criminal justice system;
- Seniors Week and Seniors Card program to promote active ageing and to raise awareness about issues which affect older people; and
- The Office of the Senior Practitioner, established under *Stronger Together*, provides leadership and coordination of services to clients with complex needs and challenging behaviours.

ADHC works with a number of stakeholders to ensure that policies, programs and services are well informed and meet client needs. These stakeholders include almost 900 government and non-government organisations and service providers who are funded by ADHC to deliver services: peak bodies, advocacy and industry groups; community agencies and organisations; and, regulatory bodies.

ADHC administers the following Acts:

- NSW Disability Services Act 1993;
- Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 No 2;
- Home Care Service Act 1988;
- Community Welfare Act 1987;
- Guardianship Act 1987 No. 257; and
- Youth and Community Services Act 1973.

Characteristics of current and potential customers and staff with a disability

Service user profile

A significant proportion of people in NSW are affected by disability. The 2003 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) (released in September 2004) reported that 17.9 percent of persons in NSW had a long term disability that restricted their everyday activities. While most of these people live independently or with family, some require the assistance of government to participate in education, work and community living. It should be noted that there is 2.4 times the incidence of functional disability in Aboriginal communities compared to other Australians, yet access to services is significantly reduced.

The shape of the Australian population is changing with the older age groups making up an increasing proportion. With an older population and increasing life expectancies there will be more people with disabilities and an associated increased demand for carers¹⁵. It has been forecast that in the period 2006 – 2010 there will be an increase of 11.6 percent in the projected population of persons aged 65 years and over with a severe disability that restricts everyday activities. The incidence of severe disability is expected to rise by 9.1 percent in the population aged 45 to 64 years¹⁶.

ADHC is currently working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to improve the availability of disability data in order to better understand unmet need and plan more effectively for service provision. The accuracy of disability data will improve with the increase in the sample size of the 2009 SDAC.

ADHC collates information on clients in ADHC operated disability services and ADHC funded disability services. These figures are reported in the ADHC Annual Report and published on the ADHC website.

Demographic information collected about ADHC operated services in 2008/2009 indicates that the largest proportions of clients are currently those with an intellectual disability (63 percent). Clients with an intellectual disability are also the largest proportion of clients accessing ADHC funded services (37 percent).

The 18 to 64 years age group is the largest group of clients accessing ADHC operated services (45.9 percent)¹⁷ and ADHC funded services (54 percent).

¹⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, 'Themes - Disability, Ageing and Carers', viewed 20 August, 2009, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/29ac3ed8564fe715ca256943002c4e3c!OpenDocument>>

¹⁶ ADHC 2008, 'Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies', p. 5, viewed 20 August, <http://www.ADHC.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/998B6A21-F698-4219-9E73-8B8EC492C882/3828/DAPGuidelines.pdf>.

¹⁷ ADHC 2009, *Annual Report 2008/09*, p. 361.

Aboriginal people make up five percent of clients in ADHC operated services. This compares with 4 percent in ADHC funded disability services. Approximately 8 percent of clients in ADHC operated services are from a CALD background. This compares with four percent in ADHC funded services. Aboriginal and CALD groups may be underrepresented in services due to the difficulty engaging with services and negotiating a complex service system.

Staff profile

In 2009, ADHC employed over 13,000 staff with 79.5 percent of staff working in direct client services including 39.3 percent in Accommodation and Respite, 9.1 percent in Community Access and 31.1 percent in Home Care services. The remaining 20.5 percent of staff work in service support, policy and strategic development, regional support and central office administration. EEO information was available for 5,574 employees. It should be noted that EEO data is collected from staff through the recruitment process and relies on staff voluntarily providing such information online.

The SDAC indicates that in 2003 there were approximately 621,000 people with a disability and/or long-term health condition aged between 15 and 64 years in NSW¹⁸. The NSW Government has set disability employment targets at 12 percent of all NSW public sector employees and 7 percent of all employees for people requiring a workplace adjustment¹⁹.

Available statistics indicate that the performance across all NSW Government agencies is falling well short of these targets. The Australian Government and all other State jurisdictions have also been unable to meet targets for employment of people with a disability.

In 2009, 6.4 percent²⁰ of ADHC employees had identified themselves as having a disability. In the same period, 2.1 percent²¹ of ADHC employees with a disability needed workplace adjustment.

It should be noted that the percentages included above may significantly underestimate the proportion of workers with a disability as figures are dependent on voluntary disclosure by employees.

In 2009, ADHC's commitment to EEO was further enhanced with the implementation of its *Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2008 – 2009*.

Four action plans continue to be in place:

1. Action Plan for Employment Equity and Diversity;

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, 'Themes - Disability, Ageing and Carers', viewed 20 August, 2009, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/c311215.nsf/20564c23f3183fdaca25672100813ef1/29ac3ed8564fe715ca256943002c4e3c!OpenDocument>>

¹⁹ NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, cited in ADHC 2008, *Annual Report 2007/08*, p. 244

²⁰ ADHC Annual EEO Workforce data June 2009

²¹ Op cit.

2. Aboriginal Employment and Capabilities Framework Action Plan;
3. Action Plan for Employment and Development of People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds; and
4. Action plan for Employment and Development of People with a Disability.

The action plans include planning, action and program outcomes to address access and equity issues in both strategic and operational areas of ADHC.

Outcomes Since the 2000-2002 Disability Action Plan

A review of ADHC's *Disability Action Plan 2000 – 2002* indicates that positive steps have been taken to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to equal opportunity for people with a disability. Highlights and recent activities are outlined below.

Physical access improvements

- \$64 million was allocated to capital works, including \$50 million on specialist accommodation support.
- Following access audits completed in Central Office in 2000 and in Regional offices in 2001, modifications were undertaken to several premises.
- A review of emergency and fire drill procedures and training was conducted at Central Office to ensure appropriate support for people with a disability.
- ADHC's Return to Work Policy is committed to providing and maintaining a work environment that ensures the health, safety and welfare of employees. A key principle of this policy is ensuring that any injured employee will not be disadvantaged because of an injury or by participating in a return to work program.

Customer service and communication access improvements

- ADHC policies and program information were provided in a range of different formats.
- In January 2009, a fact sheet entitled '*How to create accessible documents*' was made available on ADHC's Intranet for use by all staff.
- All ADHC offices were provided with copies of a handbook outlining good practice in organising meetings for people with a disability.
- More than 1,000 staff received Inclusive Communication and Behaviour Support (ICABS) training between 2007 and 2009.
- An options paper was prepared that mapped current information available and existing complaints processes within ADHC.
- Between 2005 to mid 2009, 91 percent of all ADHC funded service providers were monitored using the Integrated Monitoring Framework (IMF) where over 4,000 outlets received an on site visit and were rated against 23 key performance indicators using the IMF Service Review Instrument (SRI). The review indicated that service providers are performing well in most areas, with

at least two thirds of all outlets, fully meeting the requirements of each key performance indicator.

- Major policy frameworks such as the ADHC's *Valuing and Managing Diversity: Cultural Strategic Framework 2010-2013* were developed with people with a disability through consultation with peak bodies such as NSW Disability Council and the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association (MDAA).
- In 2008/2009, the Industry Development fund was established to assist the NGO sector to implement service improvements and reforms.
- In 2010, eight regional workshops will be delivered to ADHC staff to promote the *Language Services Policy and Guidelines* to inform and support staff to provide language and interpreter services when communicating with clients and carers with limited English language proficiency.
- In 2008/2009, a number of information kits and resource guides were launched targeting Aboriginal and non English speaking cultural groups to break down identified barriers to these groups in accessing services, including:
 - *Shoulder to Shoulder* which provides information for Aboriginal families who have a child or young person with a disability about services and Aboriginal support organisations; and
 - *Raising Kids Together* which provides information for families from Afghanistan, Iraq or Sudan who have a child or young person with a disability, written/voiced in English, Arabic, Assyrian, Dari, Dinka and Juba Arabic.

Employment Strategies

As the lead agency for *the NSW State Plan* goal aimed at reducing unemployment for people with a disability, ADHC is committed to closing the gap in the unemployment rate between people with a disability and the overall community by 50 percent by 2016. This is equivalent to approximately 6,000 jobs.

It is anticipated that at least half the *State Plan* target for employment will be met through successful TTW outcomes.

- 745 school leavers were approved to enter TTW in 2010. Currently about 50 percent of participants in TTW successfully make the transition to employment or further education.
- Training was delivered to 57 TTW providers to improve their networks with private sector employers and boost their capacity to place clients in work.
- The remainder of the employment target for the *State Plan* is being met through the following new strategies targeting public and private sectors:
 - ADHC has implemented a pilot project engaging six Australian Disability Enterprises to provide lawn and garden maintenance services for 13 properties over a 12 month period.
 - The Australian Employers' Network on Disability was funded to produce a booklet informing businesses about the benefits of employing people with disabilities and of delivering services that are accessible to customers that may have a disability.

- In 2008/2009, 51 NSW Government agencies were trained in developing Disability Action Plans and strategies to ensure that people with a disability are able to access services and facilities on an equitable basis.
- From December 2009, the NSW Government enabled public sector agencies to purchase goods and services from organisations that predominantly employ people with a disability without going to open tender. This has given such organisations an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to meet government requirements without requiring them to compete in an open market.
- ADHC's commitment to employment strategies for people with a disability is further demonstrated through the following initiatives:
 - A review and adjustment of ADHC's recruitment procedures was undertaken to ensure people with a disability were not disadvantaged. The review covered position descriptions; advertising of positions; receipt of applications; interview techniques and staff selection panels.
 - In 2006/2007, ADHC implemented a new process for recruitment of positions that provide direct care to clients such as those in accommodation, respite and Home Care. This process allowed increased marketing of ADHC vacancies and the development of a simplified application process that reduced the reliance on extensive written applications.
 - Workshops for ADHC staff that focused on diversity, discrimination and ADHC's Code of Conduct and Ethics were conducted across NSW to further embed a discrimination free and inclusive culture, aligning with the Dignity and Respect in the Workplace Charter.
 - The ability to report EEO data online was promoted across ADHC to allow ADHC staff to access information to assist in human resource planning and support, including reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Improvements in Service Delivery

Substantial improvements have been made in service delivery to people with a disability, their families and carers through the implementation of *Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2016* and *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011*.

ADHC's progress in the delivery of better specialist services for people with a disability and their families is set out in the 2008/09 annual report.

Stronger Together is delivering \$1.3 billion in extra funding over its first five years, which equates to approximately \$1.5 billion in 2010/11 dollar terms. This money is already making a real difference for people with a disability, their families and their carers.

Some of the major achievements from the first four years of *Stronger Together* include:

- The recruitment of 169 new case managers to guide and support families through the mainstream and specialist service systems;

- Over 3,100 extra therapy places for children and adults with a disability rolled out in the first four years;
- An increase of over 4,000 respite places including flexible and centre-based options, as well as innovative services to meet the needs of families such as after-school and weekend options;
- Over 1,000 flexible and centre-based respite packages and support coordination for over 2,100 families with ageing parent carers;
- Funding provided to over 6,400 families to buy items they need to make life easier such as whitegoods, communications software and play equipment;
- New information and support networks including resources for families with a child with a disability translated into five languages and distributed across the state and a resource to support siblings of a child with a disability;
- Delivery of over 4,700 new skill development and day program places;
- Increased support for young people in the Community Participation Program;
- Great success with post school programs with over 1,100 successful applications made to either the Transition to Work or Community Participation Program;
- An increase of over 810 day program places for adults;
- Doubling the size of the Attendant Care Program which now supports over 700 people;
- Providing \$1 million to pilot programs for people with acquired brain injury and motor neurone disease;
- Establishing disability housing and support initiatives to support up to 50 people with an intellectual disability or acquired brain injury in partnership with Housing NSW; and
- Creating 670 new accommodation places, rising to 990 by June 2011.

Better Together has delivered:

- *NSW Carers Action Plan 2007 – 2012*, which outlines a whole-of-government policy commitment to recognising and supporting carers. It includes strategies to increase the respect for and recognition of carers, reach out to family members who may not perceive themselves as carers, improve service to carers and the people for whom they care, encourage agencies to view carers as partners in care and support carers to combine working and caring;
- Additional resources for Carers NSW to help develop the capacity of non-government organisations to respond to carers;
- A more flexible support system focused on early intervention for children and young people with autism spectrum disorder and their families;
- Four additional Aboriginal intensive family support services;
- Improved training and information for carers including funding of \$150,000 to develop an information kit for families with children with autism spectrum disorder; and

- \$1.7 billion to be spent between 2006 and 2011 on capital works to improve access to transport, schools, social housing and group homes for people with a disability.

Monitoring and Review

ADHC's core business is to plan for inclusive services that meet the needs of people with a disability and acknowledges that the process of improving service delivery through ongoing monitoring and review as a crucial component of an efficient service system.

Communication Strategy

The ADHC *Disability Action Plan 2010 – 2013* (DAP) will be incorporated into the DHS DAP. Once the DHS DAP has been adopted across the cluster of agencies, the Director-General DHS will communicate this to all DHS staff via the *DHS Directions* e-newsletter. The DHS DAP will be posted on ADHC's intranet for staff use.

The responsibility for implementing the plan will lie with ADHC's Executive, Regional Directors, Central Office Executive Directors and other senior managers. The actions in this plan are intended to be incorporated into ADHC's strategic and operational plans for implementation by all staff.

Governance and oversight

ADHC will utilise existing regional and central governance structures to monitor the progress of implementation of the DAP with the aim of maximising outcomes for employees with a disability and all clients.

Formal reporting

The Community Access Directorate will monitor the implementation of the DAP, provide advice to the Executive and report on outcomes in ADHC's annual report. This annual review will report against specific performance indicators included in the plan. A number of these indicators are targets that all NSW Government departments are expected to report against²²; others are specific to ADHC's roles and responsibilities.

Future Planning

ADHC will review its DAP according to the timeframes established by the DHS DAP steering committee. By 2013, the DHS DAP will become a more consolidated document with the background information common to each of the DHS agencies contained at the beginning of the document. This will allow ADHC to focus on reviewing the implementation strategies to achieve the seven outcomes as listed in the *Guidelines for disability action planning*²³.

²² ADHC (2009) Disability Action Planning Performance Reporting and Evaluation Framework

²³ DADHC Sept 2008 Guidelines for disability action planning

Consultation Process

The development of the DAP builds on intensive consultation processes undertaken to develop the *Stronger Together* policy framework. Consultations with people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocates, academics, peak bodies and community members have informed *Stronger Together*. This has been complemented by consultation with staff and with disability peak organisations.

Meetings with ADHC Representatives

Consultation was undertaken with managers and key staff within ADHC. Interviews were conducted to obtain information about existing policies and practices in place to promote access for people with a disability. The interviewees were asked to identify existing initiatives that could contribute to the plan and strategies that could further improve access and/or provide a more inclusive workplace.

Four focus groups for non-managerial employees were conducted. These groups, involving a mix of direct care, policy and administrative staff, were intended to give a broader platform for discussion of disability access issues in ADHC. Issues explored included knowledge of disability access issues and training needs, customer service and information provision, and accessible employment within ADHC. Meetings were held in Central Office, Dubbo, Queanbeyan and Coffs Harbour.

Consultation with People with a Disability

Consultation was conducted with the following disability peak organisations:

- People with Disability Australia Inc;
- Brain Injury Association of NSW Inc;
- Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) Inc;
- NSW Council for Intellectual Disability;
- Physical Disability Council of NSW;
- Carers NSW Inc; and
- NSW Council on the Ageing.

Action Measures

Disability Action Planning supports the objectives of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* which provide protection for all Australians against discrimination based on disability.

The *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* requires that all government agencies prepare and implement a disability action plan applying the principles of the Act. Following a recent review of disability action planning, the NSW Government

Disability Policy Framework was developed. The framework includes three levels of planning:

Level 1: Planning to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination in universal mainstream services, programs and facilities and public sector employment for people with a disability.

Level 2: Planning which will assist and influence other government agencies and sectors to improve infrastructure and services for people with a disability.

Level 3: Planning for specialist and adapted services for people with a disability. As the principal agency in NSW with responsibility for disability services, ADHC is committed to addressing all three levels of planning. The priorities for action listed below outlines how the Agency will address this.

The areas below form the basis of the strategies identified in the ADHC DAP:

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to ADHC funded and provided services for people with a disability.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation for people with a disability in the NSW Public Sector.

Outcome 6: Using government decision making, programs and operations to influence other agencies and sectors to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability.

Outcome 7: Providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Action Plan

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to ADHC funded and provided services for people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.1 ADHC employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding access and equity; privacy legislation and informed consent in relation to protection of client records; and diversity issues in relation to ADHC's operations			
1.1.1 Ensure employee induction programs have consistent message about staff responsibilities and rights in relation to access, equity and diversity	Standardised induction program finalised and implemented Performance/reporting through SAP T&D	2010 – 2012	Learning and Development
1.2 Barriers of access to services are reduced or eliminated			
1.2.1 Continue to improve the capacity of current service models to deliver appropriate services to Aboriginal and CALD clients with a disability	Implementation of Access and Equity Plan: Strengthening Services for Aboriginal people 2009-2011 and Cultural Diversity Strategic Framework 2010-2013	2010 – 2013	Regions and Directorates Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery
1.2.2 Continue removing barriers to services for people with adult onset disabilities such as an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) ²⁴	Implementation of Interagency Agreement of the Care and Support Clear pathways developed for people with an ABI	2010 – 2013	Attendant Care and Physical Disability Unit, Home Care Branch
1.3. ADHC's complaint system is accessible to people with a disability, their families and carers and is considered in strategic planning			

²⁴ This involves implementation of the tasks in the Interagency Agreement on the Care and Support Pathways for people with an ABI (a cross-government Memorandum of Understanding between ADHC, NSW Health, Housing NSW and the Lifetime Care and Support Authority).

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.3.1 Translate <i>Feedback and complaints handling information sheet</i> into various languages, provide in accessible formats	Information sheet translated and available in accessible formats	2010 – 2012	Corporate Communications
1.3.2 Ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in the feedback and complaints handling process	Feedback and complaint handling process incorporated into staff induction process	2010 – 2011	Learning and Development
1.3.3 Enable online feedback via the ADHC website	Website capability reviewed and updated	2010 – 2011	Corporate Communications Information Technology
1.3.4 Monitor feedback and complaints incidents	Feedback and complaints incidents monitored Feedback/complaints sent to regions / business units to improve service delivery and access	Every quarter	Public Accountability Branch Regions and directorates

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.1 Information products developed by ADHC are available to people with a disability			
2.1.1 Ensure ADHC Branding and Publishing Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate effectively with regard to making information accessible - incorporate information about legislative/technological changes (as required) in relation to accessibility 	Guidelines reviewed and required changes incorporated	2010 then annually, subject to legislative requirements	Corporate Communications
2.1.2 Ensure the ADHC website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - incorporates all accessibility options for people with a disability - complies with Level "AA" in World Wide Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - provides statement on accessibility 	Website progressively updated to W3C "AA" compliance Accessibility certificate achieved and maintained. Easy read fact sheets uploaded	2010 – 2011	Corporate Communications
2.2 ADHC staff have the necessary skills and tools to communicate and work effectively with people with a disability			
2.2.1 Review relevant staff training programs including:	Training programs reviewed Appropriate disability content incorporated into	2010 2011	Learning and Development

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - induction programs - clinical report writing - management development 	training programs		
2.2.2 Review and update the Home Care guidelines Communicating in alternative formats with people with a disability: Policy and procedures 2002	Policy and guidelines are reviewed, updated and circulated	2010 – 2011	Home Care Service
2.2.3 Ensure teletypewriter (TTY) equipment is installed in regional offices as required. Provide staff training on the use of TTY Equipment and the National Relay Service	TTY available and staff are trained in its use as required	2010 – 2011	Regional Directors Learning and Development
2.2.4 Embed Integrated Communication and Behaviour Support (ICABS) training in regional plans to assist direct care staff to better meet the needs of clients who struggle to communicate via speech	ICABS training is available in all regions Number of staff in each region who receive training is recorded	2010 – 2012	Learning and Development Regional Directors
2.3 ADHC's information products are culturally appropriate			
2.3.1 Produce information about ADHC services and policies in languages other than English which incorporate culturally appropriate communication strategies such as visual and media formats	Language services policy developed ADHC services and relevant policies translated into key languages	2010 – 2013	Community Access Regions and Directorates

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.3.2 Develop/implement communication plan to provide Aboriginal communities with relevant information on ADHC services and policies	Communication plan developed Communication plan implemented	2011 2012	Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery

Outcome 3: Making government building and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
3.1 Development of agreed minimum criteria and performance standards for ADHC premises across all business stream			
3.1.1 Finalise ADHC's Office Accommodation Manual, design guidelines for ADHC offices	Baseline information is available on ADHC's compliance with codes and standards relating to access to Government premises	2010	Strategic Asset Management & Procurement (SAMP)
3.1.2 Finalise ADHC's Supported Accommodation design guidelines	Baseline information is available on ADHC's compliance with codes and standards relating to access to Government premises	2010	SAMP
3.1.3 Benchmark group homes and large residences against guidelines, integrate findings in Reconfiguration of Community Living Assets Business Case	A benchmark is established which guides decision making in relation to ADHC assets	2010	SAMP
3.2 ADHC premises including fit out should comply with Australian Standards for disability access			
3.2.1 Develop a staged audit program to measure the performance of ADHC group homes and large residential centres	All ADHC premises comply with relevant standards such as the Building Code of Australia, <i>Disability Discrimination Act (1992)</i>	2010 – 2012	SAMP
3.2.2 Improve signage in ADHC offices for people with intellectual and/or sensory disabilities, including culturally appropriate signage for Aboriginal and CALD people	Signage manual completed Implementation of improved signage across all ADHC premises	2011 2011 – 2012	SAMP
3.2.3 Ensure disability parking is available at all ADHC office premises, at set down zones or	Compliance verified through access audit of ADHC premises (refer 3.2.1)	2011	SAMP

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
within a reasonable distance of offices	Audit outcomes inform planning to ensure compliance	2012	Regions
3.2.4 Emergency evacuation and fire drill procedures are reviewed to ensure staff, clients and visitors with a disability can be safely and efficiently evacuated	Evacuation plans reviewed and displayed in all premises Evacuation drills conducted on a regular basis	2011 At least annually	Strategic Human Resources/OH&S Regional Directors/Senior Managers

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Actions	Targets and Monitoring	Timeframe	Responsibility
4.1 Participation of people with a disability and carers on ADHC's committees and advisory groups is increased (including representation from CALD and Aboriginal people)			
4.1.1 Prepare guidelines for selection of representatives on departmental committees and advisory groups to boost participation by people with a disability and their carers	Guidelines finalised and implemented Communication and awareness plan developed and implemented	2012	Sector Development Community Access
4.2 Participation of people with a disability, their families and carer in service development			
4.2.1 Develop strategy and approaches to include people with a disability in service development and planning	Best practice strategies from programs and regions identified and disseminated across ADHC	2011	Sector Development Regions and Directorates

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
5.1 Improve accuracy of data about numbers of ADHC employees with a disability			
5.1.1 Establish benchmarks of staff who have identified their disability	Benchmarks established Measure effectiveness to inform campaign (5.1.2) and ADHC employment strategies	2010 then annually	Strategic Human Resources
5.1.2 Undertake campaign to encourage ADHC staff to identify their disability	Campaign rolled out	2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.2 ADHC's employment policies and procedure support access by people with a disability			
5.2.1 Develop reasonable adjustment guidelines to provide managers and supervisors with guidance and consistency on work-related adjustments available to people with a disability	Staff with a disability are provided reasonable work-related adjustments required to conduct their work	2010 – 2011	Strategic Human Resources SAMP
5.2.2 Review and update Employment and Equity and Diversity Management Plan (2008-2009)	Plan review and implement Human Resources Equity and Diversity Plan	2010 – 2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.3 Barriers to recruitment of people with a disability are reduced or eliminated			
5.3.1 Provide recruitment information in accessible formats	All recruitment information available in accessible formats	2011	Strategic Human Resources Information Technology

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
5.3.2 Include a person with a disability on interview selection panels where appropriate	<p>Tool developed to provide guidelines re inclusion of a person with a disability</p> <p>Tool to be included in ADHC Selection Guidelines for Convenors and Panel Members</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>	<p>Regions and Directorates</p> <p>Strategic Human Resources</p>
5.3.3 Recruitment strategies encourage applications from people with a disability	<p>Recruitment information is accessible</p> <p>Recruitment panels include a person with a disability where appropriate (refer 5.3.2)</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2011</p>	Strategic Human Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.4 Consult with Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to explore ADHC's participation in the NSW Traineeships for People with a Disability Program. 	<p>Consultations held with DPC</p> <p>Strategies identified and implemented</p> <p>Participation in initiatives developed</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>2012</p> <p>2012</p>	Strategic Human Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.5. Include organisations which employ people with a disability in tenders for services. 	<p>Develop and implement plan to communicate strategy to officers undertaking procurement</p> <p>Increase number of contracts let to organisations that employ people with a disability</p>	2011	<p>SAMP</p> <p>Regions and Directorates</p>

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 5.3.6 Work with training organisations and other government agencies to facilitate apprenticeship opportunities for people with a disability on construction projects 	Consultation undertaken and strategy developed	2012	Community Access SAMP
5.4 ADHC provides a safe and supportive work environment for all employees			
5.4.1 Provide support for line managers in assessment, control and consultation on safety including reasonable adjustment	Current mandatory line manager OHS training program updated	2011 then annually	Strategic Human Resource Regions and Directorates
5.5 ADHC to increase support to existing employees with a disability			
5.5.1 Consult with staff with disabilities to identify issues and barriers in employment advancement	Consultation carried out and feedback incorporated in ADHC <i>Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan</i>	2011	Strategic Human Resources
5.5.2 Develop information on supports available to employees with a disability	Information brochure developed and available in appropriate formats	2011	Strategic Human Resources
	Intranet updated and maintained to include support information for staff with a disability	2011	Corporate Communications

Outcome 6: Using government decision-making, programs and operations to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.1. ADHC will work in partnership with NSW Government agencies, funded NGOs and business partners to engage in disability action planning			
6.1.1 Support/monitor development of disability action plans by all government agencies	All NSW Government Departments submit a DAP to ADHC by April 2010	2010	Prevention and Pathways
6.2 Cross-government efforts are in place to meet State Plan employment and community participation targets for people with a disability			
6.2.1 Delivery of training plans to TTW service providers through the Australian Employers Network on Disability (AEND) to develop better business networks	Maintain and/or increase the number of training plans delivered (currently 63)	Annually from 2010	Community Access
6.2.2 Promote the implementation of the Public Service Management (Goods and Services) Regulation 2009 relating to contracts with organisations which employ people with a disability within ADHC and other government agencies	Consultations held with other government agencies Suitable contracts identified Number of contracts let to registered disability employment enterprises	2010 – 2011	SAMP Community Access
6.2.3 Engage with DPC to develop a cross-government disability employment action plan	Cross-government action plan developed Work commenced towards action plan targets	2011 – 2012 2012	Community Access
6.3 ADHC will work with other agencies and sectors to improve access to mainstream services for people with a disability			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.3.1 Continue to develop cross-agency projects at the regional level to build on the <i>Better Together</i> framework	Each region to provide best practice examples of interagency projects which increase access for people with a disability to mainstream services	Annually through life of DAP	Regions Prevention & Pathways
6.3.2 Support work of the Ministry of Transport and the Australian Government regarding access to transport services by people with a disability, their families and carers, including people in isolated communities	Representative from ADHC to participate in working groups/committees which have governance responsibilities for accessible transport services	2010 – 2013	Prevention & Pathways
6.3.3 Work in partnership with NSW Health to develop Young People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) Protocol	Protocol between ADHC and Health endorsed	2011 – 2012	Accommodation Policy & Development
6.3.4 Work in partnership with NSW Health and Community Services to improve physical, developmental and emotional health outcomes for children and young persons in out of home care	Participate in Out of Home Care Health Assessment Reference group	2010 onwards	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.5 Work in partnership with Community Services to deliver Joint Practice Framework in Case Management	Joint Practice Framework implemented, monitored and reviewed Framework monitored and reviewed	2010 2012	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.6 Partner with Community Services to develop accommodation models for Children/Young People with a disability	Suitable accommodation models developed	2011	Prevention and Pathways

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
6.3.7 Finalise Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Intellectual Disability and Mental Health, between ADHC and NSW Health	MoU is endorsed Monitoring and evaluation process undertaken	2010 2012	Office of the Senior Practitioner
6.3.8 Work in partnership with Housing NSW to ensure that people with a disability are appropriately supported in public housing tenancies	Input into the NSW Housing and Human Services Accord and other joint projects	2010 - 2013	Prevention and Pathways
6.3.9 Implement ADHC's commitments as lead agency under the NSW Interagency Service Principles and Protocols for People with an Intellectual Disability in the Justice System	ADHC's commitments are delivered	2011 – 2012	Office of the Senior Practitioner

Outcome 7: Providing quality specialist and adapted services where mainstream services are not adequate to meet the needs of people with a disability

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.1 ADHC's labour force skills and capacity are increased			
7.1.1 Orientation for Home Care workers includes a disability awareness component including CALD and Aboriginal cultural competency	All new care workers receive pre-service training	2010	Home Care
7.1.2 Ensure OHS systems for staff in Home Care, accommodation and respite services are appropriate for dealing with high risk activities such as manual handling	High risk strategies, programs and guidelines reviewed and updated as required	2010	Strategic Human Resources Regional Learning & Development Regional OH&S
7.1.3 Build on strategies for attracting and retaining Aboriginal and CALD staff to provide culturally appropriate services including: - Aboriginal Employment & Capability Framework (AECF) - Employment Equity and Diversity Management Plan	AECF Action plans developed and implemented Employment Equity and Diversity Management plan developed and implemented	Annually from 2011	Regions and directorates Aboriginal Service Development and Delivery Strategic Human Resources
7.2 Skills are enhanced across the disability and community care sector			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.2.1 Practice Leaders to support and deliver on evidence based practice to ensure better outcomes for people with a disability	Nursing & Health Care Practice Leader recruited Linkages with universities developed Increased research by staff	2011 – 2012 2010 2010	Office of the Senior Practitioner
7.2.2 Develop practice guidelines to support consistent best practice for ADHC Community Support Teams	Case Management, Therapy and Behaviour Support Guidelines produced	2010	Community Access Office of the Senior Practitioner
7.2.3 Support non-government agencies in board management and governance knowledge through the “It’s your business” initiative	Implementation, monitoring and review of initiative	2010 – 2011	Sector Development
7.3 Increase the capacity of the disability service system to meet the needs of people with a disability their families and carers			
7.3.1 Adopt a person centred approach to support people with a disability in all program areas	Implementation, monitoring and review of person centred approach	2010 – 2013	Prevention and Pathways
7.3.2 Services and programs to maximise a focus on prevention and early intervention	Implementation, monitoring and review of <i>EarlyStart</i> initiative	2010 – 2011	Prevention and Pathways
7.3.3 Work with National Disability Services to promote careers in community care and disability sector through the ‘Care Career’ initiative	Implement, monitoring and review of initiative to inform future planning and policy development	2010 – 2013	Sector Development
7.4 Strengthening quality assurance in ADHC operated and funded services			

Actions	Performance Measures	Timeframe	Responsibility
7.4.1 Implementation of a new quality and performance monitoring framework for all funded services	Implementation rolled out in all regions	2010 – 2012	Sector Development
7.4.2 Provide ADHC direct care and Home Care clients with an individual plan and/or service agreement contract to ensure that the services to be provided are clearly identified and understood	All clients have a service agreement that is regularly reviewed	2011	Regions and Directorates
7.4.3 Develop the use of the Service Providers Portal to promote new policies, guidelines and best practice information	Information disseminated through the Portal	2011	Sector Development

Businesslink Disability Action Plan 2009-2012

Policy Statement

NSW Businesslink is committed to fostering a workplace that treats people with a disability fairly and equitably and to ensuring that all employees enjoy equality of opportunity and a work environment free from harassment and discrimination.

By promoting the entitlement of people with disabilities to experiences and outcomes equivalent to those available to the wider community, Businesslink will help to develop a climate in which people with disabilities feel confident and valued.

This Disability Action Plan offers staff a succinct statement of Businesslink's goals, strategies and targets for assisting staff and clients with disability over the next three years.

Legislative Basis

NSW Businesslink's obligation to address equity issues for people with disabilities is contained in three pieces of legislation:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)

Definition of Disability

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA) contains the broadest definitions of disability. It defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability:

- which he or she has
- which he or she used to have
- which he or she may have in the future

- which is imputed to him or her.

Both permanent and temporary disabilities are covered under the DDA.

It should be noted that this definition does not attempt to place some people with a disability outside its coverage by virtue of the perceived minimal effect of some disabilities. This definition seeks to include all people with a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability or the extent of its effect.

Overview of NSW Businesslink

NSW Businesslink Pty Ltd (Businesslink) is a Proprietary Limited Company delivering shared services within the framework of the NSW Government shared services reform strategy. Businesslink provides a broad range of operational and organisational infrastructure services and facilities to its clients, so as to enable them to deliver their core frontline services in a cost effective manner.

Businesslink services over 22,000 staff across three client agencies, which in turn provide services to more than 250,000 citizens of NSW.

The shared services model seeks to create value for Shareholders by generating economies of scale through the implementation of optimal common, consistent, repeatable transactional activities, information flows and business processes. It creates value for clients by delivering efficient and cost effective services.

Workforce Profile

The NSW Businesslink Annual Report 2007/2008 reported that the percentage of staff who identified themselves as a person with a disability was 6% (with 1.5% of staff requiring workplace adjustments). This is a reduction of 2% compared with data from the 2006/2007 Annual Report.

All staff reporting with a disability are employed on a permanent, fulltime basis.

Consultation Process

Businesslink has consulted with stakeholders regarding the development of the Disability Action Plan 2009 -2012. These stakeholders include staff who have a disability, or are carers of someone with a disability, or who are interested in disability issues, Human Resources, Industrial Relations, the PSA, and Management.

Achievements of the 2006 – 2008 Disability Action Plan

Businesslink's Disability Action Plan 2006-2008 continued to assist staff, clients and suppliers with a disability in the key areas of access, information and employment.

Some key achievements included:

- The Liverpool car park provides six disabled car park spaces
- Entry to the building is level and free of any steps
- Entry and egress for the building and access within the building is wheelchair friendly
- Security swipe card points are considerate to wheelchair bound staff/visitors

- Workstations are designed to facilitate height adjustment of the workstation. There are currently several modified workstations within the Liverpool building to accommodate staff of various heights
- Toilets with disability access are available on the ground floor, level 6 and the ladies toilet level 10
- Toilets with disability access have medical waste disposal bins for those with special medical requirements
- Toilets with disability access on level 6 and level 10 are fitted with electric opening doors
- Two evacuation chairs are located within the Liverpool building to facilitate physically disabled people to be exited from the building during an evacuation, power outage or lift failure
- The Evacuation Plan and training considers and caters for immobile and disabled staff and visitors in the building in the event of an emergency
- Hearing impaired staff are provided with a person to translate using sign language during large meetings and conferences
- Training rooms are designed to accommodate wheelchair access and people with limited mobility
- Security staff are available during office hours to assist where possible
- Use of a weekly email newsletter as the preferred means of distributing information to staff
- Allocation of Telephone typewriters (TTY) to staff with hearing impairments
- Disability access considered in the location and design of Regional Service Centres in Queanbeyan, Orange, Newcastle and Lismore, and the Parramatta office.
- The Disability Action Plan 2009–2012 aims to build on these achievements and further enable people with a disability to access services and employment. In particular attention will be paid to our off-site offices.

Monitoring and Review

The initiatives of the Disability Action Plan will be monitored on an annual basis by the People and Culture Group. It will be reviewed by Senior Management and the relevant Business Unit Managers with responsibilities within the plan to ensure that all action measures are evaluated on a half-yearly basis.

A report evaluating implementation of the Disability Action Plan will be incorporated into Businesslink's Annual Report.

Level of Planning Required for 2009 -2012 Plan

The *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies* developed by DADHC outlines three tiers of service delivery - Level 1 covers universal mainstream services, Level 2 covers adaptive services, and Level 3 covers specialised disability services.

NSW Businesslink has been assessed as falling within the Level 1 tier of service delivery. An outline of the requirements of Level 1 planning follows.

Level 1 Planning

Planning to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination in universal mainstream services, programs and facilities and public sector employment for people with a disability.

Specific outcomes required in the Disability Action Plan are:

- Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability
- Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability
- Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability
- Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultation and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees
- Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Implementation

Responsibility for the implementation of this plan resides with the People and Culture Group.

Outcomes, Actions and Performance Indicators

Outcome 1: Identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
<p>1.1 Conduct a review of issues of access to the Business Service Centre (BSC) for people with disabilities to ensure that people with disabilities from our client agencies can access the BSC</p>	<p>BSC</p>	<p>2010</p>	<p>Adoption of appropriate review recommendations</p> <p>Indicators for improvements could include:</p> <p>Promotion of accessible self-service options</p> <p>Utilisation of new and emerging technology to best assist client access</p> <p>Communication or advertising of BSC email address for IT, payroll and HR related matters as an alternate means to contact rather than telephone</p> <p>Communication or advertising 53999 for IT, payroll and HR related matters as an alternate to contact via email</p> <p>BSC staff provided with training / briefing in responding to clients needs with disabilities</p> <p>Review IVR recordings and menu options to provide ease of access to selected services</p>

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
1.2 Conduct a training needs analysis (TNA) to identify training needs of BSC staff in disability awareness	Learning and Development	2010	TNA conducted
1.3 Schedule and conduct disability awareness training for client contact staff to improve awareness of needs of clients and staff with disabilities	Learning and Development	2010	Training conducted
1.4 Review accessibility to services provided by Businesslink by incorporating disability access into current customer satisfaction surveys administered by Businesslink	Product Management Group	2011	Disability access question/s included in the 2011 Customer satisfaction survey
1.5 Communicate Businesslink's commitment to supporting staff with disabilities and communicate Businesslink's privacy policy and commitment to confidentiality to encourage disclosure of disability and accuracy of EEO data in SAPHR.	Communication & Marketing	2010	Increase in the number of staff who disclose
1.6 Promote disability awareness through publicising and celebrating International Day of People with a Disability annually.	Employee Development & Communication and Marketing	Annually	Celebration and communications strategies enacted

Outcome 2: Provide information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
2.1 Ensure web communications strategies are in line with W3C's Web Content Accessibility guidelines	Communication & Marketing Web Services	2010	Guidelines adhered to
2.2 Continue to provide an Auslan interpreter for staff for all key Businesslink presentations when required	Communication & Marketing	As required	Interpreter provided if necessary

Outcome 3: Make Businesslink buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
3.1 Audit Parramatta and Regional Office sites to ensure emergency evacuation procedures comply with the same standards implemented in the Liverpool office.	Business Services	2010	Audit completed and improvements made if necessary
3.2 Review Fire and Emergency Evacuation Procedures for relevant sites to ensure processes are in place for people with a disability including providing the necessary education and training to relevant persons	Business Services	2010	Review completed and appropriate actions taken
3.3 Include disabled access and facilities in criteria for selection of new premises both for Businesslink and our client agencies - Building Code of Australia, Disability Access - part 1428.1 and 1428.2.	P&PS	2010	Criteria included in standard facilities procurement documentation
3.4 Develop a Reasonable Adjustment Policy	People and Culture	2010	Policy developed
3.5 Consult with staff with a disability and provide appropriate workplace adjustments as required in line with the Reasonable Adjustment Policy	People and Culture	As required	Adjustments made when required

Outcome 4: Assist people with a disability to participate in public consultation and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
4.1 Invite applications from staff members with a disability to join appropriate committees. Two levels of participations are envisaged – full member and/or subject matter expert	People and Culture	Ongoing	Invitation made

Outcome 5: Increase employment participation of people with a disability in NSW Businesslink

Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicator
5.1 Develop a set of mandatory questions both on the application form and as part of the invitation to interview process – e.g. Do you have a disability? Do you have any special interview requirements? Please specify?	Recruitment Solutions	2010	Mandatory set of questions developed and implemented
Where necessary and reasonable the workplace will be adjusted to accommodate preferred applicants with disabilities.	Managers	As needed	Necessary adjustments made
Conduct a review of the Merit Selection Training course to ensure it includes sections on equitable practices in relation to people with disabilities in all aspects of recruitment.	Learning and Development & People and Culture	Annually	Annual review conducted
Explore the implementation of a traineeship program for people with disabilities	People and Culture	2010	Research completed and program commenced if appropriate

Community Services Disability Action Plan 2010-2014

Commitment

In Australia, one in five of us lives with a disability of some kind²⁵. Whether it is physical, intellectual, illness related or psychological, disability affects not only individuals but their families and their communities.

At Community Services we know that where there are other risk factors, including isolation and economic disadvantage, disability can contribute to families reaching crisis point.

Community Services is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of children and young people with disabilities and supporting families to overcome the difficulties of living with disability. This is part of our overall priority that children, families and communities are safe, healthy and resilient.

This plan outlines our commitment to ensuring that our services are accessible, appropriate and responsive to the needs of people with a disability, and our strategies to achieve this commitment for the next five years. We also look forward to strengthening our partnerships with government agencies and non-government organisations to ensure that there is a continuum of quality service provision across NSW.

Annette Gallard

Chief Executive

²⁵ ABS cat.no. 4430.0 2003

Policy context

In addition to the legislative responsibilities outlined in the DHS DAP executive summary, Community Services has responsibilities in accordance with a number of NSW government policies. This Disability Action Plan represents the Agency's commitment to these policies and its practical strategies.

NSW State Plan 2010

The *NSW State Plan 2010* is the NSW Government's long term plan to deliver the best possible services to the people of NSW. Community Services, as part of the Department of Human Services, has particular responsibility for strengthening communities and for improving child wellbeing, health and safety and ensuring children have the skills for learning by school entry, with a focus on those most vulnerable. The principles which underpin the State Plan 2010 include the adoption of early intervention and prevention strategies to stop existing problems from getting worse and prevent problems from developing whenever possible, and effective collaboration between all levels of government and its partners.

Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011

Better Together identifies how NSW Government agencies will work together to improve planning and service delivery to ensure appropriate access for people with a disability and that only those with the greatest need will have to use special facilities or programs. It also outlines practical strategies for achieving the State Plan target of increasing employment and community participation for people with a disability.

NSW Government provides services for people with a disability in three tiers – universal services, adapted services and specialised services. Community Services provides universal services which are used by large numbers of people, including people with disabilities.

Integration into agency planning

The Disability Action Plan will be integrated into Community Services planning processes and documents.

Role of Community Services

Community Services works in cooperation with other government and community groups to help build a safer and stronger community for everyone. The agency's core role is to ensure that children and young people receive the best possible start in life by providing a range of services and supports to them and their families.

Community Services provides a range of services that reflect the diverse needs of the community.

- Prevention and early intervention strategies provide targeted support to vulnerable children and families to prevent them from entering or escalating in the child protection system. Programs such as Brighter Futures address immediate problems as well as the underlying factors that contribute to them.
- Working closely with government, non-government and community groups as well as the public to develop a framework for regulation, policy, licensing and compliance monitoring to help keep children and young people safe and give them a good start in life.
- Children at risk of significant harm are identified and appropriate intervention measures are taken to ensure their safety.
- Arranging appropriate care for children and young people who cannot safely live at home. Out-of-home care may be provided by extended family, foster care, residential care or in independent living arrangements. Community Services also funds and supports other organisations that provide out-of-home care.
- Offering a number of services designed to encourage community development and address issues that lead to family breakdown, including alcohol and other drug abuse prevention, and homelessness.
- Working with a number of non-government organisations to provide disaster readiness planning, disaster recovery services and evacuation and emergency accommodation in the event of a disaster.

Prevalence of disability among Community Services clients

It is reported in *Better Together* that one in five people in NSW has a disability. Although the vast majority of these people go about their lives without needing additional support, around 190,000 people have a moderate disability and a further 200,000 people have a severe or profound disability which impacts significantly on their ability to communicate, to care for themselves or to move about in the community. Projections indicate that this number will increase, especially as the population agesⁱ. A report in 2003 indicated that four per cent of children aged 0-4 years had a disability, with the proportion increasing to just over 51 per cent of people aged 60 years and olderⁱⁱ. NSW Health estimated that in 2005/06 there were 1.1 million people in New South Wales who experienced a mental illness, with around 170,000 (2-3 per cent) experiencing a severe mental illnessⁱⁱⁱ.

When a parent has a disability, particularly a mental disability, this can affect family wellbeing and the development of children and young people. A 2005 study estimated that between 21-23 per cent of children lived in Australian households where at least one parent had a mental illness, equating to just over a million children under the age of 18 years^{iv}.

The additional challenges which may be faced by parents with a disability need to be fully acknowledged. For example, the practicalities of transporting babies and small children in cars or public transport. Parents with a mental or intellectual disability may well need significant ongoing support to understand the needs of babies and small children and how to respond.

The 2005 study concluded that up to 60 per cent of the children and young people from families affected by parental mental illness, or over half a million Australian children, are more likely to experience mental health problems than other children. Research suggests that children with disabilities are at higher risk of abuse than non-disabled children^v. This may occur through isolation from support networks, or because children with a disability (particularly those with an intellectual disability) may lack the strategies and communication skills to protect themselves from abuse. It is also possible that children with disabilities are at higher risk because caring for them can be more stressful for parents who may already be struggling to cope. In some instances disability can also be the result of abuse, either directly or indirectly.

The Supporting Children with Additional Needs (SCAN) scheme helps give children with additional needs equal access to funded licensed children's services and activities. Community Services funds training for child care staff, travel to specialist services, and the employment of support workers at Community Services-funded preschools, vacation care and occasional care services. During a one week survey in September 2008, 5,218 children with a disability accessed funded licensed children's services^{vi}.

Revised program guidelines were published in January 2010 with the revised program focusing on supporting mainstream children's services which have children with additional needs, particularly those with a disability and/or challenging behaviours.

Parents with significant learning difficulties and/or intellectual disability and child behaviour management problems are two of the vulnerabilities that qualify families for the Brighter Futures Early Intervention Program.

When it is not possible to help keep families together, Community Services ensures that children and young people are cared for in a safe environment by foster carers or through other arrangements. Some of these children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) have high and complex needs that bring them within the definition of disability in the *Disability Services Act 1993*.

Children and young people in out-of-home care as at 30 June 2008 and 2009^{vii}

	As at 30/06/09	As at 30/06/08
Number of children and young people in OOHC	16,524 (100%)	14,667 (100%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC identified as having high and complex needs	379 (2.3%)	347 (2.4%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC who are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	5,307 (32.1%)	4,575 (31.2%)
Number and percentage of children and young people in OOHC who are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and who are also identified as having high and complex needs	81 (1.5%)	77 (1.7%)

Community Services staff

Community Services employs about 4,500 staff located in approximately 110 offices, including community services centres, across NSW.

The agency's *Annual Report 2008/09* includes information on the representation of EEO groups among staff, including data on those people who identify themselves as having a disability. The tables include the benchmark or target for employment and for the salary level of people with a disability and are based on staff numbers as at 30 June each year.

Trends in the employment of staff with a disability, 2005/06 – 2008/09

	Percentage of total staff				
	Benchmark or target	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
People with a disability	12.0	5.0	5.0	6.0	6.0
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustments	7.0	1.7	1.9	2.3	2.5

Trends in the distribution index of salary levels for staff with a disability, 2005/06 – 2008/09

	Distribution index				
	Benchmark or Target	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
People with a disability	100	101	105	102	102
People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment	100	97	102	103	104

Note: A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of the distribution of the EEO group across salary levels is equivalent to that of other staff. Values less than 100 mean that the EEO group tends to be more concentrated at lower salary levels than is the case for other staff. This distribution index does not include casual staff.

Based on the best available information, while Community Services has not reached the target for employment opportunities for people with a disability, particularly people needing work-related adjustments, in any of the last five years, the distribution of salary levels indicates that people with a disability are generally employed at salary levels equivalent to all other staff. Community Services continues to encourage all staff to supply equal employment opportunity information for statistical purposes.

Reviewing the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006

Six priority areas for action were included in *Community Services Disability Act Plan 2004-2006* in line with NSW Government priorities. Significant achievements in these areas underpin the development of a Disability Action Plan 2010-2014 and they are outlined below.

Physical access

Community Services continues to review and assess all its owned sites for physical accessibility as part of the Total Asset Management (TAM) planning process.

Community Services continues to upgrade all of its property portfolio to meet all relevant statutory building and disability codes (at the time of fit-out construction) which incorporate physical accessibility requirements. All site upgrades ensure

- all reception/waiting rooms are designed for wheelchair access and, where possible, accessible toilets are nearby
- reception counters allow for disability access
- workstations and shelving units are height adjustable.

Community Services produced an Emergency Management policy, guide and reference manual to guide staff in ensuring arrangements for staff and visitors with a disability are addressed.

Promoting positive community attitudes

Community Services positively promoted the inclusion of people with disabilities through publications and resources such as the *Good practice guidelines for DoCS funded services manual* and *Wraparound support services for children and young people* (integral to the provision of out-of-home care services). Both publications and associated resources were developed and piloted in consultation with a range of non-government sector agencies.

Community Services provided training for staff, volunteers and management committee members of funded services to further develop awareness of best practice for disability access and service provision (associated with the implementation of the *Good practice guidelines*).

Training of staff

Information about disability awareness is included in online and face-to-face staff induction and orientation courses.

Caseworker Development Program modules include disability-specific content on

- working with families where a member has a disability, including placement needs and leaving care needs for a young person with an intellectual disability
- working with parents with an intellectual disability in child protection
- communicating with children and young people who may have a disability
- assessing risk of harm, child protection dynamics and interagency guidelines.

A Dual Diagnosis Resource kit, developed in partnership with the Mental Health Coordinating Council, is available on the Community Services intranet to assist staff working with parents with a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance use. An information booklet for parents and two illustrated books written for children are also available to download from the Community Services website.

Community Services introduced instructions on interviewing adults and young people with physical, sensory and/or intellectual disabilities in the Joint Investigation Response Team training.

Accessible information about services

Community Services included teletypewriter (TTY) phone numbers on all new and reprinted publications produced during the year and on the website. TTY services installed at the Helpline and Domestic Violence Line continued to be operational and all new staff employed at these sites receiving training on TTY use during their induction training.

Accessibility to the Community Services website has been improved by adding a skip to content link that allows visitors that use a screen reader to skip the

long list of navigation options for each page – it skips straight to the main content, adding ‘access keys’ that allow the visitor to just press a key to access ‘search’, ‘site index’, ‘home’ or ‘contact us’. The site achieved an AA rating for website accessibility. Users can navigate the site using the tab key if they are not able to use a mouse. The new design incorporates a different system of navigation that will work on a wide range of devices, including those used by people with a disability.

The *Supporting Children with Additional Needs* brochures have been published on the website in six community languages.

Employment in Community Services

Applicants for positions in Community Services are asked to advise of any particular needs for access or support during the assessment process. All candidates are given an opportunity to bring additional equipment or have it provided for them for the completion of tasks, including written exercises, computer skills and presentations.

All new staff are asked to complete a health declaration to identify any requirements for workplace modifications. Workplace assessments are then completed.

JAWS (Jobs Access With Speech) screen reader technology is available for identified users who are visually impaired. This software is approved by Vision Australia and works for all the agency’s standard desktop software applications.

Accessibility to the intranet has been improved by replacing the design and navigation tools with a more useable interface. The intranet complies with W3C standards, which is over and above the minimum requirement for government intranets.

Complaints procedures

Grievances and feedback to Community Services can be made by way of mail, fax, telephone, email or in person at an office. Complainants have the right to choose the format which is the most convenient and suitable to them.

Two principles of the *Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993* are particularly relevant to complaints made by, or on behalf of, people with disabilities:

- a service provider is to enable a complaint about the service to be dealt with fairly, informally and quickly and at a place convenient to the complainant
- a complaint about the provision of a service is to be dealt with even if it is made by another person on behalf of the person eligible to receive, or receiving, the service.

Community Services continues to review complaints procedures to ensure that complaints are resolved in an inclusive way. The procedures ensure that assistance is provided to enable complainants to express their views and participate in the complaints process.

Developing a new plan

Consultation

Staff from each of Community Services Regions were consulted and provided advice on a range of disability issues. Submissions from advocacy and peak bodies to the Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW were also analysed.

There will be ongoing communication about progress on the implementation of the DAP with stakeholders, both outside and within Government.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for people with a disability

Community Services recognises that people with a disability may be faced with particular barriers that could limit their access to the services provided by the Agency.

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Revise and implement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Community Services (CS) and Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) for clients with a disability	Improved coordination of service delivery Improve information sharing between CS and ADHC in relation to children and young people with a disability	New MOU signed March 2010 Implementation ongoing	Operations	MOU implemented
2.	Develop knowledge and skills of CS staff in relation to working with children and young people with a disability	Relevant staff receive training and development in relation to working with children and young people with a disability	Commencing December 2010 and ongoing	Operations and Learning and Development	Proportion of relevant staff trained
3.	Improve the quality of out-of-home care KiDS data and NGO Minimum Data Set (MDS) to ensure data on children with a disability is accurate and reliable	Increased OOHC options for placement of children and young people with a disability	Commencing December 2010 (development of plan) and ongoing	Planning & Corporate Performance, Business Improvement and Corporate Services	Accuracy and reliability of out-of-home care KiDS data and NGO MDS is improved
4.	Implement new SCAN program guidelines	Children with additional support needs have increased	Commencing 2010 and ongoing	F&CSR	Number of children with a disability accessing CS

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
		<p>opportunities to access eligible CS funded preschool, vacation care and occasional care services</p> <p>Eligible CS funded children's services are responsive to the needs of children with additional support needs</p>			funded preschool, vacation care and occasional care services (during one survey week in August/September of each year)
5.	Work to improve access to services funded under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) and Crisis Accommodation Program (CAP) for people with physical disabilities	Increased number of SAAP/CAP crisis services are accessible to people with disabilities	Commencing 2010/11	Funding Support Unit in conjunction with Housing NSW	Upgrading of 20 SAAP/CAP properties to include modifications enabling access for people with disabilities
6.	Strengthen communications about supports and services for families with parent(s) with learning difficulties/intellectual disability	Increased access to a range of services provided under the Brighter Futures Program that respond to identified individual and family needs for families with parent(s) with learning difficulties/intellectual disability and have children aged under 9 years, or who are expecting a child	Ongoing	Operations Corporate Information for publication of material	Number of families where the parent(s) have learning difficulties/intellectual disability entering the Brighter Futures Program

Outcome 2: Providing information in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability

Providing information about Community Services in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability is an essential component of improving access to services

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Ensure mechanisms for making complaints or lodging grievances are accessible in a range of formats and that appropriate support is made available to complainants	CS website is updated to ensure information about how to make a complaint and the availability of support and assistance is accurate and accessible	Before January 2011	Investigation and Review Branch Corporate Information for web publication	Web site updated
2.	Ensure CS website continues to comply with the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines	Full compliance with guidelines	Ongoing	Corporate Information	Website complies
3.	Ensure information about CS is available through other government and non-government agencies	Building and maintaining strong cooperative links with other government and NGO groups	Ongoing	Operations, Major Change Program Unit Corporate Information for web and print publication	Links to CS on other sites. Brochures etc available at a range of outlets
4.	Use of accredited interpreters to communicate with a person with a disability who speaks a language other than English	Communication needs met for people with languages other than English	Ongoing	All units	Suitable interpreters used
5.	Consideration will be given to promoting CS support and services more actively through existing platforms already reaching families with disability	Information available to all families who may benefit from it	Ongoing	All units responsible for advising Corporate Information of services offered and source of funding	New promotions commenced

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
6.	Consideration will be given to reproducing existing resources in Braille and audio formats	Initially, information most likely to be of use to families of people with visual impairments available in accessible formats	2011/12	All units responsible for reviewing resources and advising Corporate Information of requirements. Corporate Information for publication, subject to availability of funding	Brochures produced in audio and Braille formats

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability

Ensuring the buildings and facilities used by Community Services are physically accessible to people with a disability is essential to ensuring access to services

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Ensure CS property portfolio complies with relevant disability legislation / building codes	100% of CS property portfolio complies with relevant disability legislation / building codes	Ongoing	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
2.	Ensure appropriate office accommodation is leased which will enable disability access	100% of CS property portfolio provides disability access	Ongoing	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
3.	Provide reception counters that will enable disability access	100% of CS property portfolio includes reception counters that enable disability access	30 June 2012	Corporate Services	% of property that complies
4.	Provide height adjustable workstations	100% of the workstations in CS property portfolio are height adjustable	30 June 2013	Corporate Services	% of workstations that comply

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees

Encouraging and facilitating the participation of people with a disability in public forums and other consultation processes is important for ensuring not only the provision of opportunities to participate as equal citizens but also that disability issues are included for consideration where appropriate.

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Information about public forums and membership of CS committees is made available in audio and Braille formats	Information about attendance at public forums and participation in CS committees and boards is available to all people	July 2010 and ongoing	All units need to advise Corporate Information about public forums and committees Corporate Information responsible for publication, subject to availability of funding	Information published in range of appropriate formats
2.	Public forums and committee meetings are held in locations with disability access	People with a disability are able to attend public forums and participate in CS committees	Ongoing	All units	All public meetings held in locations with disability access

Outcome 5: Increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector

Providing a work environment that is accessible and attractive for people with a disability ensures that Community Services is a supportive, diverse and flexible workplace that encourages all qualified applicants to seek employment with the Agency.

[Note: The guidelines for disability action planning advise that inclusion of this outcome in the DAP is not mandatory as it covers targets in EEO management plans. Community Services does not have an EEO management plan. Further the inclusion of this outcome in the DAP ensures a comprehensive profile of CS initiatives for people with a disability is available in one comprehensive document]

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
1.	Refer Health Declarations provided in recruitment process to HR/OHS staff to advise on reasonable adjustments that may be required	All applicant Health Declarations that identify a medical or other disability are referred for advice prior to entry on duty	By December 2010	Corporate Services	% of requested work place adjustments completed
2.	Nominate a Disability Contact Officer in Head Office to provide advice/support to managers and staff regarding issues of disability and reasonable adjustment	Nominated position and contact details available on the intranet and advised to managers and staff	By December 2010	Corporate Services	Contact person details available on intranet
3.	Promote a commitment to consider reasonable adjustments for applicants with a disability (in non-caseworker roles) in all recruitment packages	Statement of commitment linked to Health Declaration included in recruitment packages	By December 2010	Corporate Services	% of recruitment packages including a statement of commitment to consider reasonable adjustments

#	Actions	Targets	Timeframes for implementation	Responsibility	Measures
4.	Develop a strategy to improve access to employment with Community Services for people with disabilities	Employment with Community Services is more accessible to people with disabilities	Commencing 2011	Corporate Human Resources	Strategy developed to improve access to employment with Community Services for people with disabilities

Implementation

Integration into planning

This Disability Action Plan will be integrated into Community Services main planning processes, in particular the annual statement of Agency Directions and business plans.

The endorsed plan will be widely promoted through Community Services website, intranet and community networks.

Review and reporting framework

In line with the Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies a copy of the Community Services Disability Action Plan 2010-2014 will be submitted to Ageing, Disability and Home Care. A copy will also be provided to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Community Services will review its progress towards achieving the outcomes it has identified as part of this Disability Action Plan. A report on this review will be included in the Community Services Annual Report.

By the end of 2014 this Disability Action Plan will be reviewed and updated.

Housing NSW Disability Action Plan 2009-2013

Foreword

People with a disability make up about one in three of current public housing tenants and about one in five of tenants in community housing organisations. They have diverse needs with some living independently and actively participating in the community, while others have complex needs and require support to sustain their tenancies and connect with their community. Some may live in rural, regional or remote communities, others may come from diverse cultural backgrounds including Aboriginal Australians. The important role of advocates, carers and support workers who assist people with a disability must also be recognised.

Housing NSW is committed to assisting people with a disability who are most in need to access and sustain social housing and, where appropriate, to provide them with private rent assistance. We continue to work with our government and non-government partners to ensure people with a disability who need support to sustain their tenancy are able to access the support services they need.

Our staff who have a disability are a valuable asset to our organisation. We are committed to ensuring that our workforce policies and practices enable the recruitment and retention of staff with a disability.

This plan outlines strategies over the next five years to ensure housing assistance and related support is accessible and appropriate to the needs of people with a disability.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our tenants, staff and government and non-government partners who provided valuable input into this plan. I look forward to your continued feedback and to working with you to deliver on its priorities.

Mike Allen

Chief Executive

Our commitment

Housing NSW is committed to assisting people with a disability who are most in need to access and sustain social housing and private rent assistance.

We are committed to working with our government and non-government stakeholders towards understanding future demand for housing assistance and to identifying strategies to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Housing NSW is committed to promoting tenant participation and engagement and to working in partnership with other agencies to ensure that people with a disability who need support to sustain their tenancy are able to access the support services they need.

Housing NSW is committed to working with the community housing sector to ensure that community housing providers continue to provide housing assistance to those most in need, including people with a disability.

Staff working in Housing NSW can expect to work in an environment free from discrimination and where staff members with disability are supported with the necessary workplace adjustments that enable them to perform their duties. Housing NSW aims to increase the proportion of staff with a disability that are recruited and retained within its workforce.

The Housing NSW Disability Action Plan 2009 – 2013 (the plan) reflects the commitments of Housing NSW to providing affordable and accessible housing assistance to people with a disability. It outlines strategies that promote social inclusion and access to support needed to help clients with a disability to sustain their tenancies.

This plan is guided by the following principles:

- our services should respond fairly to the diverse needs of clients
- our clients can expect to have access to quality information and are involved in decision making
- our client networks and relationships are valued and supported
- we work collaboratively with other agencies to develop and deliver housing services linked to support when needed
- we strive to maintain a high standard of service to clients with diverse needs.

Disability action planning outcome areas

The plan is one of Housing NSW's obligations under the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993*. Consistent with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies*, the plan focuses on seven priority areas:

- ensuring people with a disability are able to access housing services and products
- providing information in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability
- improving physical accessibility of buildings and facilities for people with a disability
- assisting the participation of people with a disability in public consultations and on Housing NSW advisory boards and committees
- increasing employment participation of people with a disability in Housing NSW

- influencing other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life for people with a disability in social housing; and
- providing quality specialist and adapted services to meet the needs of people with a disability

For the purpose of housing needs assessment, Housing NSW considers a person to have a disability if their ability to function is impaired or if they have a medical condition due to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical condition or combination of conditions, which is permanent or likely to be permanent. Housing NSW also recognises that disability exists within a social context where attitudes of some institutions and individuals towards disability can create further barriers to access to services, opportunities and social inclusion.

Development of the plan

The plan was informed by consultation with key stakeholders including:

- Housing NSW tenants
- Housing NSW staff
- Disability peak organisations
- Housing Partners Non-Government Organisation Reference Group
- Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee
- Tenants Union of NSW; and
- Housing and Human Services Senior Officers Group.

The plan was made available for public comment for the period June 2009 on the Housing NSW website. Advice and direction was also provided by an internal Steering Committee comprising Housing NSW and Aboriginal Housing Office representatives, and the Disability Reference Group, which is made up of Housing NSW staff that have a disability or are carers of a person with a disability.

This plan is informed by the Housing NSW *Corporate Plan* and complements a range of strategies that focus on specific client groups, including *New Directions in Social Housing for Older People* and the *Housing and Human Services Accord*.

Policy context

The majority of NSW Government agencies have a legislative responsibility under the NSW *Disability Services Act 1993* to develop a Disability Action Plan. In addition, all agencies have obligations under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the NSW *Disability Discrimination Act 1977* which recognise the right of people with a disability to equality before the law and make discrimination on the grounds of disability unlawful. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more information.

The NSW Government recognises the need to improve the services provided to people with a disability and their carers across all three tiers of service delivery – universal services,

adapted services and specialist services. This ensures the notions of better services, fairness and opportunity for all citizens, as outlined in the *NSW State Plan*,²⁶ are upheld.

The NSW Government recognises there is an increasing demand for more, higher quality services from the specialist disability support system. A growing elderly population, combined with an increasing number of people with a disability living in the community, is placing pressure both on the service system and carers. To meet these needs, the Government is realigning the disability support system to become more flexible and innovative. Among the changes in specialist service provision proposed in *Stronger Together: A New Direction for Disability Services in NSW 2006-2016*, the Government has a commitment to deliver services that have greater predictability, clear entry and exit points and that offer a range of options most suitable to the needs of the people concerned.²⁷

Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families: 2007 – 2011 more specifically identifies how NSW Government agencies work together to improve planning and service delivery. Housing NSW is a partner in some key initiatives under this strategy which are being implemented under the Housing and Human Services Accord (Accord).

Commonwealth/State partnerships related to housing also provide a policy context for responding to the needs of people with a disability. For example, the National Affordable Housing Agreement and related partnership plans identify a number of outcomes that will improve service and opportunities for people with a disability. These include:

- supporting vulnerable groups, including people with a disability to access services;
- designing housing to meet the needs of elderly people and people with a disability; and
- improving tenancy management and maintenance standards

The *Homelessness White Paper: the Road Home 2008* outlines the Commonwealth Government's strategy to tackling homelessness. It recognises that people who are homeless often have complex problems including substance abuse, mental illness, developmental disabilities and chronic physical illnesses. The *NSW Homelessness Action Plan 2009 – 2014* contains a range of partnerships that will help strengthen responses to homelessness.

Another related reform is the growth of the community housing sector in NSW as outlined in *Planning for the Future: New directions for community housing in New South Wales 2007/08 – 2012/13*. Under this strategy the community housing sector will play an increasingly important role in delivering a diverse and flexible response to clients most in need, including those with a disability.

There are various State and Commonwealth policy contexts that inform the current approach to providing housing assistance for people with a disability described in the Disability Action Plan.

Demand

²⁶ NSW Government (2006). *State Plan*, NSW Government, Sydney.

²⁷ NSW Government (2006) *Stronger Together: A New Direction for Disability Services in NSW 2006-2016*, NSW Government, Sydney.

Policy shifts, demographic trends, and increasing disadvantage experienced by people with a disability contribute towards higher demand for social housing.

Policy shifts

The disability service system has shifted over time, leading to more people with a disability seeking social housing:

- The NSW social housing system has evolved from providing housing to low income working families to providing housing for the most disadvantaged, predominantly those dependent on social security payments, resulting in a growing proportion of social housing households that include a person with a disability. Approximately one-third of social housing applicants receive the Disability Support Pension (DSP).
- A changing policy environment with strategies such as *Better Together* and *Stronger Together* is ensuring the most appropriate accommodation is available for people with a disability by providing a wide range of options that suit the location and changing needs of the individual.
- The availability of other services has an impact on the demand for social housing. For example there has been a notable decline in the number of boarding houses which are often used by people with a disability as an affordable housing option.
- Deinstitutionalisation of care since the 1980s and the 1990s has meant many people with a disability are now moving back into their communities. This has been accompanied by income support payments such as the Disability Support Pension as well as the need for a range of support services including flexible accommodation options.²⁸
- In other jurisdictions, there is an increasing trend towards separating the provision of housing from the provision of support services for people with a disability so that the conflicts of interest experienced with the roles of the landlord and support provider are minimised.

Demographics

Demand for disability related housing services is expected to be driven by an increasing ageing population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics *2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* notes:²⁹

- a demographic shift towards an ageing population and an increase in the number of people with complex needs requiring support
- the number of individuals in NSW with a severe or profound core activity limitation is expected to increase by 7.7 per cent between 2006-2010 based on ABS population projections. Growth is predominantly in the age category of 65 years and over (11.6 per cent)

²⁸ *Australia's Welfare 2007 – Housing for Health and Welfare* (2007), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra p 214.

²⁹ *Survey of disability, ageing and carers* (2003), Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

- life expectancy of people with a disability is becoming increasingly closer to the general population as provision of care and medical treatment improves.

Financial disadvantage

People with a disability are likely to experience greater financial disadvantage and hence place a higher demand on social housing. In 2005, 19 per cent of the population in Australia had a disability. This proportion is not reflected in home ownership where only 12 per cent of all home purchasers had a disability.³⁰ The following list describes factors that contribute towards the financial disadvantage of people with a disability:

- in line with national trends, workforce participation rates (53 per cent) are lower in NSW for people with a disability compared with the wider population (six per cent) resulting in a reliance on welfare payments. As housing affordability deteriorates, more people with a disability are likely to require social housing
- higher than average living costs,³¹ combined with deteriorating housing affordability, leads to more people with a disability experiencing financial difficulty
- with the 2006b changes to Disability Support Pension eligibility, some people have been placed on alternative, lower benefits such as Newstart, further reducing their capacity to afford suitable accommodation
- there is currently limited funding to assist people in the private rental market who wish to maintain their independence, so social housing often becomes a long term rental option
- people with a disability frequently face discrimination and are excluded from the private rental market
- many properties, particularly in the private market, are inappropriate and inaccessible for use by people with a disability
- an inability to access information can inhibit some people with a disability from fully participating in the private purchase or rental markets.

³⁰ *Australia's welfare 2007 – Disability and disability services* (2007, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, p 189.

³¹ Saunders, Peter, *The cost of disability and the incidence of poverty*, Social Policy Research Centre Discussion Paper No. 147, University of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007.

Supply

In NSW the supply of low cost rental stock has been declining with most growth focused on the high end of the market. Of the low rental stock that is available, only 11 per cent is being occupied by low income private renters in Sydney.³²

The proportion of dwellings constructed for public housing purposes has declined over the same period. Across Australia, it is recognised that public housing has been under-maintained until recently with extensive renewal programs now in place.³³ In NSW, a major maintenance reform program is starting to address the maintenance backlog.

Drivers affecting supply

- Until recently, there was a reduction in real terms in Commonwealth Government funding for social housing through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA). The recent injection of Commonwealth funding under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan will help increase the supply of additional social housing dwellings
- The price of land within metropolitan areas has increased, diminishing the ability for Housing NSW to purchase and maintain social housing dwellings in these areas. This is particularly relevant to people who require easy access to public transport and disability related services in the community
- Thirty per cent of the existing public housing stock in NSW is located in housing developments which have limited accessibility,³⁴
- Changing composition of households requires a change in the social housing portfolio and, in particular, a need for smaller properties that will accommodate single people and smaller families
- Competition from others in greatest need due to demographic changes and housing affordability means limited resources are under pressure to adequately meet the needs of people with a disability.

Role of Housing NSW

Housing NSW is governed by the *NSW Housing Act 2001* to manage the NSW Government's housing portfolio and develop broader housing strategies. It provides:

- Public housing – property and tenancy management for households living in over 124,000 public housing homes
- Community housing – funding and regulation of not-for-profit organisations to provide property and tenancy management currently for more than 17,500 properties (including crisis accommodation). This is set to increase under the current growth strategy

³² *Improving housing affordability in NSW*, National Council of Social Services, Sydney 2005.

³³ Lawson, Julie and Milligan, Vivienne, *international trends in housing and policy responses*, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Sydney 2007.

³⁴ Housing NSW (1999) *Fact sheet-Community Renewal in Goonellabah*, Housing NSW.

- Aboriginal public housing – property and tenancy management for more than 4,300 properties owned by the Aboriginal Housing Office
- Links to support services – partnerships with other government agencies and community organisations to support households with special needs living in social housing
- Private rental assistance – the provision of financial assistance to low-income households renting in the private sector
- Special assistance – the provision of subsidies for people with a disability or living with HIV/ AIDS who rent in the private market
- Home purchase assistance – advice and financial assistance for home buyers
- Affordable housing – the development of low-cost housing options with the private sector and not-for-profit organisations
- Community regeneration – the development of cross-agency strategies to support the reduction of social, environmental and economic disadvantage within some social housing and other communities
- Housing policy development and overall regulation of community housing and performance monitoring of public housing in NSW.

Housing NSW employs approximately 2,500 staff in 90 offices across NSW. Our staff work with community housing providers, the Aboriginal Housing Office, Commonwealth and State government agencies, non-government organisations and community organisations to meet the housing needs of tenants and the community.

Housing NSW funds and regulates the community housing sector, through its Community Housing Division. Community housing providers are independent, autonomous non-government providers that utilise government assistance and private investment to provide housing for people on very low to moderate incomes and those with complex needs. Housing NSW works closely with the sector to provide guidance on implementing strategies that support clients with complex needs, including those with a disability.

The strategies outlined in this Plan may refer to the social housing sector³⁵ as a whole or separately to public housing or community housing or Aboriginal housing managed by Housing NSW, as indicated.

It is noted that the Aboriginal Housing Office is developing its own Disability Action Plan, using Housing NSW's Plan as a guide.

People with a disability in social housing

Assessment of the housing needs of people with a disability is based on a functional approach. This focuses on the effect a disability has on a client's ability to find and keep suitable and affordable housing located near necessary health or support facilities such as specialist hospitals, disability and home support services or special schools for children with a disability.

³⁵ Social housing includes public housing, community housing and Aboriginal housing managed by Housing NSW

When providing housing assistance, Housing NSW considers a person to have a disability if their ability to function is impaired or they have a medical condition due to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical condition or combination of conditions, and is permanent or likely to be permanent, resulting in:

- a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility
- the need for ongoing support services
- an inability to obtain housing from the private rental market.

Currently the receipt of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) or the Carers Payment is used by Housing NSW as a proxy indicator of disability for public housing tenant households (including those in Aboriginal Housing Office properties). Housing NSW collects data on applicants, tenants and other household members receiving the DSP and Carers Payment.

At 30 June 2009, 34 per cent of current public housing tenants (including those in Aboriginal Housing Office properties) had a household member with a significant disability (where at least one household member is receiving the DSP or the Carers Payment and the household income is below the public housing lease review income limits).

Of new tenants (housed during 2008-09) 36 per cent were people with a significant disability. This is an increase of eight per cent since 2001.

Data shows an average increase in the proportion of tenants with a disability of one per cent per year since 2001. If this trend continues there will be an additional 1,000 tenants with a disability each year, with an increase of 5,200 by the end of 2013.

Data is not currently available on applicants/tenants with a disability who are not receiving DSP or the Carers Payment. Often tenants and applicants do not disclose disability information to client service staff. This could be due to a number of issues including concerns about their privacy. Numbers are therefore likely to be under-represented. In addition, there is currently no data on the range and nature of disabilities of applicants or tenants.

Community housing providers provide information on the number of tenants (and tenants newly housed during the year) where at least one member of the household has a disability. When collecting this information, Community Housing defines "disability" as including anything which restricts the person's everyday activities or otherwise limits their ability to function within the range considered normal for a human being. However, they do not collect data on whether their tenants receive DSP.

As at June 2009, there were a total of 16,600 community housing households, and 25 per cent of these included a member with a disability. In 2008/09, 29 per cent of the 3,300 new community housing households included a member with a disability.

Staff with a disability

In keeping with NSW State Plan commitments, Housing NSW reports annually to the Department of Premier and Cabinet through the Office of Employment Equity and Diversity, Public Employment Office on the diversity of its workforce.

As at June 2009 the total proportion of Housing NSW staff with a disability was seven per cent (an estimated 191 people). Although this represents a decrease from 11 per cent in 2004, the distribution of staff with a disability across all salary levels has increased from 95 in 2004 to 99, indicating that the salaries of officers with a disability are more closely equivalent to the salaries of other staff.³⁶

Forty-nine people, 1.9% of Housing NSW staff, required workplace adjustment as at June 2009.³⁷ This represents a decrease from 79 people, or 2.9%, in 2004. However, the distribution index for officers requiring workplace adjustment has risen from 93 in 2004 to 99 in 2009.

Priority action areas

This section identifies current achievements against each priority action area and indicates broad actions for future implementation. A detailed implementation plan will be prepared to support this, identifying internal responsibilities and timeframes.

Ensure people with a disability are able to access housing services and products

Housing NSW recognises that people with a disability may be confronted with particular barriers that affect their access to appropriate housing products and services.

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has implemented a range of initiatives to identify and remove barriers to services for people with a disability.

Disability modifications program

Through an ongoing program of modifications to existing and new dwellings, Housing NSW provides housing for people with a mobility related disability. Work carried out includes modifications, such as hand-rails and ramps for physical access, and may include minor alterations to kitchens and doorways to ensure homes meet the functional requirements of people with a disability. In 2008/09 Housing NSW spent \$5.16 million to modify around 1,900 dwellings.

Property assessment

³⁶ A distribution index of 100 indicates that the centre of distribution of the group across salary levels is the same as for other staff. Values greater than 100 mean that the group tends to be concentrated at higher salary levels than is the case for other staff; values less than 100 indicate that the group tends to be concentrated at lower salary levels.

³⁷ Workplace adjustments are changes made or provisions offered in the work environment to enable a person with a disability to do their job. An example is providing a parking space close to the place of employment for an employee in a wheelchair.

Since 2000 Housing NSW has undertaken a number of property assessment surveys to gather information on the condition of all properties, including any disability modifications. This assists in the allocation of appropriate properties to people with a disability. In late 2008 Housing NSW began the current round of surveying to update property data including collecting further information on the level (low, medium or high) of modification in properties modified for people with a disability. Low level modifications may include the installation of grip rails, medium level modifications include the widening of door ways or installing ramp access, and high level modifications involve major structural modifications to a house.

Income eligibility

Special income eligibility provisions are granted to households that include a person who has incurred expenses as a result of a medical condition, disability or permanent injury.

Priority housing transfers

Priority housing transfers are considered where the client's disability or medical condition means that their current housing circumstances are unsuitable, regardless of income eligibility or other eligibility requirements.

Bedroom entitlement

Tenants with a disability may be entitled to an extra bedroom above their minimum bedroom entitlement if they require:

- storage space for medical equipment
- room for a family member or carer to stay when short term support is required due to hospitalisation or illness
- a separate room for their partner if their disability or routines associated with their disability require the couple to sleep separately.

Design requirements

Housing NSW is developing design requirements for social housing in line with the principles of universal design, which means the housing can be used by all people, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design. Universal housing design principles have been included in some pilot housing projects to test costs and amenity. Features include accessible entries, wider doorways, accessible bathrooms and internal features such as low placed light and power switches. Two projects are due for completion and occupancy in early 2009 when their performance will be evaluated.

The application of universal design requirements within the community housing sector is being explored.

Older persons design guidelines

As part of the New Directions in Social Housing for Older People Plan, Housing NSW has also developed guidelines for best practice design of social housing to improve suitability of housing to meet the needs of older people. The guidelines integrate physical (accessibility and security) and social (social participation and interaction) design aspects.

Training

The *Certificate IV in Social Housing* introduced in 2006 for Housing NSW client service officers provides greater focus on the assessment and support of clients with complex

needs, including people with a disability, and the role of Housing NSW in working with other service providers who provide specialist support.

Recent enhancements to the Certificate content include:

- Housing NSW in collaboration with the NSW Federation of Housing Associations has introduced a 'Partnership Training course' for client service staff under the Housing and Human Services Accord to develop partnerships to assist people with complex needs including people with a disability.
- A revised module has been developed to address the needs of clients with complex needs.

Community housing staff may also access training packages delivered by the Federation.

Complaints mechanisms

Clients have a range of options available to provide feedback to Housing NSW:

- calling the free phone number
- completing a Client Feedback Form online at our website
- requesting a form by post, or
- collecting a form from a branch office
- sending a general letter.

Clients who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can access the Telephone Translating and Interpreter Service using the AUSLAN (sign language) interpreters or using a Teletypewriter (TTY) through the Telephone National Relay Service (NRS) to make a complaint.

Community housing clients can make complaints to the community housing provider, the Federation of Housing Associations or the NSW Community Housing Registrar.

All social housing clients can make an appeal on decisions made about their applications to the Housing Appeals Committee.

Why do we need further action?

Research and advice from tenants and staff with a disability and disability peak groups indicated that:

- Housing NSW needs to gather more accurate information on applicants and tenants with a disability to improve its asset and service delivery planning
- Housing NSW can improve its capacity to match modified properties to the needs of clients
- There are inconsistencies in the customer service provided to tenants and applicants with a disability
- Many Housing NSW properties require further work in order to be accessible to people with a range of disabilities
- Currently there is no data system to record modifications of properties in the community housing sector

- Housing in the private rental and home ownership market is becoming less affordable or difficult to source for people with a disability
- The Housing NSW complaints system needs to recognise the differing capabilities of people with a disability
- Recognition that disability and the types of support required may be perceived differently by people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- People with a disability living in rural, regional or remote communities may have difficulties accessing the supports or services they require
- Recognition and support for advocates or carers of people with a disability.

Proposed headline strategies

- Increase the number of social housing homes (public and community housing) that meet universal design principles
- Increase the number of public housing homes that are modified to meet the needs of people with a disability

Other proposed strategies

- Review Housing NSW data collection and analysis systems to ensure that functional disability data is used to inform asset and service planning in addition to data on Disability Support Pension recipients
- Develop and conduct ongoing training for all Housing NSW staff and community housing providers to work with people who may have a range of disabilities
- Continue to include the disability allowance in income eligibility criteria
- Improve public housing information systems to identify assets with disability modifications and to allocate properties to people with a disability (this involves linking allocation to Housing NSW's property assessment survey data)
- Adapt public housing complaints management systems to accept complaints from tenants and applicants in a range of formats
- Discuss with the Real Estate Institute of Australia the need to include the housing needs of people with a disability in accredited training of real estate agents

Provide information in a range of accessible formats

Providing information about Housing NSW services and products in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability is essential in improving access to housing assistance.

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has introduced a range of initiatives to improve the accessibility of information.

Information about services

In line with NSW State Government website standards, the Housing NSW website has undergone development to improve its accessibility including user friendliness for people with a disability.

Housing NSW is currently developing a Service Delivery Channel Strategy to improve access to Housing NSW products and services for clients and applicants. This strategy will incorporate the provision of information on housing products and services in a range of accessible formats for people with a disability.

Housing NSW provides two communication channels to clients with hearing difficulties to ensure they have equal access to public housing services and information – access to AUSLAN interpreters and the Telephone Typewrite Service through the Australian Communication Exchange's National Relay Service for those with hearing and speech impairments. These services are provided at no cost to clients and can be used when applying for housing assistance, making other enquiries and requesting home repairs.

Housing NSW has been piloting an audio version (CD) of the tenant newsletter for clients with visual impairments since June 2008.

Other important sources of information for clients with disability and housing needs are the Community Housing Division website and the website of the Federation of Housing Associations, which provide resources for the community housing sector and for people interested in finding out more about community housing.

Why do we need further action?

Many social housing tenants or applicants are unaware of the services available and how to access them. This is particularly problematic for people with a disability who require support to access housing assistance. Information needs to be available in alternative formats suitable for people with a disability. For example in large print, Braille, audio and electronic formats including email and electronic attachments such as PDF.

The Housing NSW website meets NSW Government and W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) standards for people with a disability. This website, and Housing NSW's Intranet site, provides information on services for people with a disability and their support organisations.

Proposed headline strategy

- Develop information on public housing services and products in a range of appropriate formats for people with a range of disabilities

Proposed strategies

- Ensure information about Housing NSW services and products is available through other government agencies and non-government organisations
- Continue to maintain compliance with the W3C's Web Content Accessibility and NSW Government guidelines
- Ensure Housing NSW Service Delivery channels respond to the needs and capacities of people with a range of disabilities
- Discuss with the Real Estate Institute the provision of online access to information about modified properties in the private housing market

Improve physical accessibility of buildings and facilities

Current focus

In recent years Housing NSW has worked on the following initiatives to improve the physical accessibility of buildings and facilities:

Office accommodation strategy

Housing NSW is developing a five year Office Accommodation Strategy to comply with the provisions of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and, over time, the *Disability Discrimination Act*. The BCA contains specific provisions for access to and within buildings, for people with a disability. It applies to building work on both new and existing buildings.

Housing NSW is also developing Office Accommodation Guidelines to ensure Housing NSW offices and facilities meet Occupational Health and Safety standards for staff, promote the physical wellbeing of staff and are adaptable to future needs and changing delivery and service methods.

Why do we need further action?

Not all Housing NSW office buildings are accessible for people with a disability. Some have poor wheelchair access, no lifts and toilets and limited or no car parking facilities for people with a disability. Signage can be hard to read and poorly placed. Clear signage considering location, lighting and size benefits all visitors.

Proposed headline strategy

- Housing NSW continues to develop office accommodation strategies to comply with national standards

Assist participation in public consultations, government advisory boards and committees

Current focus

Housing NSW convenes a number of forums to encourage and facilitate the participation of tenants. Some of these are described below.

Tenant and community initiatives program: In recent years Housing NSW established the Tenant and Community Initiatives Program to fund regionally-based tenant participation, resource centres and local community development projects. There are nine Tenant Participation Resource Services, each ensuring people with a disability have equal opportunities to participate. Meetings are held in accessible venues and assistance provided to people with a disability who attend. Some services have identified and will facilitate opportunities for people with disabilities to access support services such as mental health services, drug and alcohol services, disability services and family support.

Housing NSW is encouraging tenants with a disability to participate in the **Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee** (SHTAC). The SHTAC was established as a pilot project in 2008 and is currently under review. The SHTAC is a state wide tenant participation structure providing advice to Housing NSW on policy and service development, with membership including representation from both public and community housing. All committee members received leadership and committee skills training.

Building stronger communities strategy: The *Building Stronger Communities Strategy 2007-10* is being implemented by Housing NSW in seven priority locations to bring about long term sustained social and economic improvement. In all Building Stronger Communities locations disability access and mobility is considered when consulting the community. Many of the Community Centres have ramp access and disabled toilet facilities. Specific examples of community engagement initiatives in these locations include:

- In Dubbo Housing NSW works closely with the Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to ensure people with a disability are consulted and involved in social inclusion activities.
- In Macquarie Fields, three of the five residents on the Neighbourhood Advisory Board have a disability. They also have a program running in partnership with Diabetes Australia and Hearing Australia that targets Aboriginal residents and is structured around a lunch gathering with information provision on health issues.
- In Orange/Bathurst, Housing NSW is working in partnership with a local company, Wangarang Industries, which provide employment to recipients of a Disability Support Pension. This provides the opportunity for tenants with a disability to gain meaningful

employment as either a stepping stone to re-enter the workforce or work with assistance.

- In Mt Druitt, work is underway to upgrade public spaces to increase access and use of these areas by children, families, young people and people with a disability, and in partnership with other government agencies to strengthen and/or develop transition to work options including pre-employment courses for a range of target groups including people with a disability.
- Neighbourhood Advisory Boards have been established in some Building Stronger Communities locations with applications open to tenants with a disability.

Other locations: Housing NSW has a number of other locations building participation of the community including people with a disability. Examples include:

- In the Bonnyrigg Living Community Project and Airds Bradbury Renewal Project, people with a disability are included in consultation and advisory capacities.
- At Bonnyrigg an advocate was employed to assist people with a disability, older people and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with housing issues. Specific outreach activities were undertaken to meet people with a disability in their homes. Housing NSW provided special information and consultation sessions for people with a disability and their carers, and provided consultation processes in accessible community locations.
- In the Minto Community Renewal Project a network of residents, NGOs and government agencies undertake formal and informal community renewal activities and coordinate participation in consultations. All activities and consultations are required to be accessible for participants, including the people with a disability, the elderly and mothers with prams. The groups are to consider transport to the site, cost, time of day, translation needs and the provision of childcare.

Non-Government Organisation (NGO) housing partners reference group: Housing NSW convenes the NGO Housing Partners Reference Group to provide advice on policies and programs across a range of areas. Participation on this group includes organisations that represent people with disabilities.

Community housing tenants network: The community housing sector convenes the Community Housing Tenants Network which may include representation of people with disabilities.

Why do we need further action?

Many social housing tenants consulted during the development of this Plan told us they wanted to be more involved in Housing NSW's decision making processes, including participating in other public consultations, advisory boards and committees.

Proposed headline strategy

- Ensure tenant participation program guidelines encourage diverse participation including people with a disability

Other proposed strategies

- Monitor and encourage participation of people with a disability in social housing tenant participation and consultation structures including the Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee

Increased employment participation of people with a disability in Housing NSW

This section discusses actions in relation to Housing NSW staff only and does not apply to community housing providers, as Housing NSW does not have jurisdiction over employment practices in the community housing sector.

Current focus

Providing a work environment that is accessible and attractive for people with a disability allows Housing NSW to tap into a pool of increasingly qualified applicants. It also encourages a supportive, diverse and flexible workplace.

The NSW State Plan commits government agencies to targets of 12 per cent employment of people with a disability and seven per cent employment of people requiring work-related adjustment. Housing NSW employs a large number of staff throughout the State and supports the employment of people with disabilities within Housing NSW, as well as retaining and enhancing career opportunities through the initiatives outlined below.

Disability reference group

An internal Housing NSW staff Disability Reference Group was established in June 2008. This reference group provides a forum for the identification and discussion of issues facing Housing NSW staff and clients with a disability. In line with State Government priorities, this group will also consider strategies to increase employment opportunities in Housing NSW for people with a disability.

Human resource management

Housing NSW is currently reviewing its flexible work practices and investigating approaches to improving workplace flexibility. This will be particularly beneficial for people with health or disability needs or those caring for people with a disability.

Why do we need further action?

Labour force participation by people with a disability in Housing NSW is lower than for people without a disability and decreased from 11 per cent in 2004 to seven per cent in 2008.

Proposed headline strategy

- Improve Housing NSW management practices in relation to staff with a disability through workplace adjustment including flexible work practices and job design, and disability awareness training

Other proposed strategies

- Ensure Housing NSW recruitment and employment policies are appropriate to attracting employment participation of people with a disability
- Improve Housing NSW recruitment practices for people with a disability, for example by increasing the use of disability employment agencies and developing brochures for use at career expos
- Ensure Housing NSW employees with a disability are well-informed of their rights
- Establish a mentoring program for staff with a disability

Influence other agencies to improve community participation and quality of life

Housing NSW is committed to working in partnerships with other government and non-government agencies and tenants to use our influence to improve the delivery of State Government services to people with a disability.

Current focus

Housing and Human Services Accord partnerships

The Housing and Human Services Accord was established to ensure that people with complex needs are able to access the support they need to sustain their tenancies. One of the priority target groups under the Accord is low income people with a disability (psychiatric, physical and/ or intellectual).

Some current partnerships and initiatives for tenants with a disability under the Accord include:

- an Independent Living Program in Western Sydney, a partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to assist adults with an intellectual disability with ageing carers to live independently
- an initiative for Young People With a Disability Leaving Out of Home Care for young people with physical or intellectual disabilities, a state wide partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care
- the Parolee Support Initiative in Western Sydney for ex-prisoners with mental health problems and/or an intellectual disability, a partnership with Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Health, and Department of Corrective Services

- Offenders with Co-existing Disorders pilots in four locations to assist ex-prisoners with substance abuse, mental health problems and/or an intellectual disability. This partnership involves Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, NSW Health, and Department of Corrective Services.

The Disability Housing and Support initiative (DHASI) is a state wide partnership with the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the NGO sector as part of the Stronger Together strategy. It provides housing linked to support for people with an intellectual disability.

Housing and accommodation support initiative

The Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) is an innovative partnership program between NSW Health, Housing NSW and the non-government sector that provides housing linked to clinical and psychosocial rehabilitation services for people with mental health issues.

HASI is designed to assist people with mental health problems and disorders, who require accommodation support to participate in the community. It allows people with mental health issues to maintain successful tenancies, improve their quality of life and, to assist in the management of their illness.

Joint guarantee of service for people with mental health problems and disorders living in aboriginal, community and public housing (JGOS)

The Joint Guarantee of Service is a partnership between Housing NSW, NSW Health, Department of Community Services, Aboriginal Housing Office, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW, Aboriginal and mainstream community housing providers and non-government mental health service providers to coordinate the delivery of mental health support and housing services to people with mental health problems and disorders, living in social housing. The JGOS has recently been reviewed by the NSW Ombudsman's Office. Housing NSW will review and incorporate findings from the Ombudsman's Office in late 2009.

Housing and mental health agreement: Under the Accord, a Housing and Mental Health Agreement is being developed to form an overarching strategic approach to meeting the housing and support needs of people with mental illness. The Agreement will incorporate HASI and JGOS and other programs.

Working with the NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian

Under the Accord, Housing NSW is working in partnership with the NSW Trustee and Guardian / the Public Guardian to ensure that service delivery for their clients (many of whom have intellectual or psychiatric disability) takes into account the role of NSW Trustee and Guardian/The Public Guardian in managing their affairs. The partnership will also ensure that when tenancies are at risk, NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian are able to intervene early to provide assistance.

Improving access to occupational therapist assessments

Under current Housing NSW policy for undertaking disability modifications to properties, an occupational therapy (OT) assessment is required. Due to a shortage of OT services in many locations, this often delays modifications for clients. Housing NSW has developed local service agreements with OT services to improve the process for having requests for disability modifications assessed and approved.

Community housing

Community housing providers regularly work in partnership with support providers to ensure that clients with a disability are able to sustain their tenancies. Examples include:

- Affordable Community Housing in Parramatta provides low-level supported, secure housing for people suffering from chronic schizophrenia with support provided by the Schizophrenia Fellowship
- Care-n-Co is a housing cooperative providing affordable accessible housing to low income people with physical disabilities in a complex with fully modified villas in Minto. Provision is made for live-in carers. Additional support is provided by Home Care and other community networks.

Why do we need further action?

There are a number of Accord partnerships and initiatives currently underway to assist tenants with a disability to sustain their tenancies. However these initiatives involve a small number of tenants and need to be expanded as well as developing other new initiatives.

There is also a need for further improvement in the process for approving and undertaking disability modifications of properties for people with a disability.

There is an opportunity to work strategically with the community housing sector to ensure a whole of social housing system approach to meeting the needs of people with a disability.

Proposed headline strategy

- Work with NSW Health and the NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care to improve access to Occupational Therapists' assessment and reporting for disability modifications

Other proposed strategies

- Review the evaluation of Accord initiatives and determine future opportunities for replication and/or expansion
- Finalise the implementation of the Accord partnership with the NSW Trustee and Guardian/the Public Guardian
- Work with the Federation of Housing Associations to improve planning and service delivery for people with a disability across the community housing sector

Provide quality specialist and adapted services to meet the special needs of people with a disability

People with a disability are able to access mainstream Housing NSW services however these services may not always meet their needs effectively. To cater for this group and their carers, Housing NSW has a number of targeted housing assistance initiatives.

Current focus

Private rent assistance

The *Special Assistance Subsidy - Disability (SAS-D)* is paid to people with a disability who are approved for Priority Housing, or have reached their turn on the public housing list but need to rent in the private market while they wait for a suitable Housing NSW property. This ensures they are not financially disadvantaged in the private rental market while they wait for an accessible house that meets their needs. The amount of rent a client pays is similar to the amount they would pay as a public housing tenant. The client must provide proof of income for members of their household aged 18 years and over. Housing NSW pays the balance of a benchmark rent charge. As at 30 June 2009, 1,133 subsidies were provided under this program at a cost of \$7.65 million.

Housing NSW has a number of other products designed to assist people to enter the private rental market – these are targeted at people with complex needs and are accessed by people with disabilities:

The *Tenancy Guarantee Program* – guarantees are provided to private landlords for clients who have faced difficulties securing a private tenancy, e.g. because of discrimination. The Guarantees are available through Housing NSW offices and ten community housing providers across the state. In the year 2008/09, Housing NSW approved 87 new Tenancy Guarantees applications to people who were experiencing difficulty in obtaining appropriate accommodation because of a disability or illness, and 29 of these were activated.

The *Private Rental Brokerage Service (PRBS)* assists homeless people with complex needs (intellectual disability, physical disability, mental illness and physical illness), including those with a disability who have support arrangements in place, to find and sustain private market tenancies. PRBS provides coaching, advocacy, and assists tenants to build relationships with real estate agents, landlords and support agencies.

In the year 2008/09, Housing NSW approved 864 new PRBS applications. Of these new applications, 205 were approved for people living with a mental illness, 25 were for people with a physical disability, 20 were for people with an intellectual disability and 16 were for people with a physical illness.

Special Assistance Subsidy

The Special Assistance Subsidy provides eligible clients who have a mental or physical disability with a rental subsidy so they can rent in the private market. In the year to 30 June 2009 this program provided 1,133 subsidies totalling \$7.65 million.

Partnerships

Recognising that Housing NSW's role is not to provide specialised support services, Housing NSW has established a number of support partnerships to assist clients with disability to enter and sustain tenancies, including HASI, DHASI and JGOS. These partnerships and others are described in Section 4.6.

Why do we need further action?

As the demand for social housing and the complexities of housing need increase, it is important for Housing NSW to continue to consider new and innovative initiatives for people

with a disability. This must include investigating options for financial assistance for people with a disability to gain further access to the private rental market and home ownership.

Also, Housing NSW recognises that carers of people with a disability may also require enhanced support.

Proposed headline strategy

- Share good practice in asset design responses by reviewing the Older Persons Design Guidelines to broaden their focus to include people with a disability

Proposed strategies

- Explore financial products to assist people with disability to gain access to low cost housing
- Better identify the housing needs of carers of people with a disability and explore partnerships to support carers

Implementation

An Implementation Plan will be developed to further detail the strategies outlined in this Plan, including responsibilities, timeframes and performance indicators.

Integration into planning

This Disability Action Plan will be integrated into the following Housing NSW planning processes:

- Corporate Plan
- Housing Service Divisions' Business Plans and related Area Action Plans
- Multicultural Framework
- Other service improvement plans that are developed for other client groups.

Business planning guidelines will be developed to direct the integration of the Plan into the Corporate and other business/ service improvement plans.

Communication strategy

Once endorsed, the Plan will be launched and widely promoted through the Housing NSW tenant and staff newsletters, website, intranet and community networks. Information will be provided in a range of alternate formats for people with a disability, as well as people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

All business units will be provided with a copy for implementation through business plans. Presentations will be undertaken in Housing NSW Divisions to promote the Plan.

A copy of the Plan will also be sent to the Federation of Housing Associations for communication to community housing providers.

Consultation will be held with the community housing sector to review the integration of elements of this Disability Action Plan into overall social housing system planning and service delivery.

Formal reporting and monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Plan will be undertaken by the Housing NSW Disability Reference Group as a standing agenda item. The Disability Reference Group is made up of Housing NSW staff with a disability. The Group provides a forum to identify and discuss issues facing staff and clients with a disability, with the aim of increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability and in improving Housing NSW service delivery to people with a disability.

Internally, Housing NSW business units will report on their progress towards implementing the actions on an annual basis. A format for this report will be provided.

Consistent with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government Agencies* a copy of the Housing NSW Disability Action Plan will be submitted to the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care. A copy will also be provided to the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. Progress against performance measures and timelines will be reported in the Housing NSW Annual Report. Employment

outcomes will also be reported through the Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) report.

At the end of 2013 the Plan will be reviewed and updated. As part of the review process, consultation will be undertaken with Housing NSW tenants, staff, disability peak organisations and other key stakeholders.

Appendix

1. Legislation

Australian Government

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is the main Australian legislation providing for the rights of people with a disability.

The DDA contains the most widely used definition of disability. This definition is broad-ranging and covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities. The DDA includes:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or results in disturbed behaviour.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability they may have, have had, or may have in the future. This applies to all government agencies, including those providing housing or other accommodation options.

The DDA also makes it illegal for accommodation providers to discriminate against a person because of a disability. This means that providers of accommodation cannot:

- refuse an application for accommodation from a person with a disability
- provide a person with a disability with accommodation on less favourable terms and conditions; or
- give an application of a person with a disability a lower priority. For example, put an application on the bottom of the list because it is assumed the person with a disability will be a less stable tenant.

NSW Government

NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977

Part 4A of the *NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW ADA) establishes a complaints-based system that aims to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability.

The definition of disability contained in the NSW ADA is very similar to that contained in the DDA. The only difference between the definitions is the inclusion in the DDA of a reference to the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body as constituting a disability which broadens the definition.

NSW Disability Services Act 1993

The main principle of the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* (NSW DSA) is that people with a disability should be provided with services to enable them to achieve their maximum potential as members of their community. This Act demonstrates the NSW Government's commitment to improving the life experiences of people with a disability.

The NSW DSA defines the target group for disability services as people with a disability that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments. In this way, disability is defined more by behaviour that manifests as a result of a disability, rather than the disability itself.

The NSW DSA focuses on service delivery outcomes for people with a disability.

Consistent with the principles of the Act, the NSW Government has adopted the following related objectives:

- The achievement of a planned, coordinated and flexible approach to policy and service provision in NSW for and with people with a disability and their carers
- The creation and promotion of opportunities, services and facilities which enable people with a disability and their carers to participate in the wider community and to attain a better quality of life; and
- The provision of ways for NSW Government service providers to measure and report on their progress in increasing access to government services for people with a disability.

Juvenile Justice Disability Action Plan 2007-2011

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of young offenders with disabilities to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending and their further entrenchment in the criminal justice system.

Commitment

The Department of Juvenile Justice recognises that, as a proportion of the general population, people with disabilities are over-represented in the criminal justice system, both as offenders and as victims.³⁸

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to identifying and responding appropriately to the needs of young offenders with disabilities to reduce the likelihood of their reoffending and their further entrenchment in the criminal justice system.

International research clearly indicates that detention of young offenders is *not* the most effective strategy, and that it may actually increase the risks associated with re-offending. Detention is also far more expensive.³⁹ Research instead indicates that strategically targeted community-based interventions are far more effective and cost efficient.

There are significant and particular challenges in reducing recidivism by juvenile offenders, particularly given the high levels of intellectual disability, mental illness and drug use among juvenile offenders.

Additionally, the Department is committed to fulfilling its obligations under both State and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. These laws require the Department to eliminate practices that may discriminate against people with disabilities and to assist young people with disabilities who are in contact with the juvenile justice system to gain full and equitable access to Departmental services.

In line with the Department's **Statement of Purpose:**

To provide services to young offenders to decrease their re-offending and increase their capacity to successfully reintegrate into their communities.⁴⁰

³⁸ 2003 Young People in Custody Health Survey and the 2006 Young People on Community Orders Health Survey

³⁹ *Effective Practice in Offending Behaviour Programmes – Literature Review*. Prepared for the Youth Justice Board (UK) by James McGuire, Peter Kinderman, Carol Hughes, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Liverpool

⁴⁰ Department of Juvenile Justice, 2007-2011, *Corporate Plan*

Specifically the Department will:

- Assess young people entering the juvenile justice system to identify those with disabilities;
- Develop individual case plans to address the identified offending related needs of young offenders with disabilities;
- Provide services and programs designed to be responsive to the needs of young offenders with disabilities;
- Provide appropriate support and linkages to other services for young offenders within the community and on discharge from custody within the ambit of the Department's mandate; and
- Work in collaboration with other agencies to ensure that young offenders with disabilities involved in the juvenile justice system receive the level of support and services they require to live successfully in the community without offending.

Defining disability

For the purposes of this Plan, the Department has adopted the definition of disability used by the *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* as follows:

- For the purposes of this Act, a person is in the target group if the person has a disability (however arising and whether or not of a chronic episodic nature):
- that is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, physical or like impairment or to a combination of such impairments, and

that is permanent or is likely to be permanent, and that results in:

- a significant reduced capacity in one or more major life activities, such as communication, learning, mobility, decision-making or self-care, and the need for support, whether or not of an ongoing nature.

Legislative framework for equity of access

The Department of Juvenile Justice's obligations to address equity of access for people with disabilities is contained within three Acts of Parliament:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (C'th);
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW);
- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW).

The Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* and the NSW *Anti-Discrimination Act* make it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in matters such as employment, premises and access to goods and services. The legislation covers people who have a physical, sensory, intellectual or psychiatric disability.

The *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* requires the development of a *Disability Action Plan* by all NSW Government agencies using the *Disability Policy Framework 1998* as the guideline. Consequently, the Department has observed section 9 of the *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)* in formulating this *Disability Action Plan 2007-2011*.

Departmental legislative framework

The work of the Department of Juvenile Justice is authorised under five Acts of the NSW Parliament:

1. Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987;
2. Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987;
3. Children (Community Service Orders) Act 1987;
4. Young Offenders Act 1997;
5. Children (Interstate Transfer of Offenders) Act 1988.

Within the terms of this Disability Action Plan, equity of access is applied equally to the young offenders referred to a youth justice conference or whom the courts require the Department to supervise or detain.

Policy framework

Policy guidance in the formulation of the Disability Action Plan comes from the following three Plans:

NSW Government State Plan 2006-2016

The NSW Government established the *State Plan, A New Direction for NSW* as a foundation document for setting the priorities and targets for government services in NSW over the next ten years.

This Plan identifies three key priority areas aimed at improving outcomes for people with disabilities (including those with a mental illness) to reduce the risks of re-offending.

- F2 Increased employment and community participation by people with disabilities
- F3 Improved outcomes in mental health
- R2 Reduced re-offending

The strategies and actions of the DAP set out how the Department of Juvenile Justice is addressing the three key priority areas outlined above.

Increasing support for young offenders with disabilities will not only help achieve State Plan priority R2 *Reducing Re-offending*, but also F2 *Increased employment and community participation for people with a disability* by providing a basis from which young offenders with disabilities can engage in community activities and employment. It will also work

towards meeting increased support and access targets for people with a disability, as set out in *Stronger Together: a new direction for disability services in NSW 2006-2010*.

NSW Department of Juvenile Justice Corporate Plan 2007-2011

The Corporate Plan has targeted strategies specifically to support young offenders with disabilities in Outcome 3.3:

Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.

The achievement of Outcome 3.3 is supported by:

- Developing and implementing a Comprehensive Assessment Framework that covers disability and mental health issues.
- Measuring the percentage of young offenders assessed as having mental health and/or disability issues upon commencement of Community Supervision.
- Measuring the percentage of referrals for mental health and/or disability assessments that are accepted.
- Measuring the percentage of case plans that address disability issues identified through assessment.

NSW Department of Juvenile Justice Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011

The Department's Aboriginal Strategic Plan focuses on a range of issues affecting Aboriginal young people within the juvenile justice system. One of the specific goals of this Plan is to improve the effective management of Aboriginal young people with mental health and/or disability issues.

Organisational context

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with young offenders who, at the time of their offences, were between the ages of 10 and 17 years. Young people serviced by the Department include those referred and accepted for youth justice conferences, those who are remanded in custody pending appearance at court and those who have been sentenced by a court to community-based supervision or to a period in custody in a juvenile justice centre.

The work of the Department can be divided into three main service areas:

Youth Justice Conferencing (YJC): Is available for offences committed by eligible young people that are considered too serious to be dealt with by police cautions or formal warnings. Conferences are based on the principles of restorative justice.

Community-based Services: Include all services provided to offenders in the community, such as court-ordered supervision and offender assessments prepared for the courts.

Custodial Services: Include all services to young people directed by the courts to be placed in detention.

Profile of Young Offenders

In 2006-2007, there were 4403 admissions to juvenile justice centres in NSW (both remand and control). During the same period, 3121 community supervision orders were commenced and 1185 youth justice conferences facilitated. The overwhelming majority of juveniles in contact with the justice system (across all program areas) are male. In 2006-2007 this proportion ranged from 80.7% (Youth Justice Conferencing) to 95.1% (sentenced to detention). Just over 50.5% of young people attending youth justice conferences in 2006-2007 were aged less than 15 years. The majority of those receiving community-based supervision orders, remand or control orders were aged between 16-18 years (61.9%, 52.9% and 68% respectively).

Aboriginal young people represented 54.7% of those sentenced to detention, 37.8% on remand, 39.5% on community-based supervision and 27.2% participating in a youth justice conference in 2006-2007.⁴¹

⁴¹ 2006-2007 Annual Report of the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice pp.13-19.
http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_htm/publications/annualreport/AnnualReport0506.pdf

Prevalence of Disability

The 2003 *Young People in Custody Health Survey*⁴² and the 2006 *Young People on Community Orders Health Survey*⁴³ are the most comprehensive studies undertaken in Australia on the physical, intellectual and mental health of young people in contact with the juvenile justice system. These Health Surveys identified a number of significant issues for the young people serviced by the Department:

Summary Findings of Health Surveys	Custody (YPiCHS)	Community (YPoCOHS)
Symptoms consistent with a clinical diagnosis of mental illness	88%	40%
Symptoms consistent with Schizophrenia	21%	3%
Intellectual disability (prevalence)	10-13%	8-11%
Mild or severe hearing loss	33%	Not tested
Experienced abuse and/or neglect	68%	72%
Reading scores below low average	40%	21%
Left School by Year 9	33%	32%
Suspended from school at some time	91%	90%
Special education	40%	36%
History of parental/ step parental imprisonment	43%	27%
History of out of home care	28%	24%
Not living in the family home	33%	36%

⁴²http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/general/2003YoungPeopleInCustody.pdf

⁴³http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_hm/publications/research/2006YoungPeopleCommunityOrders_KeyFindingsReport.pdf

Consultation

The Department receives advice on a range of disability issues (including input into the Disability Action Plan) within the justice system through its involvement with the Justice Disability Advisory Council that reports to the NSW Attorney General. The Council includes representation from disability advocacy groups and non-government service delivery organisations.

Reviewing the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006

The Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2004-2006 focussed on increasing the disability competence and confidence of the staff of the Department and ensuring better supports for young people with disabilities who are in contact with the juvenile justice system.

The significant achievements of the Disability Action Plan 2004-2006 underpinning the Disability Action Plan 2007-2011 are:

- Development of an information and training package (including a *Checklist*) to assist convenors identify participants in youth justice conferences who may have disabilities;
- Executive Committee approval for use of the *Checklist for Additional Support Needs in Youth Justice Conferencing* to be rolled out to YJC operations across NSW;
- The multi-faceted, cross-agency Orana Joint Case Management Project targeting four Aboriginal young people who presented with a range of issues including intellectual disabilities, mental illness and physical health problems;
- The availability of *Accesslink* (a database of disability and contact information developed by the Attorney General's Department), and other disability resources and links through the Departmental intranet, which are regularly featured along with other disability issues in *Jigsaw* (the internal fortnightly staff newsletter);
- Links with external agencies such as Justice Health, DADHC, DET, DoH and the Criminal Justice Support Network (CJSN) as well as advocacy groups and non-government organisations have been established providing essential support for Department of Juvenile Justice staff to assist young people with disabilities; and
- Participation in DADHC's Intellectual Disability (ID) & Criminal Justice Senior Officers' Group with development of a key project under this auspice.

Overall, the DAP 2004-2006 has played an instrumental role in increasing awareness of, and responsiveness to, disability issues across the Department's service areas.

Evaluation framework

The Department will:

- Undertake an annual stock take of disability programs and strategies across the Department's operations;
- Review and evaluate progress with JDAC and advocacy groups at the end of each calendar year throughout the life of the DAP 2007-2011; and

Relationship to other access and equity initiatives

The DAP is one of a number of Departmental access and equity initiatives. Many of the strategies in the DAP complement those outlined in the following Departmental Plans:

Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement Forward Plan

The Department of Juvenile Justice ethnic affairs priorities include enhancing the cultural appropriateness of services to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups in juvenile justice centres and community offices.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

The Department of Juvenile Justice is committed to the principles of EEO and recognises that although people have different abilities, qualifications and experience, everyone should be given an equal chance to reach their potential and utilise their talents.

Tiers of service delivery

The NSW government publication *Better Together* indicates that a key policy principle in NSW is that government services to people with a disability are to be provided in three tiers: Universal, Adapted and Specialist. The Department of Juvenile Justice comes within the Universal tier which has four main Outcome areas:

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for young offenders with a disability.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations, and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

A fifth Outcome concerning increasing employment participation of people with a disability in the NSW public sector is not required to be reported in this Disability Action Plan. This matter is reported in the Departmental EEO Management Plan and in the Annual Report.

The Departmental targets for each of the above four Outcomes are listed on the following pages.

This Disability Action Plan 2007-2011 was revised in September 2008 to bring the document into line with the *Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies* published by DADHC in September 2008.

Outcome 1: Identifying and removing barriers to services for young offenders with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	R2. Reducing re-offending. F3. Improved outcomes in mental health. F4. Embedding the principle of prevention and early intervention into government service delivery in NSW.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	3.3 Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 2. Our staff have the capacity to identify the needs of, and work effectively with, Aboriginal young people and communities. Outcome 4. Aboriginal young people have access to the least restrictive and most appropriate intervention.

Actions		Targets
1.1	Ensure that all young offenders entering juvenile justice jurisdiction are screened for physical and intellectual disabilities, and mental health issues.	All young offenders to be screened by use of an approved assessment tool. Annual target to reduce the duration between entry into juvenile justice jurisdiction and disabilities screening.
1.2	Maintain formal linkages with Justice Health's Adolescent Court and Community Services for access to adequate screening/assessment of young offenders with mental health problems and intellectual disability for appropriate diversion to mental health treatment or DADHC support.	Compare the number of young offenders with identified intellectual/mental health problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverted from court under Section 32 and 33 • Assessed in the community • Appropriately case managed and care co-ordinated in the community.
1.3	Encourage disability awareness amongst staff.	All Detention Centre and Community Service staff to receive disability awareness training in their Induction. All Community Service

		staff to have available to them local registers of community-based disability services.
1.4	Develop protocols with Justice Health to ensure continuity of care for young people with identified disabilities on release from custody.	All young offenders with identified mental health problems and other forms of disability leaving Juvenile Justice Centres and Community Care Services to have targeted continuity-of-care plans.
1.5	Participation in the Senior Officers' Group On Intellectual Disability & The Criminal Justice System.	Lodge annual report on time with DADHC concerning the Interagency Service Principles and Protocols for the criminal justice system.

Outcome 2: Providing information and services in a range of formats that are accessible to people with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	R2. Reducing re-offending. F4. Embedding the principle of prevention and early intervention into government service delivery in NSW.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	1.7 Research and evaluation functions are enhanced.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 3. Delivery of programs and services that are supported by evidence based research and proven to be successful in reducing the risk, severity and frequency of re-offending for Aboriginal young people.

Actions		Targets
2.1	Assist Youth Justice Conferencing participants with disabilities to fully participate in the conferencing proceedings.	All Youth Justice Conferencing participants with disabilities to be provided with the necessary equipment and/or services to allow them to fully engage in proceedings.
2.2	Ensure Attorney General's Department is advised when hearing impairment support is required in Children's' Court Rooms.	All young offenders with hearing impairments to have audio assistance technology (if required) during their Children's' Court appearances
2.3	Incorporate the needs of young offenders with disabilities into the standards for community-based and custodial services.	Full adherence to the Australian Juvenile Justice Administrators' (AJJA) Standards for Custodial and Community Juvenile Justice services for young offenders with disabilities.
2.4	Meeting the information needs of Indigenous people, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse	Provision of culturally appropriate materials for all young offenders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translated official documents

	backgrounds who have a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to translations of official documents on the Departmental website• Access to accredited translators• Access provisions for people with disabilities to the Departmental website.
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Outcome 3: Making government buildings and facilities physically accessible to people with a disability.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	F2 Increased employment and community participation by people with disabilities.
Corporate Plan 2007-2011	1.8 Research and evaluation functions are enhanced. 4.3 New and refurbished Juvenile Justice Centres are fit-for-purpose and completed on schedule.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 2. Our staff have the capacity to identify the needs of, and work effectively with, Aboriginal young people and communities.

3.1	Conduct annual audit of existing Departmental properties to determine accessibility of facilities for people with disabilities.	All Departmental facilities audited to have met accessibility standards, and those that do not to have a plan in place to meet this target.
3.2	Incorporate the physical accessibility of each property, including the accessibility of public transport, into future building standards and into the selection criteria for properties.	Mandatory consideration of accessibility issues for all Departmental facilities.
3.3	The Department and DADHC develop youth appropriate models of accommodation under the Criminal Justice Program to ensure the needs of young people with disabilities are met.	Departmental representatives on the Criminal Justice Program's Review and Assessment Panel (RAP) to monitor the effectiveness of referrals/assessments/progress of young offenders with disabilities accepted into the Criminal Justice Program.
3.4	Develop innovative housing options with appropriate supports for young people in partnership with the DoH, Justice Health, DoCS and community-funded partners through the interagency Housing Accord Shared	Effective housing options with support are in place -- trials evaluated.

	Access Trials.	
3.5	Specify safe evacuation of people with disabilities in all emergency procedures for Departmental offices and detention centres.	All staff to be trained in emergency procedures; including those procedures for staff, young offenders and visitors with disabilities.

Outcome 4: Assisting people with a disability to participate in public consultations and to apply for and participate in government advisory boards and committees.

Authority	Objectives
NSW State Plan	F4. Improved outcomes in mental health.
Corporate Plan	1.2 Staff are trained, resourced and supported in the performance of their work. 3.3 Young offenders with mental health and/or disability issues are identified and diverted or managed appropriately.
Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2007-2011	Outcome 1: Aboriginal young people are equipped to make choices that promote positive life development. Outcome 3: Delivery of programs and services that are supported

Actions		Targets
4.1	Incorporate coverage of disability issues in all recruitment information and induction sessions, including those for recruitment and training of Youth Justice Conferencing convenors.	All recruitment information contains information relating to disability issues.
4.2	Conducting consultations in accessible venues and providing appropriate supports and assistance for people with a disability	All Departmental consultations to take place in accessible venues with appropriate assistance for people with a disability. •
4.3	Manage an Implementation Plan for the <i>People with an Intellectual Disability and Criminal Justice - Service Principles and Protocols</i> and regularly report on progress in achieving the aims, outcomes and principles set out in the Service Principles and Protocols Agreement.	Regularly report to DADHC as part of the Disability Action Plan reporting process.

4.4	Maintain liaison with disability groups or peak organisations to discuss justice disability issues.	Annual meetings of the Department's Justice Disability Advisory Council to review and evaluate the Disability Action Plan 2007-2011.
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ⁱ NSW Government, *Better Together: A new direction to make NSW Government services work better for people with a disability and their families 2007-2011*, NSW Government, (2007).

ⁱⁱ ABS *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2003*, Australian Bureau of Statistics [available online at www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/Latestproducts/4430.0].

ⁱⁱⁱ New South Wales: *A New Direction for Mental Health*, NSW Health (2006).

^{iv} VicHealth, *Research Report on Children at Risk in Families affected by Parental Mental Illness* (2005).

^v See for example, Barker, J & Hodes D.T *Abuse of Children With Disabilities, The Child in Mind: A Child Protection Handbook*, Routledge, UK, 2004.

^{vi} NSW Department of Community Services, *NSW Department of Community Services Annual Report 2007/08*, pp34-35.

^{vii} Community Services KiDS-CIW annual data (unpublished).