



Queensland Government

Department of **Employment and Industrial Relations**

Disability Service Plan

2007 - 10

Foreword (DG)

The work of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is challenging and rewarding. It makes a lasting and significant impact on the lives of Queensland workers including people with a disability and their families. The department enjoys a proud record in making workplaces safer, fairer and more productive as well as maximising workforce participation opportunities for those disengaged or under-engaged in the labour market.

Through the initiatives contained within the Disability Service Plan the department has the opportunity to promote the principles it values so greatly, such as acceptance of diversity and equal employment opportunity. This department appreciates that the productive capacity of the department is enhanced by developing a diverse workforce. It recognises that much work is yet to be carried out across Queensland in decreasing the barriers that face people with a disability and looks forward to the opportunity to carry out the priority areas for action detailed in the following Disability Service Plan.

Across Queensland, people with a disability are an asset to our workforce, families, community and State. This department values diversity and is serious about removing barriers with regard to the accessibility of policies, complaints procedures, recruitment and retention strategies, positive attitudes and awareness of departmental employees, information and communication and physical access to public buildings that the department is responsible for.

Sighted and signed.

PETER HENNEKEN
Director-General

/ /

Scope of the exercise

1.1 Introduction

The *Disability Services Act 2006* (the Act) was passed by the Queensland Parliament on 29 March 2006. The new legislation requires every Queensland Government department to develop a disability service plan to identify issues regarding service delivery to people with a disability and ways these issues will be addressed.

The Act provides a strong foundation for promoting the rights of people with a disability, increasing their wellbeing and encouraging their participation in the life of the community. It includes measures to safeguard the rights and safety of people with a disability and combines with existing systems to improve the quality of services they receive.

The new legislation encourages all Queenslanders to promote inclusive principles within their own communities. People with a disability have the right to equal access to services available to other members of the Queensland community. The service delivery principles encourage service providers to consider the needs of people with a disability when they design and deliver services.

1.2 Policy statement

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) supports the rights of people with a disability, increasing their wellbeing and encouraging their participation in the life of the community. The Department is dedicated to improving the quality of services, information and communication provided to people with a disability and considering their needs when designing and delivering them for the Queensland community.

1.3 Overview of the core business and functions of the Department

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (the Department) has been established to further the economic and social objectives of the Queensland Government through the development of policy and the provision of services that contribute to:

- **Productive jobs** – by fostering harmonious, committed and productive working environments and by supporting effective rehabilitation arrangements for injured workers.
- **Safe jobs** – by providing workplace health and safety standards and compliance services aimed at reducing the human and economic cost of work related injury and disease, and by supporting experience based workers' compensation.
- **Fair jobs** – by implementing an industrial relations system that promotes job security, stability, fair rewards for labour, supports skill development and by supporting fair compensation and early return to work for those injured in the workplace.

- **Workforce participation** – by maximising participation in the labour market by encouraging and supporting disengaged people to find work and assisting people to build work skills through a range of employment programs.

The Department is a functional service organisation comprising:

- Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations (PSIER)
- Private Sector Industrial Relations (PSIR)
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ)
- Electrical Safety Office (ESO)
- Employment and Indigenous Initiatives (EII)
- Executive and Strategic Services (ESS)

The Department provides its services to urban, rural and remote communities throughout the State through a network of 22 offices established within five (5) regions. The Central Office is situated at William Street, Brisbane.

1.4 Data profile

1.4.1 Service users profile

- People with a disability represent 22.1% of the Queensland population (approximately 834,000¹ people).
- About 33.5% (approximately 279,100) of people with a disability live with a severe or profound core activity restriction.
- National average for people with a disability is 20%
- Queensland average for people with a disability is 22%
- National average of people with profound/severe disability is 6.2%
- Queensland average of people with profound/severe disability is higher than all other jurisdictions (7.6%)

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations provides services to a diverse range of Queenslanders, including people with a disability as they seek the department's services.

1.4.2 Staff profile

At December 2006, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations Equal Employment Opportunity census indicated that people with a disability represented 7.88% of the department's workforce. (Source: Human Resource Information System: Aurion).

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing & Carers, 2003.

1.5 Disability Service Plan methodology

The Department has a well established practice of internal and external consultation. It is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers, and where required, disability organisations to ensure that services are provided appropriately.

The Department has consulted with the officers from the Disability Services Reference Group advising the Chief Executive Officers' Sub-committee on Disability and other external stakeholders such as the Chair of the People with a Disability Network, Executive Directors of each division of the Department and Directors of various business units within the department which will be involved in the implementation of the Disability Service Plan.

Input has also been sought from key stakeholder groups such as Carers Queensland, Queensland Advocacy Inc and Queensland Disability Network to develop appropriate actions and performance measures for the Disability Services Plan.

The Plan will be submitted to the CEO-Sub-committee for endorsement in March 2007. Implementation of the Plan and will commence from July 2007.

1.6 Communication strategies

The Department will promote and communicate the Disability Service Plan to staff through a broadcast email from the Director General introducing the Plan, with a hyperlink to the Plan published on the Department's intranet site.

The Plan will be communicated to the general community, including people with disabilities via the department website.

The Disability Service Plan will be communicated to key stakeholders by being published on the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations internet site.

1.7 Process for reviewing, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan

The Director, Workforce Management is responsible for the preparation, review and maintenance of the Disability Service Plan in conjunction with the other service areas where relevant.

As required by the *Disability Services Act 2006*, the Department will report to Disability Services Queensland on the plan annually from July 2008, 12 months after implementation. Annual reporting will continue with a review of the Plan taking place every three years. The

Plan will be modified accordingly and new areas for action will be identified. As the Plan is modified, updated versions will be published on the Department's intranet and internet sites for the information of Departmental staff and the community.

1.8 Measurement of progress

The Disability Service Plan is subject to review and evaluation to measure progress. The Department will evaluate its achievements annually against the performance indicators and where required, the Plan will be modified to accommodate priorities and needs.

Results will be reported in the Department's Annual Report. Where required, the Plan will be modified to accommodate priorities and needs. In addition, the Department will review the Plan every three years.

1.9 Review/update of the Plan

The Department will review the Plan every three years to ensure the initiatives remain relevant and effective. The Director, Workforce Management is responsible for the preparation, review and maintenance of the policy in conjunction with the other service areas where relevant.

As required in the *Disability Services Act 2006*, the Department will report to Disability Services Queensland on the plan annually from July 2008, 12 months after implementation. Achievements against the progress measures will be submitted to Disability Services Queensland. The Plan will be modified accordingly and new areas for action will be identified.

As the Plan is modified, updated versions will be published on the Department's intranet and internet sites for the information of Departmental staff and the community.

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen access to generic services to people with a disability; and
- Strengthen individuals, families and carers.

Priority area for action 1: Policies and procedures

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Existing published policies reviewed
- ◆ New policies include equitable access to services for people with a disability

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
1.1	Undertake a review of published Departmental policies and procedures to ensure equitable access to departmental services and assistance for people with a disability.	All ED's	ongoing	✓	
1.2	All new policies and procedures will take account of the need to maintain equitable access to any Departmental services.	All ED's	ongoing	ongoing	✓

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen individuals, families and carers; and
- Improve accountability, performance reporting and quality.

Priority area for action 2: Complaints

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Complaints procedures to include a range of communication formats
- ◆ Promote information on complaints procedures
- ◆ Information about complaints procedure collated and improvements made

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
2.1	Review complaints management policy and procedure to ensure complaints may be lodged in a range of communication formats/modes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in writing (including e-mail); • orally; • sign language; • a representative or advocate; • audio tape or audio CD; • on-line forms; or • any other means of electronic communication. 	ESS (Manager G&R ALU)	✓		
2.2	Promote accessible complaints mechanisms to the community.	ESS (SCU) + DEIR		✓	
2.3	Analyse any feedback received about the medium used by clients to make a complaint, to inform amendments or improvements to departmental service delivery.	ESS (Manager G&R ALU)	ongoing	ongoing	✓

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen early intervention strategies (including specific strategies for children with a disability); and
- Strengthen individuals, families and carers; and
- Strengthen across Government linkages.

Priority area for action 3: Recruitment and retention

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Policies, guidelines and practices to be reviewed and amended where necessary (consideration to be given to carers of people with a disability)
- ◆ Investigate the social, environmental and organisational barriers to employment of people with a disability
- ◆ Increase employment opportunities for people with a disability in the Department's workforce at all levels
- ◆ Number of people assisted under the WorkAbility Strategy

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
3.1	Review the current Recruitment and Selection policies, guidelines and practices to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the barriers for people with a disability; and • Enable selection committees to conduct attraction and selection processes that eliminate the environmental and organisational barriers to inclusion of people with a disability; and provide sufficient guidance to managers and selection panels when recruiting people with a disability. 	ESS (HR, WM)	ongoing	✓	
3.2	Conduct workforce analysis to investigate the social, environmental and organisational barriers to employment of people with a disability within the Department.	ESS (HR, WM)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
3.3	Increase the employment opportunities for people with a disability at all levels within the Department	ESS (HR, WM)			✓
3.4	All Departmental HR policies to include flexibility in work practice for people with carer responsibilities to attract applicants who are carers.	ESS (HR, WM)	ongoing	ongoing	✓

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
3.5	Maximise workforce participation opportunities for people with a disability by providing customised employment and training assistance under the <i>Skilling Queenslanders for Work</i> initiative	EII	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen early intervention strategies (including specific strategies for children with a disability); and
- Strengthen individuals, families and carers.

Priority area for action 4: Attitudes and Awareness of Employees (Staff training)

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Staff trained in Disability Awareness Education
- ◆ Training program evaluated
- ◆ 'People with a disability' staff network initiatives are supported and encouragement given to employees who are carers of people with a disability to join and actively participate in the network.
- ◆ Continued support of disability issues and celebration of achievements

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
4.1	Provide Disability Awareness Education for all staff members.	WCU	ongoing	ongoing	✓
4.2	Evaluate the Disability Awareness Education program to determine if staff awareness has increased and whether it has contributed to staff improving the development and delivery of policies, programs and services to people with a disability.	WCU	ongoing	ongoing	✓
4.3	Maintain and actively promote the existing Departmental 'People with a Disability' (PWD) staff network and encourage active participation within the PWD staff network of Departmental employees who are carers and family members of people with a disability.	Chair, PWD network + EII + ESS.	ongoing	ongoing	✓
4.4	Continued Departmental support of staff involvement in recognised community events pertaining to disability issues and celebration of achievements	Chair, PWD network + ESS + all ED's	ongoing	ongoing	✓

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen access to generic services to people with a disability; and
- Strengthen across government linkages; and
- Strengthen individuals, families and carers; and
- Improve accountability, performance reporting and quality

Priority Area for Action 5: Information and communication

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Published information available in accessible formats
- ◆ Promote this information's availability (in accessible formats) to the community
- ◆ Departmental website reviewed and amended where necessary
- ◆ Guidelines for engaging support services developed
- ◆ Raise awareness of TTY facilities and divisional email addresses
- ◆ Promote and participate in signature events for disability
- ◆ Develop guidelines for holding accessible events and meetings

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
5.1	Information about departmental publications and services will be available in an accessible format.	ESS (SCU)	ongoing	✓	
5.2	Undertake community awareness that departmental information is available in an accessible format.	ESS (SCU)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
5.3	Amend Departmental forms to be available in accessible formats where possible.	All ED's	ongoing	✓	
5.4	Continually review Departmental website to ensure it is accessible to people with a disability.	ESS (SCU)	✓		

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
5.5	Develop guidelines for engaging support services such as interpreters (including Australian Sign Language), scribes etc to assist communication with people with a disability.	ESS (SCU)	ongoing	✓	
5.6	Raise awareness of the provision of telephone typewriter (TTY) facilities.	ESS (SCU)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
5.7	Inclusion of Smart Service Qld TTY phone number on all publications and the website etc.	ESS (SCU)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
5.8	Raise awareness of divisional e-mail address which already exist to assist clients with a disability in communicating with service delivery staff.	ESS (HR, CBS) + (SCU)	✓		
5.9	Promote and participate in signature events to increase awareness and understanding of the needs of people with a disability.	DEIR	ongoing	ongoing	✓
5.10	Promote and encourage the participation of staff and clients with a disability in departmental promotions that raise public awareness of the contributions of people with a disability.	DEIR	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing
5.10	Develop guidelines for holding accessible events and meetings.	ESS		✓	

DISABILITY SERVICES QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

- Strengthen access to generic services to people with a disability; and
- Strengthen individuals, families and carers.

Priority Area for Action 6: Physical access – public buildings

Performance measures/outcomes:

- ◆ Modifications made to workplaces where required
- ◆ Future premises leased and comply with standards issued by Department of Public Works
- ◆ Review of/and inclusion of, disability evacuation process within current evacuation procedures

Action number	Activities/Outputs	Service Area	Completion 2007/08	Completion 2008/09	Completion 2009/10
6.1	Modify or adjust workplaces where required (by Public Works) to fit the particular needs of people with a disability in accordance with Reasonable Adjustment principles.	ESS (CBS)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
6.2	All new structures that are designed to deliver services such as client information counters and client reception desks are accessible to people with a disability.	ESS (CBS)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
6.3	Ensure that all future premises leased by the Department are accessible to people with a disability.	ESS (CBS)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
6.4	Ensure when planning for new accommodation, those physical structures such as doorways, steps and stairs do not act as a barrier to staff and customers with mobility disabilities.	ESS (CBS)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
6.5	Compliance/consideration given to standards, policies, guidelines and practices issued by the Department of Public Works.	ESS (CBS)	ongoing	ongoing	✓
6.6	Fire Evacuation Procedures for department reviewed to include employees with a disability.	ESS (CBS)	✓		

ABBREVIATIONS FOR SERVICE AREAS:

All ED's:	All Executive Directors
DEIR:	Whole of Department is responsible/to be involved
EII:	Employment and Indigenous Initiatives
ESS:	Executive and Strategic Services
CBS:	Corporate Business Services
HR:	Human Resources
Manager G&R:	Manager, Governance and Risk
SCU:	Strategic Communication Unit
WCU:	Workforce Capability Unit
Chair, PWD network:	Chair of the People with a Disability staff network.