



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Our Mission
*To increase
investment and attract
population to our
region.*

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BACKGROUND

The Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission

Functions, facilities and services provided by the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission

The Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission (GEDC) region covers approximately 770,488 square kilometres (including off-shore islands) and has a population of 54,000. It incorporates 9 local government authority areas – the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Shires of Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, Ngaanyatjarraku and Ravensthorpe.

We are a statutory authority of the Government of Western Australia, established under the Regional Development Commission Act 1993, to encourage and promote balanced social and economic development in the Goldfields-Esperance Region of Western Australia. We are 1 of 9 Development Commissions in Western Australia.

We are responsible to the Minister for Regional Development and Lands.

A board of management comprising 10 members, representing local government, community and ministerial appointees, sets the overall strategic direction and goals for the GEDC.

Our Vision

To create opportunities to build a vibrant sustainable future for our Region

Our Mission

To increase investment and attract population to our Region

The functions of the Commission, as set out in the Regional Development Commissions Act (1993) are to:

- Maximise job creation and improve career opportunities in the Region. Develop and broaden the economic base of the Region.
- Identify infrastructure services to promote business development within the Region.
- Provide information and advice to promote business development within the Region.
- Seek to ensure that the general standard of government services and access to those services in the Region is comparable to that which applies in the metropolitan area.
- Generally take steps to encourage, promote, facilitate and monitor the economic development in the Region.

Planning for better access

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2006, more than 405,000 Western Australians were identified as having a disability. There are many types of disabilities, including sensory, physical, intellectual, cognitive, neurological and psychiatric disabilities. As a result some people may have difficulty with mobility, hearing, vision or communication.

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended in December 2004) that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the organisation will ensure that people with disabilities 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 (DDA).

Progress since 2007

The GEDC is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities. The GEDC is also committed to supporting staff with disabilities and open to equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The GEDC adopted its first Disability Service Plan (DSP) in 1996 to address the barriers for people with disabilities who need to access the GEDC's services and facilities. The DSP addressed both its statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993) and its obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

Periodic reviews of the initial plan highlighted staff awareness and understanding of disability access and inclusion to our information, services and facilities. The GEDC plans to continuously improve staff awareness of the need to consider people with disabilities when delivering services.

Since the implementation of the initial DSP many initiatives have improved staff understanding of disability access and inclusion issues. Periodic reviews of the initial plan highlighted areas where access and facilities are available and could be improved, or alternative options which could be considered to further improvements. The GEDC plans to continuously improve access to facilities and staff awareness when delivering services with clients, stakeholders and staff disabilities.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

The GEDC is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of GEDC services and facilities (both in-house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community;
- ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of their community through the consultative process with local business and industry in respect of new investments;
- consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately;
- Consider a person for employment on their ability to do the job not on their disability
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP; and
- achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The six desired outcomes are:

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

REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

Responsibility for the planning process

The Manager, Policy and Projects, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, is tasked with developing, implementing, reviewing and evaluating the DAIP.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

In late 2012 the GEDC advised the community of the draft DAIP through the GEDC's quarterly electronic newsletter, which is also available on the GEDC website. The GEDC advised that copies of the draft DAIP were available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required.

The draft was also included in the "What's New" page on the GEDC website (www.gedc.wa.gov.au).

Staff were also encouraged to provide feedback at this time.

In December 2012 the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by the CEO.

The finalised Plan will be posted on the GEDC website and advertised in the GEDC quarterly newsletter. The Plan will be advertised in the Kalgoorlie Miner, to raise awareness of the availability of plan on the GEDC website. It will also be available in a variety of alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille, upon request.

As plans is reviewed and amended both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

Community consultation process

The GEDC undertook to review its DAIP, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- draft of the plan was provided to all staff in October/November 2012 for input and comment.
- draft plan was put on the GEDC website in October/November 2012 under what's new for input and comment from the community and stakeholders.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 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 areas of the GEDC. GEDC staff will be made aware of the strategies and outcomes which the GEDC have committed to and encouraged to support implementation. The manager Policy and Projects, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The GEDC's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act.

The DAIP implementation may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and monitoring

- The review of the GEDC's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2016-2021 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2021. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Department's DAIP 2012-2016.
- A status report will be provided in the GEDC's annual report.

Evaluation

- The CEO will endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process annually.
- A notice about the consultation process will be placed in the GEDC's newsletter, will be posted on the Department's website and circulated to key disability service providers.
- In seeking feedback the GEDC will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in previous consultations.
- GEDC staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for

improvement.

Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received. Copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by the GEDC, will be available to the community in alternative formats.

REPORTING ON THE DAIP

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The GEDC will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- its progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- the progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and the strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

The following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the GEDC will undertake from 2012-2016 to maintain access to its services, buildings and information for members of the community. The six desired outcomes provide a framework for maintaining access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of and events organised by the GEDC.

STRATEGY	
1.	The objectives of the DAIP are in accordance with the Goldfields-Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011-2021. Revision 1 July 2012
2.	All GEDC policies and procedures are inclusive of people with disabilities where appropriate.
3.	GEDC staff are familiar with the access considerations for people with disabilities.
4.	The design and delivery of services and projects are inclusive of, and accessible to, people with disabilities.
5.	GEDC resources are accessible for people with disabilities.
6.	Events organised by the GEDC are accessible for people with disabilities.
7.	Occupational Health and Safety procedures are in place to ensure the safety of staff or other people with disabilities in the event of a fire, evacuation or other critical incident.
8.	Policy and procedures are reviewed regarding the Disability Services Act's requirements in relation to GEDC agents.

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the GEDC's employment opportunities, buildings and facilities.

STRATEGY	
1.	Annual reporting on Access Plan to the Chief Executive Officer.
2.	Information about the access features of GEDC premises is readily available.
3.	Consider a person for employment on their ability to do the job not on their disability
4.	Feedback about accessibility issues from staff and visitors with disabilities is acted on in a timely and appropriate manner.
5.	Implementation and review of the DAIP (and any related plans or policies) is the responsibility of the Manager for Policy and Projects.

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from the GEDC in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

STRATEGY	
1.	Staff and visitors are widely informed that information is available in alternative formats on request.
2.	GEDC staff are aware of the need to deliver information in alternative formats if required for people with disabilities.

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| 3. All GEDC publications, information and forms use inclusive language and are accessible to staff and visitors with disabilities. |
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Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from GEDC staff as other people receive from GEDC staff.

STRATEGY	
1.	GEDC will provide their DAIP on the web site to inform the public on how it will provide services for staff and visitors with disabilities.
2.	GEDC staff are aware of their responsibilities and are supported in their service delivery to staff and visitors with disabilities.
3.	Policies and codes of conduct prohibit discrimination, harassment and victimisation of staff and visitors with disabilities and strategies to prevent these behaviours are in place.

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to GEDC.

STRATEGY	
1.	Opportunities are provided for staff and visitors with disabilities to seek redress on any matter of concern regarding the GEDC via complaints policy and information on the web site.
2.	GEDC will make its process for making a complaint or handling a grievance in clear and accessible formats via the web site.
3.	GEDC will handle all complaints in a confidential manner.
4.	GEDC staff are aware of the procedure for handling complaints and grievances.

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by GEDC.

STRATEGY	
1.	GEDC will advertise on the website the means by which staff and visitors with disabilities can provide feedback on any issue pertinent to GEDC's service delivery.
2.	GEDC will continue to provide inclusive opportunities for staff and visitors with disabilities to participate in GEDC public consultation.