



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–23

**Support, Access, Inclusion –
ensuring opportunity so that
we all can reach our best**

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This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is available on the EPA website: <https://www.epa.sa.gov.au>

If you require a copy in an alternative format such as Easy Read, large font, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille), please contact general enquiries on (08) 8204 2004.

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Statement from the Chief Executive

I am pleased to present the Environment Protection Authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020 – 2023.

As South Australia's independent environmental regulator, the EPA reflects a vision that welcomes, respects and values the contribution of everyone, irrespective of their abilities, age, gender or cultural background. The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan reinforces these core values.

This plan provides a commitment and a pathway for providing people living with disability to access the EPA and its services while ensuring equality and respect.

This plan enables actions, responsibilities, timeframes and measurable targets to be set out and aligned with the priorities of the South Australian *State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023*. This includes ensuring access to our buildings, our community meeting venues, our information and communication systems, and our products and services. It is also about ensuring the voices of people living with disability are heard.

Disability access and inclusion also ensures the provision of employment opportunities in collaboration with Disability Works Australia¹ to develop strategies to help increase employment of people living with disability.

This plan reinforces the EPA's continuing commitment to promote wellbeing and equality through the provision of disability access services and to ensure that people living with disability can have the appropriate support and resources to undertake work, living and leisure activities as needed and relevant to their disability.

Tony Circelli
Chief Executive

Date: 24 November 2020

¹ <http://www.dwa.org.au>

About the Environment Protection Authority (EPA)

The EPA is South Australia's independent environment protection regulator. We protect, restore and enhance the environment through the risk-based regulation of pollution, waste, noise and radiation.

We work closely with industry, the community and government to protect our unique natural environment while supporting economic growth and improving wellbeing. We administer the *Environment Protection Act 1993*, *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982* and *Plastic Shopping Bags (Waste Avoidance) Act 2008*, and develop guidelines and codes of practice.

The EPA is governed by a Board with members appointed by the Governor. The Chief Executive, Tony Circelli, is responsible for giving effect to the policies and decisions of the Board in relation to the *Environment Protection Act 1993*, and for the management of the administrative unit and Radiation Protection Committee which also performs functions under the *Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982*.

The EPA's public interface for people with disabilities is primarily through:

- access to our buildings
- our community meeting venues
- our information and communication systems
- our products and services available online.

Staff profile

As at 30 June 2020 the EPA employed 206 staff (194.71 FTE – Full Time Equivalent)

A total of five staff (two female, three male) indicated that they were living with disability, including physical and sensory disability, according to the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* definition. This equates to 2.43% of all EPA staff.

Workplace adaption has been undertaken for the five staff.

The total number of employees in the South Australian Public Sector with a declared disability was 1,434 representing 1.33% of the workforce as at 30 June 2019.

We are committed to workforce diversity and reducing the barriers that prevent full participation at work for people living with disability through ensuring an accessible workplace and technologies.

Strategic context

Background

Australia was a signatory to the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in July 2008 and its optional protocol. Through the Convention, Australia has committed to promoting human rights and ensuring people living with disability enjoy equal rights to those without a disability.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)² of the Australian Government, which went into full operation in 2020, will support a better life for hundreds of thousands of Australians with a significant and permanent disability and their families and carers.

Disability Inclusion Act 2018

The South Australian *Disability Inclusion Act 2018*³ (DI Act) provides a legal framework to support equal access and inclusion for people living with disability in community activities and services including recreation, education, health, and public transport.

The DI Act aligns with the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and with the Australian National Disability Strategy 2010 to 2020, and requires the creation of a State Disability Inclusion Plan. The first South Australian plan came into effect on 31 October 2019.

The DI Act also mandates the development of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans for each State authority, under Part 5 section 16.

State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023 (Inclusive SA)

The *State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023*⁴, known as Inclusive SA sets out specific actions for state government agencies and local governments to achieve in order to reduce the barriers faced by people living with disability. It also complements the NDIS, as it aims to address access and inclusion for all South Australians living with disability, including people who are not NDIS participants.

Inclusive SA will also be updated to reflect social, political and environmental changes as well as any response to recommendations made by the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability*. A revised plan will be published in 2021.

EPA Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

This plan sets the focus for the next three years. It is also a living document that will respond to shifting priorities and new information, as governments across Australia are working together to design a new national disability strategy for 2020 and beyond. It builds on the achievements of the EPA's previous *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015–20*.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) Working Group is responsible for providing support in the development and implementation of initiatives that assist the EPA in achieving the DAIP targets including implementation, monitoring, and tracking progress and reporting.

² <https://www.ndis.gov.au/>

³ <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/DISABILITY%20INCLUSION%20ACT%202018.aspx>

⁴ <https://dhs.sa.gov.au/services/disability/inclusive-sa>

Members of the DAIP Working Group have a broad range of skills and experience relevant to the operations of the EPA. Staff members living with disability or are passionate about caring or advocating for people with a disability are welcome to be a part of this working group.

Our vision

Our vision is: **Support, Access, Inclusion – ensuring opportunity so that we all can reach our best.**

In achieving our vision in supporting people living with disability we will ensure:

- our service delivery and community engagement, both direct and indirect, will be accessible and of the highest standard to all members of the community; and
- our existing and future staff feel safe to identify and discuss their disability access needs and we will be well-positioned to respond in order to maximise inclusion within our workforce.

Disability access and inclusion plan development

Consultation

A draft plan was released on the EPA website⁵ for public consultation as required for under the DI Act. It was also released on the YourSAy website⁶ for South Australian government agencies.

Feedback was sought from Inclusive SA. The EPA also noted public feedback from the ‘one-government’ message around disability and access inclusion plans on the YourSAy website.

Internal consultation included establishment of a working group that included staff living with a disability as well as those with an interest or experience in supporting others living with a disability. Wider input was also sought from all EPA staff.

Consultation will continue even after this plan has been published and comments are always welcome. The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to incorporate any appropriate comments.

Relationship to other policies, strategies, frameworks

The South Australian [Public Sector Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–2021](#) provides a strategic umbrella through an overarching vision, priority and sector-wide principles for adoption. This strategy promotes a diverse, inclusive and safe public sector where everyone belongs.

In the EPA, the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group is a subcommittee of the Executive Leadership Team. This group develops strategies with the focus on Aboriginal people; age diversity; cultural and linguistic diversity; disability; gender and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex, Queer+ (LGBTIQ+) diversity and inclusion.

The Executive Leadership Team sponsor for the DAIP Working Group is a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group.

The actions listed in this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan relate directly to the four key themes identified by Inclusive SA in the Disability Inclusion Plan.

⁵ https://www.epa.sa.gov.au/community/have_your_say

⁶ <https://yoursay.sa.gov.au>

This DAIP is integrated with other relevant strategies, plans and frameworks including:

- Strategic Directions 2018–2022
- Corporate Plan 2020–21
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Plan
- Engagement Charter
- Service Charter
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2020–23

The DAIP is prepared in conjunction with the EPA's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Mental health is seen as a continuum, ranging from having good mental health to having mental illness. The scope of this DAIP covers mental health when it becomes a disability as defined by the DI Act.

Previous achievements

This is the second DAIP prepared by the EPA. Some of the key achievements of the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2015–20* were:

- establishment of a DAIP Working Group within the EPA
- disability awareness training for managers and staff through workshops and branch meetings
- establishment of a DAIP intranet page for EPA staff
- application of new format in compliance with the state government's website standards to EPA website for people with visual impairment
- community engagement planning considered appropriate access to meeting venues
- review of accessibility of information available via publications, website, social media, the EPA public register, customer call centre, and traditional media (print, radio and television).

Actions

The EPA Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is structured around the themes and priority areas of the Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023.

1: Inclusive communities for all

Social inclusion is a priority for people living with disability as it affects all aspects of their lives. It is our aim that the contributions and rights of people living with disability are valued and understood by all South Australians and that their rights are promoted, upheld and protected. We also want to ensure that people living with disability are supported to advocate for their own rights.

- Priority 1: Involvement in the community
- Priority 2: Improving community understanding and awareness
- Priority 3: Promoting the rights of people living with disability

| Action | State Plan Priority # | Responsibility | Timeframe | Measurable target |
|--|-----------------------|---|---------------|---|
| 1 Establish best practices relating to communication, publications and websites to ensure inclusion for all | 1 | Manager, Strategic Communication and Engagement | December 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications display inclusive imagery and are available in accessible formats • Website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements, including captions for online videos and digital formats for publications |
| 2 Disability awareness training, including mental health issues for people living with disability, for all staff | 3 | Manager, People and Capability | June 2021 | 100% of all EPA staff |
| 3 Include disability awareness training, including mental health issues for people living with disability, as part of induction programs for new employees | 3 | Manager, People and Capability | June 2021 | 100% of new EPA employees within three months of starting work |

2: Leadership and collaboration

People living with disability want to have a greater role in leading and contributing to government and community decision making. It is our aim that the perspectives of people living with disability are actively sought and that they are supported to participate meaningfully in government and community consultation and engagement activities.

- Priority 4: Participation in decision-making
- Priority 5: Leadership and raising profile
- Priority 6: Engagement and consultation

| Action | State Plan Priority # | Responsibility | Timeframe | Measurable target |
|---|-----------------------|--|---------------|---|
| 1 Establish consultation and engagement practices that ensure people living with disability who use the EPA's services are engaged and consulted | 6 | Manager, Strategic Communications and Engagement | December 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation processes are incorporated into communication activities involving people living with disability • An engagement planning template and guideline to incorporate consideration of people living with disability is prepared • Venues for engagement sessions and events are accessible for everyone • The option of digital or telephone engagement is provided for engagement and consultation activities |
| 2 Customer complaint processes are simple, flexible and well-promoted | 6 | Chief Financial Officer | December 2021 | Complaints materials and pathways are reviewed to support accessibility |
| 3 Consult with people living with disabilities, including EPA staff living with disabilities, during purchase, refit or lease of new office accommodation | 6 | Chief Financial Officer | June 2023 | A procurement checklist developed in conjunction with Department for Infrastructure and Transport includes consultation with people living with disability prior to completion of any purchase, refit or lease |

3: Accessible communities

The accessibility of the built environment, quality services and information is key to ensuring people living with disability are included and have the opportunity to equally participate in all aspects of community life. It is our aim to increase accessibility to public and community infrastructure, transport, services, information, sport and recreation and the greater community.

- Priority 7: Universal Design across South Australia
- Priority 8: Accessible and available information
- Priority 9: Access to services

| Action | State Plan Priority # | Responsibility | Timeframe | Measurable target |
|---|-----------------------|---|---------------|--|
| 1 All EPA communication and information systems to be reviewed for achievement of accessible technologies and alternative formats, including website accessibility (including Easy Read, pictorial forms, large font, audible options, subtitles and VoiceOver) | 8 | Manager, Strategic Communication and Engagement Manager, Knowledge, Information and Strategy | December 2022 | EPA website has been reviewed and appropriate strategies implemented |
| 2 Planning for all meetings and activities to include consideration of accessibility for all | 8 | Manager, Strategic Communication and Engagement | December 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event toolkit published and available in accessible formats • Internal and external events organised by the EPA meet the needs of people living with disability |
| 3 Audit all EPA occupied premises for building and office entry and egress, emergency procedures, access to toilets and facilities and establish a schedule of modifications in liaison with the building owners | 9 | Chief Financial Officer | June 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All physical barriers identified and a negotiated plan developed to address barriers • Meeting rooms are suitable for all people to access and circulate in |

4: Learning and employment

Workforce participation is fundamental to social inclusion. It provides economic independence and choice, social connections and friendships, value, identity and belonging. It is our aim that people living with disability have access to inclusive places of study and that education and training provides pathways to meaningful and inclusive employment and volunteering opportunities.

- Priority 10: Better supports within educational and training settings
- Priority 11: Skill development through volunteering and support in navigating the pathway between learning and earning
- Priority 12: Improved access to employment opportunities and better support within workplaces

| Action | State Plan Priority # | Responsibility | Timeframe | Measurable target |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|---|
| 1 Promoting workforce diversity, becoming an employer of choice | 12 | Manager, People and Capability | June 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new Role and Context Statements are reviewed for inclusive language and removal of unnecessary barriers to employment of people living with disability • Job advertisements include a statement to encourage the EPA as an employer for people living with disability • Applicants prior to interview are asked if there are any needs to be taken into account • An increase in the percentage of EPA staff with a disability |
| 2 Ensure staff living with disability are supported with access to training, career development and mentoring programs | 12 | Manager, People and Capability | June 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management training for managers and supervisors includes consideration of training needs for staff living with disability • An increase in the number of staff living with disability who have attended training, |

| Action | State Plan Priority # | Responsibility | Timeframe | Measurable target |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| | | | | career development or mentoring programs |
| 3 Encourage flexible working arrangements across our workforce to support staff's diverse needs | 12 | Manager, People and Capability | June 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval has been given to staff living with disability who have requested an appropriate flexible working arrangement |

Implementation process

The DAIP Working Group reports to the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group. The DAIP Working Group is responsible for implementation of this plan.

The DAIP Working Group will oversee communications about the plan, so its objectives and actions are promoted to all staff and volunteers through annual awareness events, the regular *Time Out* staff news, updates on the EPA intranet site, through managers and in staff forums. The communications will focus on raising awareness and changing misconceptions. Communication to external stakeholders will be through the EPA website and newsletters.

The DAIP Working Group will review progress on the plan at its quarterly meetings for reporting to and consideration by the Diversity and Inclusion Governance Group. Formal reporting of DAIP key activities and milestones will also be captured through the quarterly report prepared by the Organisational Strategy and Performance Branch. It will also review statistics on staff numbers of people living with disability and training records. An annual report on progress each year will be prepared for the Executive Leadership Team.

The DAIP will be reviewed at least annually with a formal review to be conducted by 31 October 2023.

Glossary and definitions

Accessible: facilities, services and information are designed so that all people can use them.

DAIP: Disability Access and Inclusion Plan prepared by state authorities for their own agency, department or council area

Disability: as defined by the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018*, is long-term physical, psycho-social, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairment, or a combination of any of these impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others

EPA: South Australian Environment Protection Authority

Inclusive: practices which allow full participation of people from varying backgrounds and with varying abilities. Inclusion refers to a sense of being included and treated with equality and dignity

NDIS: an insurance support scheme of the Australian Government that funds costs associated with disability

National Disability Strategy (NDS): the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*⁷ is a shared commitment by all governments to work together to improve the lives of Australians with disability by guiding governments and other organisations to build the wellbeing of people living with disability and their carers.

Universal design: creating facilities, built environs, products and services that can be used by people of all abilities to the greatest extent possible without adaptations

⁷ <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020>