



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



Biodiversity and  
Conservation  
Science



BOTANIC GARDENS  
& PARKS AUTHORITY



PARKS AND  
WILDLIFE  
SERVICE



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# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025



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GOVERNMENT OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Department of **Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

### Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025

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## Acknowledgments

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department) acknowledges the input received from staff, the department's Diversity and Access Committee and members of the community who have contributed to the development of this plan.

## Accessibility

Copies of this document are available in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on the department's website.

## Further information

If you have any questions relating to disability access and inclusion, please email [employeerelations@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:employeerelations@dbca.wa.gov.au) or contact the department's Workforce and Diversity Consultant

## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2025*.

This plan brings together the Disability Access and Inclusion plans of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Rottnest Island Authority, Zoological Parks Authority and the former Department of Parks and Wildlife following the formation of DBCA on 1 July 2017.

As an agency we are continuing to bring together plans that demonstrate our commitment to building an inclusive and diverse workforce, and to delivering access 'to more, for more' across our services and visitor attractions.

In 2020, the department was recognised as the first Western Australian public sector agency and the first WA based organisation to become a Disability Confident Recruiter, recognising our continued commitment to providing an inclusive and accessible workforce for all people.

This plan delivers a renewed focus for achieving access and inclusion for people with disability over the next four years.

The department is committed to providing people with disability, the same opportunities as others to access, use and enjoy our State's natural areas and major attractions, facilities, services and programs provided by the department. It also strives toward fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce that is representative of the community we serve.

While there are key staff responsible for implementing and overseeing this plan, improving access and inclusion across the department's workforce and services is a shared responsibility that requires a commitment from all staff. As we go about our day to day work and through our commitment to embodying values that demonstrate integrity, collaboration, accountability, respect and excellence – we will all be supporting this plan.

The plan has been developed in accordance with the *WA Disability Services Act 1993* and is underpinned by the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

The plan will be reviewed annually to ensure we are continuing to make progress across all seven outcome areas.

Mark Webb

DIRECTOR GENERAL, DBCA

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, BGPA, RIA, ZPA



Department of Biodiversity,  
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# Background

## The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department) was formed on 1 July 2017 and brings together the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA), Rottnest Island Authority (RIA), Zoological Parks Authority (ZPA) and the former Department of Parks and Wildlife.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) replaces each entity's previous DAIPs.

## Role of the department

Promote biodiversity and conservation to enrich people's lives through sustainable management of Western Australia's species, ecosystems, lands, and the attractions in the department's care.

The department's mission is to:

- manage Western Australia's parks, forests, and reserves to conserve wildlife, provide sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities, protect communities and assets from bushfire and achieve other land, forest, and wildlife management objectives
- inspire and act for wildlife conservation
- conserve and enhance Kings Park and Botanic Garden and Bold Park with the community, and to conserve biological diversity generally
- grow visitor numbers and yield by providing best-in-class tourism products, experiences and service while enhancing Rottnest Island's unique heritage and environment
- provide scientific excellence and deliver effective conservation of Western Australia's biodiversity.

## Planning for better access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2018), 17.7 per cent of Australians, or more than one in six people, identify themselves as having some form of disability.

Ensuring the department is welcoming and inclusive to all people plays a critical role in shaping infrastructure in the environment and helping drive tourism and the economy.

It is a requirement of the *WA Disability Services Act 1993* that all public authorities develop and implement a DAIP that outlines the ways in which the department will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the *WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

## Access and inclusion policy statement

Western Australia has a beautiful and diverse environment that provides material, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits. These values should be regarded as an essential part of the livelihood and quality of life of all Western Australians, including people with disability. People with disability are visitors to parks, users of department recreation facilities and attractions, and participants in programs and services provided across the department.

The department is one of the most decentralised State government agencies, with approximately half of its workforce employed in regional areas. Besides its metropolitan locations, the department operates from nine regional and 24 district and local centres.

The department is committed to consulting with people with disability, their families and carers, and disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately. The department's policy on access and inclusion is to ensure that everyone in the community can access, use, and enjoy our State's natural areas and major attractions, including the associated facilities, services and programs provided by the department. This will be achieved by fulfilling the seven desired outcomes of the DAIP.

## Progress

A review of the department's previous DAIPs has shown that strategies were successful in achieving significant progress towards improvements in access and inclusion by all department entities.

In 2020, the department partnered with the Australian Network on Disability to identify and remove unintended barriers to inclusive recruitment and to build on the department's confidence and capability to attract, support and retain skilled candidates with disability, becoming the first Western Australian government agency to achieve Disability Confident Recruiter status.

The department ensures that designs for new and upgraded recreation sites provide access for people with disability wherever possible. There were notable achievements in the progress and completion of several accessible infrastructure projects; adding interpretation areas and improving accessibility to facilities such as parking areas, toilets, walkways, playgrounds, barbeque shelters, and boat ramps to tourism destinations throughout the State. This includes the completion of major projects such as the Kalbarri Skywalk in Kalbarri National Park, the Ngajarli (Deep Gorge) trail and boardwalk in Murujuga National Park, and the River Journeys interpretation nodes in the Swan Canning Riverpark, providing fully accessible visitor lookouts. The department's partnership with Break the Boundary (BTB) has created opportunities for access for adaptive mountain bikes and trail riders. The completion of the Arklow Adaptive Trail project provides riders with disability access to a 9.5km trail loop through the Arklow Forest.



The department's Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) manages several highly accessible sites allowing people with disability to experience natural areas, including the Valley of the Giants Tree Top Walk in Walpole-Nornalup National Park, The Gap and Natural Bridge in Torndirrup National Park and the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Further significant improvements to services made across the department include:

- an adult changing place and sensory walks for visitors with vision impairments being available at Kings Park
- free admission for carers and companions of visitors who require assistance when travelling to Rottnest Island
- access friendly units on Rottnest Island have been upgraded, ensuring facilities are accessible for people in wheelchairs including the addition of accessibility ramps
- free hire of a beach wheelchair available to use on Rottnest Island
- free admission to Perth Zoo for carers and companions of people with disability that hold a Companion Card
- accessibility upgrades to Perth Zoo facilities such as toilets, drinking fountains and lockers
- providing additional ways to interact with exhibits and access to aural/keeper talks to improve experiences for visitors with a range of disabilities
- the department's corporate websites have been designed to meet the international standard of Website Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) 2.0 and displays the accessibility aspects of recreational sites, including the availability of accessibility equipment
- implementation of a new complaints management page on the department's website has also enabled improved accessibility for the public to submit complaints.

The department acknowledges the importance of the DAIP and has ensured that any outsourced services fulfill the requirements of the DAIP. Prior to a contract being awarded, all agents and contractors must acknowledge if they will be implementing DAIP outcomes. This information is contained in the tender documents and the evaluation reports for 'Works' and the data is collected annually for DAIP reporting requirements.

## Development of the DAIP 2021-2025

### Responsibility for the planning process

The department's Diversity and Access Committee (DAC) is responsible for the development, implementation, and review of the DAIP. The committee was established in 1999 and is comprised of representatives from the department's various divisions and entities. As the first integrated DAIP for the department's entities, this plan signifies the department's continued commitment to building an inclusive and diverse workforce, and to providing improved access to our services and visitor attractions.

## Community consultation process

In 2020, the department undertook to review existing DAIPs from each of the four entities – BGPA, RIA, ZPA and the former Parks and Wildlife – and developed a single DAIP that will guide the department over the next five years. The new DAIP will deliver a whole-of-agency approach to improving access and inclusion.

The process included:

- reviewing the department’s current DAIPs and reports to identify achievements and strategies that are still in progress
- reviewing other relevant departmental documents and strategies
- researching contemporary trends and best practice examples of access and inclusion
- consultation with key staff
- review of DAIPs developed by other agencies
- consultation with the community.

The following consultation and communication strategies were used:

- Publication of the DAIP on the department’s public website.
- Advertising the release of the DAIP for community consultation in *The West Australian* newspaper.
- Staff advised of the DAIPs release via department broadcast.

## Promotion of the DAIP

Following consultation, the DAIP was submitted to the Department of Communities (DoC). The community was informed of the DAIP through an advertisement in *The West Australian* newspaper and a copy of the DAIP is located on the department’s website and intranet.

## Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents, and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all divisions and entities of the department. Relevant staff, managers and Executive Directors will be responsible for implementing strategies identified in the Plan, whilst the DAC is responsible for overseeing the implementation.

## Reporting on the DAIP

### Review and monitoring



Department of Biodiversity,  
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- The department's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the WA Disability Services Act 1993, with progress reports to be submitted annually to DoC.
- The DAIP may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues that may arise.
- Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with DoC and uploaded to the department's website.
- The DAC meets quarterly and monitors progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.
- Progress and achievements against the DAIP outcomes will be reported on in Annual Reports published by the department and its entities, and in the DAIP Progress Report to DoC.

## Evaluation

- Once a year the department will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP by placing the updated plan and key achievements against each outcome statement on its website. Feedback will be requested from the community on the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented.
- In seeking feedback, the committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- department staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- the DAIP will be amended based on the feedback received and copies of the amended Plan will be available to the community.

## Strategies to improve access and inclusion

Based on the review and consultation process, the following strategies will provide guidance for tasks that the department will undertake from 2021-2025 to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Implementation of these strategies will be monitored by the DAC to ensure the department is tracking adequately against each one.

### Outcome 1

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

- 1.1 Staff are made aware and are regularly reminded of the DAIP and their responsibilities associated with the plan.
- 1.2 Ensure that any events organised are accessible to people with disability.

- 1.3 Perform reviews on department services and identify and remove barriers for disability access.
- 1.4 Review, monitor and address visitor feedback or complaints relating to disability access and inclusion.

## Outcome 2

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

- 2.1 Perform reviews on the department's services, sites and facilities where required and conduct an annual internal audit on major/targeted areas.
- 2.2 Ensure plans and designs for new and upgraded department services, sites and facilities consider accessibility requirements and provide access and improve the experience for visitors and staff with disability, where practicable.
- 2.3 Continue to actively support federal and state initiatives to improve access and inclusion.
- 2.4 Publish accessibility information where available for department buildings, facilities, and meeting rooms on the department's websites.
- 2.5 Ensure that the external parties contracted with the department work towards and manage their operations in accordance with the department's DAIP.

## Outcome 3

People with disability receive information from the department in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

- 3.1 Ensure that the department's websites continue to meet contemporary good practice and applicable legislative requirements for access for people with disability.
- 3.2 Continue to provide department information in alternative formats upon request.
- 3.3 Provide and promote a range of interpretation services in line with the WA Language Service Policy 2014 to improve the availability of the department's services/information to engage people with disabilities.
- 3.4 Ensure that all publications are written in plain English and are easily accessible.
- 3.5 Ensure signage is accessible and practical to people with disability.

## Outcome 4

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

- 4.1 Provide disability awareness training to all staff, including front-line service staff.
- 4.2 Provide continued staff awareness of disability and access issues and best practice relevant to their work areas.
- 4.3 Improve consultation and engagement with staff relating to implementation of the DAIP.

## Outcome 5

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the department.

- 5.1 Ensure the current complaints policy and procedure is accessible for people with disability.
- 5.2 Ensure complaints and grievances can be raised in a variety of formats.
- 5.3 Increase staff capacity to better manage complaints from people with disability.
- 5.4 Promote Language Services options to staff to ensure language is not a barrier to equitable access to information and services, including complaints processes for visitors.

## Outcome 6

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

- 6.1 Ensure that where we are consulting with the public, accessibility requirements are considered early and managed appropriately.
- 6.2 Seek a broad range of views on disability and access issues from the wider community through consultation with community groups, visitors with disabilities and the general public.

## Outcome 7

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

- 7.1 Attract applicants with disability by making use of relevant data to inform recruitment strategies, including the use of targeted recruitment processes, and promoting the department as an equal opportunity employer and a Disability Confident Recruiter.
- 7.2 Adjust recruitment and selection processes to ensure inclusivity of people with disability.
- 7.3 Ensure the department provides suitable workplace adjustments for staff with disability and accommodates flexible and accessible work arrangements.

- 7.4 Ensure staff with disability are given the opportunity to participate in all forums and committees.
- 7.5 Ensure appropriate employment and wellbeing supports are available for people with disability and promoted to all staff.
- 7.6 Identify barriers to development opportunities for staff with disability and make required adjustments.
- 7.7 Measure equity and diversity outcomes.
- 7.8 Continue to develop and identify partnership opportunities and funding sources to provide additional services and experiences for people with disability.