



Ageing &
Disability
Department

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

January 2000 - December 2002

**New South Wales
Ageing and Disability Department**

Disability Action Plan (NSW Ageing & Disability Department)
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Ageing and Disability Department

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Foreword

In my capacity of A/Director General of the Department of Ageing and Disability, I am pleased to present the Department's Disability Action Plan. The Plan will be an important opportunity to bring about improvements in the accessibility of the organisation itself as well as in the services it funds.

The ADD Disability Action Plan is the culmination of over two years work. I extend my thanks to those who have contributed to the various processes involved in its development. Your continued participation will play a vital role in the successful implementation of the Plan.

The Plan has been developed within the framework of the NSW Government Disability Policy Framework, which is designed to improve the opportunities for people with disabilities to share fully in community life in NSW. The Framework is underpinned by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and the NSW Disability Services Act 1993.

The Plan has used the information and model formats supplied in the Disability Policy Framework kit folder. This folder is one element of the advice and assistance ADD has offered to all government agencies and Local Government Authorities as they went about developing their Disability Action Plans.

The Department has endeavoured to put in place a range of measures to ensure that the implementation of the Plan is effective. They include:

- oversight directly by an Executive level position
- integration of the Plan in the planning and budgeting processes
- monitoring of the Plan's implementation through the Executive and Senior Unit Manager forums at regular intervals
- incorporation of relevant measures in performance agreements of all senior staff.

I look forward to measurable improvements being made over the three years of this Plan, and to the time when access measures can be seen to have become a routine part of the functioning of this Department.



Ag / Director General

31 January 2000

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PART 1

ADD Coverage of Priority Areas

Scope of the exercise

1.1 Introduction

The formulation of three yearly Disability Action Plans by State Government Agencies is a requirement of section 9 of the NSW Disability Services Act 1993 (DSA). The process is also consistent with the requirements of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992, which requires the removal of discrimination from services.

The NSW Government's Disability Policy Framework was approved by Cabinet in November 1998 as a means of assisting State Government service providers to systematically identify the adjustments they need to make so that their services and facilities become more accessible to people with disabilities.

The Disability Policy Framework provides a process whereby the Government's commitment to improving the opportunities for people with a disability is translated into action. The process will enable people with disabilities to share more fully in community life.

While the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD) is the agency to which all other State Government agencies submit their Disability Action Plans, this current exercise represents the Department's preparation of its own Disability Action Plan.

The Plan is designed to provide a strategic framework within which clear goals are set for improving the accessibility of ADD facilities and services to people with disabilities, and for measurement of progress towards those goals.

The ADD Disability Action Plan is the culmination of over two years of work, and is built upon the input of a wide range of staff and external stakeholders through exercises that focused on the function of ADD, the nature of the services it funds, and the clients of those services.

The first part of the Plan covers matters which are the direct responsibility of ADD. The process also recognises that there are areas of service delivery where there are overlapping responsibilities between ADD and other Government agencies.

The second part of the Plan covers areas where ADD has been allocated responsibility under the Disability Action Plan for formal co-ordination of issues involving other Government agencies, those being :

- Older people with Disabilities
- Accommodation and Support
- Respite
- Reduction in abuse
- Specialist disability services

The third part covers ADD's role in facilitating a more integrated approach to accessible infrastructure provision by the Government agencies that have a key role in infrastructure planning and provision.

1.2 Policy Statement

People who have contact with the Ageing and Disability Department are likely to expect a higher level of service from ADD in terms of the removal of physical barriers than may be expected of other government agencies or private sector organisations. This presents a challenge that needs to be recognised and actioned at all levels of the organisation.

The Department is committed to creating, promoting and sustaining opportunities and services that allow people with disabilities and older people to participate in the wider community and to have a better quality of life. In carrying out its functions, the Department will do so in ways that respect diversity and eliminate discrimination.

The Department believes that people with disabilities should:

- be full participating members of the community
- have the same access as other people in the community to mainstream services
- be free from unlawful discrimination
- be provided with specialist services that will support their independence within the limits set by available resources
- be involved in the decisions that affect their lives, and
- not be subject to abuse, exploitation or neglect.

The Disability Action Planning process is an evolving one, designed to produce cumulative improvements. It is a process where input from people with disabilities, their families and carers, service providers and related government and non government agencies, is vital to the outcome.

1.3 Overview of the core business and functions of the agency

The Ageing and Disability Department is a relatively new department, having been established in 1995 to provide a specific focus for Government policy on issues affecting people with disabilities and older people. Its activities brings it into contact with people with disabilities as citizens of NSW, users of ADD funded services, potential or actual employees, contractors, professionals, friends, relatives or visitors. Much of ADD's work involves close liaison with people with disabilities, their families, carers and service providers.

The Department's Disability Action Plan differs from that of some other Government agencies in that ADD is not a direct provider of services to people with disabilities, nor does it, in general, provide face to face service to the public. Its role is much more one of issue identification, service design and programming, policy development, program review, service monitoring and contract management. Some direct service delivery occurs with programs for Seniors, such as the Seniors' Card and Seniors' concerts and events, which fall within the coverage of this Plan.

The Department has offices in a number of different locations around the State. The Central Office of the Department is located in the Central Business District of Sydney, with non metropolitan regional offices at Newcastle, Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Lismore, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, and Dubbo. Two metropolitan regional offices are co-located with Central Office.

The core functions of the Department are:

Core functions of ADD

- Strategic planning and policy development on disability and ageing issues, including 'whole of government' strategic frameworks
- Provision of funding to service providers for delivery of services targeted in the main to people with disabilities and older people through the Disability Services Program and the Home and Community Care Program; and
- Service monitoring to ensure that the contracted service providers are delivering services relevant to the needs of a particular area, that high quality services are provided, and that the maximum benefit is obtained in the use of Government resources

The Department is currently reviewing its priorities, core responsibilities and systems for program implementation under an extensive strategic planning exercise, to ensure that it delivers better outcomes to service users.

In its policy role, ADD looks at ways to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities and older people are met. Recent efforts have focused on bringing about:

the removal of artificial barriers to access to services provided under different programs and by different levels of Government, arising out of:

- legislative constraints
- assessment protocols
- referral mechanisms
- service provision standards, and
- staffing practices

improvements in the delivery of services to people with complex needs, (such as with combinations of physical and intellectual disabilities, behavioural disorders or fragile family dynamics), by:

- removing legislative constraints
- skilling the individual and their family and carers in self advocacy, networking with service providers, and knowledge of resources, and
- supporting the individual and their family unit by provision of assistance via a service co-ordinator

the development of innovative solutions to service gaps and weaknesses, through:

- recognition of the periods of change and transition in people's lives, and
- provision of training and skills development that equips people with lifelong living skills

improvements in the effectiveness of service providers within the non-government and community sectors by:

- provision of resource materials, such as a human resources kit for managers (including a recruitment checklist, a skills audit tool and a training needs analysis form)

Improvements in the effectiveness of services to individuals by reducing overlap and duplication between programs provided by different levels of Government, or different government agencies, through:

- development of common program objectives
- agreement on data requirements
- provision of funding to fill identified gaps
- development of protocols for local co-operation, and
- joint projects, particularly on employment promotion.

In its funding role, the Department contracts a wide variety of organisations for specific service provision under the three programs it administers: the Disability Services Program, the Home and Community Care Program and the Ageing Program. The organisations range in size and function, from small community groups that have been set up to provide a specific service such as meals on wheels, to very large organisations providing a full range of accommodation and support services.

Disability services are provided in the context of the second Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement (CSDA) which commenced in May 1998 and will expire on 30 June 2002. The CSDA prescribes administrative responsibility for provision of particular types of services for people with disabilities.

Under the terms of the CSDA the Commonwealth and State Governments have shared responsibility for funding, planning, policy setting, and management of funding research and development, advocacy services, print disability and information services.

The Commonwealth has sole responsibility for employment services. The Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments jointly fund all other disability services (for example supported accommodation, respite, day programs and post school options, recreation programs and therapy services) while State and Territory Governments have responsibility for management, planning and policy setting for these disability services.

In order to improve the effectiveness of service delivery on the ground, ADD has a process of funding reform, involving measures such as the:

- introduction of performance measures to bring about continuous service improvement by community-based service providers,
- provision of support for smaller service providers through the distribution of a Plain English Guide on the required level of financial reporting, and
- introduction of an outputs-based funding framework to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. While developed initially for the 'Supported Accommodation' program, its application has been extended to cover all new disability funding.

ADD monitors the standard of service delivery by service providers against the requirements of the NSW Disability Services Act, and has introduced improvements including:

- simplification of the self assessment format for contracted service providers, with greater emphasis placed on service outcomes,

- expansion of the spread of monitoring across the State by heightened emphasis within Regional Offices on the monitoring of local levels of service provision, and
- adoption of a collaborative approach to resolution of serious, complex or outstanding issues raised by service users, carers or advocates, the Community Services Commission, other external bodies or through the contract monitoring process.

With its focus on continuous improvement, a process of consultation with people with disabilities, their families, carers, and service providers has been incorporated into the Department's routine work.

Issues of statewide relevance are identified through consultations with peak disability and ageing organisations and statewide agencies. Under the recently introduced regional planning process, which covers both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, regional plans will be developed for each of ADD's six regions. The process will provide more accurate data on the supply and demand for services and incorporate information about local services and community views. It aims to enable the Department to distribute resources more fairly across NSW, build on existing strengths in the service system and to address weaknesses.

Two Regional Advisory Groups have been established within each of the six ADD Regions as a key part of the regional planning process, one for people with disabilities and their carers and another for older people and their carers. Membership of the Advisory Groups has been tailored to ensure that a wide range of people with disabilities from communities within each region, provide input into the process. Every effort has been made to ensure barriers to participation are removed, to enable people with disabilities in distant rural centres to have the opportunity to be players in the process and to ensure that their needs are fed into the Regional Plans.

This approach builds on ADD's current planning processes and its emphasis on quality improvement because it:

- enables ADD to plan at the appropriate level for the overall delivery of services within a community rather than planning separately for services funded through each of the Department's programs (HACC, DSP and Ageing),
- improves the usefulness of data by factoring in information on where people live, the services that are currently available and what services people require,
- provides a mechanism for obtaining direct feedback from consultations with service users and service providers about what does and does not work within a community,

- improves service provision on the ground through innovations such as improved coordination and better targeting of new resources, and
- provides a strong basis for close coordination with other government departments on the support needs of users of the services and on the effective planning and delivery of services.

Developments in regional planning will be reported back to Senior Managers by the Regional Planners through an annual 'round table' conference. In this way, all areas of the organisation can benefit from the regional planning process, particularly in the key areas of policy formulation, program design and refinement, and service monitoring.

The Department also works very closely with other Human Service Departments who deliver services to the same target groups. A new data collation system, called Population Group Planning (PGP), has been designed to be flexible enough to integrate data on services provided by the NSW Health Department, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services. ADD has been the lead agency in the development of a recent Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Planning between these agencies.

1.4 Data profile

1.4.1 Service users profile

The 1998 Disability Policy Framework provided an overview of people with disabilities in NSW based largely on findings of the 1993 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. It showed that people with disabilities represented an estimated 17% of the NSW population. More recent ABS figures reveal that the proportion of the population with a disability has increased to 19.3% (ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables for NSW (1998)).

In looking at the level of disability and the impact on service delivery, the Disability Policy Framework indicated that only a very small proportion of people with disabilities in NSW would fall outside the group for whom service providers could cater in the normal course of events by making reasonable adjustments.

ADD's programs are mainly oriented to meeting the needs of people with moderate, severe and profound disabilities and their families and carers. The focus for ADD's funding of service provision occurs within the following three broad categories:

- All people over 65 years of age (45 and over for people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background), with or without a disability,

- People with a disability under 65 years of age (under 45 years of age for people with a disability of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander background), and
- All people with disabilities who reside in 'supported accommodation'.

Not everyone in the above groups require services. However, those with moderate, severe or profound disabilities, and their families and carers, require assistance at varying levels of intensity, and are likely to need services to be tailored to their needs and for their support levels to be adjusted from time to time.

In the past, planning for ADD's three programs has relied on data largely collected by service providers on their delivery of existing services rather than on individuals and their needs. Statistics were based on 'snapshots' taken of service delivery on a particular day or month each year, but did not indicate whether individuals were reliant on more than one service and/or more than one program.

The absence of consistent data on the needs of people with disabilities, and their call on services under different programs, is a serious problem for ADD in its attempts to improve the delivery of services on the ground. The availability of meaningful data is a key factor in ADD, along with other agencies involved in Human Services provision, being able to accurately identify needs and to tailor funding and service delivery around those needs.

The Department, in remedying this data problem, called on academic expertise to develop a new data approach, which is referred to as the Population Group Planning (PGP) process. PGP is designed to tie in closely with the regional planning process and to shift the focus of service provision away from a narrowly defined program focus and onto client needs. It is designed to show:

- the distribution of services and the extent of each service provided, through practical measures such as the number of hours of service provided or the number of beds required,
- area information for a particular region to enable comparisons to be made with other parts of NSW, and
- in time, information on the funding activities of other government departments.

Through its regional planning process, ADD will be able to elicit the views of people who use, or want to use, the services it funds. Consultations will occur across the Department's six regions to identify the strengths and weaknesses of local service systems as experienced by the people who live there and use the services.

Through this process, the Department's planners will be better placed to set targets for service provision, for example for the number of respite hours, living skills training resources or transport support. Developments in each region will be channelled back to the organisation as a whole through an annual two day 'round table' conference involving all units of the Department. The feedback from the regional planning process will thus inform future policy development, as well as program design and administration.

Under this new approach, each region will develop a Regional Plan by June 2000 with local service user and service provider input. The Plans will incorporate and analyse data provided by the PGP model, using information from consultations to provide local and regional context. This will enable the Regional Offices to respond more strategically with a combination of short and long term measures, some of which are expected to require cross-agency involvement.

In recognition of the overlapping responsibilities between levels of government and individual government departments, ADD works closely with other government departments at both the State and Commonwealth levels to build information tools that, while protecting an individual's privacy, will enable better models to be developed for the co-ordination and delivery of services.

The regional planning process also provides a linkage with Local Government, and the social plans of individual Local Government Authorities.

1.4.2 Staff profile

In the Disability Policy Framework, the Government has set its target for employment of people with disabilities in the NSW public sector at 11%, and at 4% for people requiring some form of workplace adjustment.

In an ADD staff awareness survey undertaken in February 1999 as part of this process, ADD's staff responses indicated that 15% of staff (26 persons) had disabilities. These ranged from:

- acquired brain injury
- blindness or vision impairment
- deafness or hearing impairment
- disability brought on by an organism capable of causing a disease
- mental illness or psychiatric disability
- neurological disabilities, and
- physical disabilities.

Of these, workplace adjustment were requested at the time of recruitment by two people, with other adjustments being made by the relevant Unit Managers upon request and from within each Unit's operating budget.

Adjustments made in response to requests made at the time of recruitment have included the provision of large screen computers, zoom text software

with speech capabilities and Closed Circuit TV (Video Enlarger), ergonomic chairs, telephone with large buttons and adjustable speaker, hearing augmentation, and provision of a part-time personal assistant to assist with typing, filing and taking notes.

A difficulty experienced by the Department in ensuring the requested adjustments are in place at time of commencement, has been with delays in contractors meeting their commitments to supply specialised computer equipment.

Adjustments made by Unit Managers have included the alteration of security fixtures at doorways (lowering of height, reducing the need for hand movements), and the provision of a motorised scooter for movement between offices within the building. Where possible, the opportunity has been taken to standardise such improvements across all offices within the Central Office complex.

Staff with disabilities have emphasised the value of non-physical measures of a practical nature that Managers can make for a member of staff with a disability, such as flexible working hours and working from home, that can support staff members in the carriage of their work.

1.5 Disability Action Planning methodology

Extensive consultation has been undertaken as a part of the Action Planning process to ensure that coverage of issues is as comprehensive as possible, and that it contributes to constructive strategy development.

Appointment of an external consultant was considered an important step in obtaining independent input from consultation processes. Consultation was undertaken with consumers of the services funded by the Department, their families and carers, service providers and staff at all levels of the Department.

This added to the results of the extensive consultation undertaken by the Department over the previous two years in the development of the Disability Policy Framework.

Key steps in the process were identified as:

Timeframe	Steps
June 98	Access audit of Head Office premises and surrounds undertaken by independent auditors.
September 98	Project established within the ADD Disability Planning and Policy Units, which had developed the Disability Policy Framework.
September 98	<p>Independent consultant contracted to develop the Action Plan around an agreed process, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project outline and approach to be submitted to meeting of Senior Unit Managers for input, refinement and endorsement; ➤ Wide consultation to be undertaken with internal and external parties through a series of focus groups and meetings convened by independent consultant ➤ Comprehensive & confidential staff survey to be undertaken and analysed by Finance and Administration area ➤ Prioritisation of tasks identified in Access audit of Head Office by ADD Occupational Health and Safety Committee ➤ Strategy development to directly involve Senior Unit Managers, on consideration of findings of the consultations, the audits and the survey ➤ Responsibility for implementation tasks to be clearly defined and spread across the Department to ensure incorporation into mainstream activities.
September 98	Senior Unit Managers' meeting endorsed project outline and approach.
October 98 - July 99	<p>Consultant and staff of ADD Disability Policy Unit held meetings with staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Employees with a disability (ADD and Disability Council) ➤ Staff generally (ADD and Disability Council) ➤ EEO committee ➤ Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Advisory Committee ➤ Non-English Speaking Background Advisory Committee.
February 99	Staff surveyed on both general disability issues and on disabilities specific to the individual staff member.

July 99	<p>Consultant facilitated a consultation forum with external peak bodies, Statewide disability organisations, and individuals with an interest in the area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disability Council ➤ Council on the Ageing ➤ consumer organisations representing people with disabilities ➤ disability organisations working with people with disabilities ➤ an organisation representing people with disabilities who are gay, lesbian, transgender or bisexual ➤ non-English speaking background disability organisations ➤ Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander disability organisations, and ➤ individuals of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander background with a knowledge of the issues.
August 99	Preliminary strategy development.
September 99	Findings of access audit prioritised by Senior Project Officer, Access Strategy.
October 99	Collation and analysis of staff survey.
October 99	Consultant's meetings with Senior Unit Managers to refine strategies.
December 99	Finalisation of the Draft.
January 2000	Finalisation of Disability Action Plan and approval by A/Director General, ADD, for approval. Subsequent referral to ADD Disability Policy Unit for inclusion in Government-wide reporting to the Social Justice Committee of Cabinet.
February 2000	Commencement of implementation of strategies.
August 2000	Report on progress in ADD Annual Report.
December 2000	Review of Disability Action Plan implementation achievements and of areas needing amendment, finetuning or additional input.

December 2000	Survey on effectiveness of the Action Planning process to cover peak disability and ageing organisations, members of Regional Advisory Groups, staff, related Departments, interested individuals. Adjustment of strategies to reflect input.
August 2001	Report on progression of ADD Disability Action Plan.
January - December 2002	Preparation of new Disability Action Plan.

The strategies for change in this document were largely developed in response to information obtained from the staff awareness survey and the access audit of Head Office. The approach taken to these two steps is detailed as follows.

1.5.1 Staff awareness survey

The staff survey was undertaken in February 1999 over a six to eight week period. The survey was distributed to all staff members but was a voluntary exercise, where respondents remained anonymous. The response rate was 57% (170 staff members). It comprised two parts:

- i. The first seeking information about the individual staff member's awareness of general disability issues and his or her opinion of the Department's responsiveness to those matters in general, and
- ii. The second seeking information only from employees with a disability, about their disability, the level of workplace modification or adjustment required for them, and views on discrimination within the workplace and barriers to recruitment and career development.

1.5.2 Access audit of Head Office

The Department was keen to audit the office space occupied within the Central Office premises at 83 Clarence Street, as well as the areas used by the general public, and the surrounding access pathways.

In recognition of the fact that access auditing is an emerging field, and that staff do not have the expertise at this stage to carry out such a specialised function, the Department sought independent auditors to undertake the task. An additional challenge was presented by the fact that the specialists in the field were as yet untested. ADD decided to use the auditing of its own premises as a means of gauging expertise, and of developing an accreditation process as a resource for use by other public agencies. This resulted in a list of accredited access auditors being developed, all of

whom, as part of their training, participated in the audit of the Head Office premises and demonstrated that they had the necessary skill level.

The list of access advisors is now available to other agencies, and many have drawn on it to assist in audits for their Disability Action Plans.

The audit of the ADD Central Office identified a wide range of tasks required for the progressive removal of barriers to access, both within and around the building. The proposed actions impact on a range of authorities, including:

- ADD management
- ADD staff
- building management
- Sydney City Council
- State Transit & CityRail
- Telecom, and
- the Roads and Traffic Authority.

The findings of the audit were analysed by the Senior Project Officer, Access Strategy, and priorities allocated for action. The Disability Policy Unit will work with Corporate Services in the development of an Access Works Program for implementation of the findings. Regional offices will be progressively audited and adjustments made accordingly. Particular emphasis will be placed on meeting venues to ensure that any barriers to participation in the Regional Planning process are removed. A similar approach is appropriate for special events hosted by ADD, such as the Seniors Concerts to ensure equitable opportunities for participation.

1.6 Communication strategies

Copies of the Disability Action Plan will be distributed to staff, peak ageing and disability groups, peak service provider groups, advocacy groups, other departments and to individuals upon request in March 2000.

The Disability Action Plan will be available on ADD's accessible website and copies will also be available via email, and upon request, in Braille, large print, audio tape and on computer disk from the Communications and Community Liaison Unit.

Contact details are:

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Website: <http://www.add.nsw.gov.au>

As the Disability Action Planning process progresses, updates will be provided in the Department's newsletters: ADD Service News, ADDing Connections and ADDing Value.

1.7 Processes for reviewing, monitoring and evaluation of the plan

Implementation of the Plan will be supported by a range of internal monitoring, reviewing and evaluation measures to ensure its effectiveness, and will include:

- oversight directly by an Executive level position
- integration of the Plan into the planning and budgeting processes
- monitoring of the Plan's implementation through the Executive and Senior Unit Manager forums at regular intervals, and
- incorporation of relevant measures in the performance agreements of all senior staff.

While ultimate responsibility for ensuring implementation of the Disability Action Plan lies with the Acting Director General, day to day responsibility for the monitoring of progress will lie with the Director, Corporate Services.

Independent feedback on effectiveness will be sought through an annual survey process to involve:

- peak disability and ageing organisations
- members of Regional Advisory Groups, and
- staff (in an anonymous capacity)

The Disability Policy Unit will have responsibility for the design and analysis of the survey, with Corporate Services being responsible for its distribution.

1.8 Measurement of progress

Central to ADD's approach to implementation of the Disability Action Plan is that its strategies are to be incorporated into the mainstream activities of Departmental staff, rather than being isolated as the responsibility of one officer or unit.

Measurement of progress against the performance indicators will be undertaken by the Corporate Services /Finance and Administration area on a six monthly basis, with yearly progress to be reported in the Annual Report. The reviewing process will provide the opportunity for modification of the strategies in the Plan, following input from the disability sector, service providers and staff.

1.9 Review/update of the plan

A new Disability Action Plan will be developed in three years, and will build upon the initiatives and achievements of the first Plan. As with other departments, the Plan will be formally submitted every three years, for inclusion in Government-wide reporting to the Social Justice Committee of Cabinet and to Parliament.

Priority Areas for Action

1.10 Physical accessibility

Goal/outcome

- The progressive removal of physical barriers to participation by people with disabilities in ADD workplaces, functions, ADD funded services and activities.

ADD context

The Department of Ageing and Disability does not generally provide direct services to people with disabilities, and in the main sets program parameters, provides funding, determines contractual arrangements with service providers, and monitors funded organisations in their delivery of services.

For ADD, the need for accessible premises is most pressing for:

- venues where consultations are held with service users, their families and carers, and other participants with disabilities, such as staff of other organisations, particularly at central office and at locations where the regional planning advisory groups meet
- venues for special events, such as the Seniors' Concert and other Seniors' events, and
- offices where ADD staff with disabilities are working. The aim is to build on the current efforts of making one-off adjustments to particular workspaces for individuals, and to move through systematic processes towards the progressive removal of barriers across the organisation.

ADD has its Central Office at 83 Clarence Street, Sydney, as well as eight non-metropolitan offices. Auditing of the Central Office premises and one regional office have been completed. Audits will also be done for the remaining seven regional offices, with an accredited independent consultant carrying out the audits. Once the audits have been completed, an access works program will be developed, along with guidelines for staff involved in the prioritisation of works.

ADD has the same expectations of funded services in relation to physical accessibility as it has of itself and of other government agencies.

Identified barriers

- 1.10.1 Although access auditing of ADD premises has been carried out at Central Office and at one regional office. Independent auditing of the other 7 regional office locations throughout the State remains to be done.
- 1.10.2 The process for prioritisation of works identified in the access audits presents a complex and time consuming balancing act to ensure the best value is achieved for the majority of users, while at the same time removing barriers to individuals with special needs.
- 1.10.3 For ADD premises, responsibilities for identification, programming and budgeting of access specific works need to be defined and integrated into the budgeting process and into the performance reviewing process for Senior Unit Managers.
- 1.10.4 An Access Works Program alone will not lead to the removal of physical barriers if staff do not understand the need to keep access pathways free of obstructions. Parallel action is required to ensure rules are put in place, communicated to staff and observed.
- 1.10.5 Areas of highest priority for full accessibility ie. consultation and meeting venues, are often external to the Department and a checklist will need to be developed to assist in accurate assessment of such venues.
- 1.10.6 The assessment of premises for lease by, or use by ADD, requires standardised guidelines and assessment criteria to enable systematic assessment to be undertaken on a routine basis.
- 1.10.7 While ADD makes service providers aware of their obligations under the NSW Disability Services Act 1993 through a provision in their contract, and offers support and information in terms of best practice, there are a wide range of situations and circumstances in which providers operate. As each service provider is responsible for implementation of the Act, the outcome varies considerably for clients of services from location to location. This needs to become part of the monitoring process.

1.10 Physical accessibility – strategies

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>1.10.1 Development of a staged audit program for premises used by ADD, including Head Office and Regional Offices, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ venues for meetings and consultations ➤ existing workplaces ➤ proposed new workplaces. <p>The process is to include a strategy, timetable, and essential documentation for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ an initial audit of Head Office (completed) ➤ an initial audit of each regional office, including meeting venues as a priority (1 underway) ➤ routine follow-up audits of all ADD premises to monitor implementation ➤ auditing as required of proposed new premises, premises for temporary leasing or to be used by ADD. 	<p>Staff time and resources</p> <p>Access Audits for 7 regional offices @ \$7000</p>	<p>Corporate Services: Coordinator, Office Services</p>	<p>7 audits to be completed by December 2000</p>
<p>1.10.2 Investigate the training needs of staff to be involved in the handling and prioritisation of works identified in access audits, and develop training program and resource material to guide staff in making balanced decisions.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Human Resources</p>	<p>June 2000</p>

<p>1.10.3 (a) Development of a staged works program for ADD premises to progressively remove barriers from both workplaces and areas used by stakeholders, according to priority order.</p> <p>The works program to be developed around the findings of the audits and programmed through the budgeting process.</p> <p>Priority order for works to be established around criteria including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. extent to which have critical impact as entry points for public access to service delivery and information 2. extent to which have a critical impact on participation in meetings and consultation forums 3. scale of benefit (aim to achieve maximum benefit for the widest range of people initially) 4. extent to which the works meet identified existing needs 5. extent to which the works meet the needs of a range of disability types 6. ease with which works are achievable : eg signage, lighting <p>In any one year, a combination of works of different priorities to be undertaken to ensure that a balanced approach is taken.</p>	<p>Staff time and resources Access</p> <p>Works Program of \$50,000 per annum</p>	<p>Corporate Services</p>	<p>August 2000 for Works Program</p> <p>Implementation to cover 3 years of the Plan.</p>
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<p>1.10.3 (b) Accountabilities to be built into the performance assessment processes for Senior Managers.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Director General Senior Unit Managers</p>	<p>December 2000</p>
<p>1.10.4 Review organisational practices and procedures to ensure staff, within their daily work practices, observe the concept of barrier free access pathways.</p> <p>➤ to be included in induction training (see Section 3)</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Corporate Services Human Resources</p>	<p>August 2000</p>
<p>1.10.5 (a) Development and promotion of an access checklist for use in the assessment of ADD venues for meetings and consultations, for:</p> <p>➤ inclusion in training ➤ wide availability to staff</p> <p>(b) requirement for staff to use access checklist in organisation of meetings with people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Accredited access auditor cost & staff time</p>	<p>Disability Policy Unit and Co-ordinator Office Services</p>	<p>a) June 2000 b) from June 2000</p>
<p>1.10.6 Preparation of standardised guidelines and checklist for staff assessment of premises for lease or to be used by ADD for:</p> <p>➤ incorporation into relevant officer position description ➤ inclusion in training</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Disability Policy Unit Co-ordinator Office Services</p>	<p>Sept 2000</p>

<p>1.10.7 Development of a strategy for improving efforts of contracted service providers in meeting their obligations re physical access through investigation of measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ provision of supporting material and guidelines➤ contractual requirements➤ inclusion of physical access provision as a component of the monitoring process.	Staff time	Contract Management	June 2001
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Performance indicators

- 1.10.1 ADD adopts by December 2000 a program for the auditing of the accessibility of premises it uses which includes all remaining regional offices in Year 1 of the Plan.
- 1.10.2 (a) The Corporate Services Unit, with input from the Disability Policy Unit, establishes guidelines for staff prioritisation of works to improve accessibility, as identified in the access audits, by June 2000;
- (b) Prior to their participation in the prioritisation process of access works identified in the audits, all participating staff are trained in the use of the guidelines;
- 1.10.3 (a) By August 2000, an Access Works Program has been developed by Corporate Services to provide a systematic mechanism over a three year period and within a budget of \$50,000 per annum, for the removal of barriers to physical access, at:
- ADD's Central Office
 - regional offices (7 remaining offices in Year 1) and
 - other venues used by ADD, particularly Regional Advisory Group meeting venues.
- (b) By December 2000 accountabilities for access improvements are built into the performance agreements of senior staff.
- 1.10.4 The Corporate Services Unit prepares draft staff procedures by August 2000 to ensure barrier free access pathways are provided at all times.
- 1.10.5 (a) An access checklist for assessment of meeting and consultation venues is prepared by June 2000, and reviewed and updated annually.
- (b) All staff are informed about ADD's checklist for assessment of external venues to be used for consultations and meetings, and of the requirement that only accessible venues are to be used, from June 2000.
- 1.10.6 ADD develops standardised guidelines and a checklist for staff use in assessment of non-ADD premises, which are to be leased or used for ADD events by September 2000.
- 1.10.7 The Provider Performance Review makes a recommendation by June 2001 on the feasibility of including physical accessibility requirements within service provider contracts.

1.11 Promoting positive community attitudes

Goals/outcomes

- ADD provides a best practice model for both the government and non government sector in its portrayal of, and interaction with, people with disabilities.
- Through ADD representation on committees and working parties, and through its employment practices, people with disabilities will be visible within, and seen to be part of, the NSW Government structure.
- Through ADD activities and promotions, the range of people with disabilities is visible to the community, with greater community awareness of the competencies of people with disabilities and of the diversity of their needs.

ADD context

The commitment of the NSW Government to the Disability Policy Framework has put in place a clear context for government agencies, in particular, to improve the accessibility of services to people with disabilities. The Disability Policy Framework describes many positive examples of initiatives taken by a range of different agencies, however many agencies are only just beginning to seriously tackle the problem.

ADD thus has a special role in portraying people with disabilities positively to other government departments, in order that they respond in a constructive way to the Disability Policy Framework. ADD is well positioned to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to become more visible within government, through its employment of people with disabilities and by ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to represent the Department on committees and working parties.

Additionally, much can also be achieved through the provision by ADD of support, advice and information to agencies in the development of their Disability Action Plans.

The Management of ADD recognises the need to foster a 'good practice' culture throughout the organisation. As the funding body to service providers, it has the opportunity to lead by example in its everyday interaction with people with disabilities and their families and carers.

In its wider role of portraying people with disabilities positively to the community, ADD has recognised the impact the media and young people have in shaping the views of the wider community. ADD has put in place a "Celebration of Ability Media and Student Awards" to encourage the portrayal of people with disabilities in positive, creative and realistic ways. Ninety two entrants were received for the first year of the awards (1999), revealing a growing level of awareness within the community of issues affecting people with disabilities.

Identified barriers

- 1.11.1 While the Disability Policy Framework provides guidelines on procedures to be followed to ensure accessible communications and in the holding of accessible meetings, some staff are not aware of this resource, and thus efforts vary from area to area within the Department.
- 1.11.2 Not all areas of the Department have a high level of awareness of the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds of people with disabilities.
- 1.11.3 Representation of the Department on government committees and working parties tends to be ad hoc.
- 1.11.4 Some government agencies are not familiar with ADD's role in promoting the interests of people with disabilities. They are only just beginning to acknowledge the problems faced by people with disabilities in accessing their services, and often struggle to develop meaningful strategies.
- 1.11.5 Existing volatility and prejudice within the media and the community is difficult to turn around in a short period of time.

<p>1.11.3 ADD supports other government agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ by example ➤ through support and advice on action planning process ➤ through provision of resource materials. 	Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Services - Disability Policy Unit 	Annually
<p>1.11.4 Review and modify the guidelines for selection of representatives of ADD on internal and external committees to increase the opportunities for representation by people with disabilities, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ improve the visibility of people with disabilities, and ➤ to show the range of responsibilities and competencies, particularly within the government structure. 	Staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Services - Human Resources 	December 2000
<p>1.11.5 Review of targeted ADD programs eg. for promotion of positive community attitudes "Celebration of Ability Media and Student Awards", in terms of: spread, type of coverage, media form, publicity , and adoption as long term strategies where successful.</p>	Staff time	Communication and Community Liaison Unit	Annually

Performance indicators

- 1.11.1 (a) The ADD Communications Strategy is revised by May 2000 to ensure that publishing and media guidelines portray people with disabilities positively, and that resource materials cater to the diversity of the social and cultural backgrounds of people with disabilities.
- (b) The ADD Communications Strategy is expanded to incorporate the Disability Policy Framework Guidelines for Accessible Communication and Meetings by June 2000.
- 1.11.2 A 'best practice' approach to communication is adopted to communication by June 2000, which requires all staff to use 'best practice' resource materials in their preparation of meetings and in their dissemination of information.
- 1.11.3 The Department's provision of information, resource material and support to government agencies and Local Government Authorities on implementation of the requirements of the Disability Policy Framework, is measured annually, with compliance reported to the Social Justice Committee of Cabinet and Parliament.
- 1.11.4 Guidelines for staff appointment to Government committees are developed by December 2000 to ensure staff with disabilities in ADD have opportunities to represent the Department, to be visible within government structures and to enable competencies to be widely recognised.
- 1.11.5 The Media Awards ("Celebration of Ability Media and Student Awards") Program, designed to promote people with disabilities positively, is reviewed annually to ensure that its effectiveness is maintained, as reflected in the level of interest demonstrated, the number of applications submitted and the range of communication mediums represented.

1.12 Training of staff

Goal/outcome

- ADD staff are trained to deal adequately with the diverse needs of people with disabilities in a non-discriminatory manner.
- ADD staff with disabilities function as Departmental Officers without barriers and without fear of discrimination.

ADD context

The Department employs staff in both Head Office and within eight non-metropolitan offices.

The staff awareness survey, undertaken as part of the Action Planning process, revealed that some staff, in working away from direct contact with users of services, are not fully informed of the diversity of disabilities and the impact that has on the need for access to services. And while some staff are experienced in dealing with a specific type of disability they remain less aware of other disabilities.

The Department is currently developing a Human Resources Strategic Plan which will include a review of staff training and career development strategies. All existing information, such as process reviews and the Staff Awareness Survey, will provide valuable input into the review process.

The new regional planning process, and the information system it will rely upon, will also provide useful input into an expanded training area. The regional planning processes are designed to bring out a fuller picture of the range of client needs on a local basis, which will influence the way services are designed, funding is allocated and services are delivered.

The staff awareness survey also sought to identify barriers which prevent some staff members with a disability from functioning with the same ease as other staff members of ADD. Respondents were able to remain anonymous, which may have been an important influence on their willingness to disclose their disability and to identify the associated barriers. It may also suggest that staff with disabilities perceive that they will be treated differently upon identifying their disability. Staff training needs to ensure that disability awareness training is provided in a way that ensures staff respond sensitively to the needs of a staff member with a disability.

Identified barriers

- 1.12.1 Staff are sometimes unwilling to disclose a disability.
- 1.12.2 Not all staff have been exposed to training in disability awareness.
- 1.12.3 Staff sometimes have specialised knowledge of a particular disability type and not the range of disabilities.
- 1.12.4 Training does not as yet reflect the organisational changes in determining the way the needs of people with disabilities are met through the regional planning process.
- 1.12.5 Monitoring through EEO statistics does not provide a full picture of the training and reasonable adjustment needs of people with disabilities.
- 1.12.6 Specialised procedural areas, such as emergency and fire drills, sometimes overlook detailed provision for the needs of people with disabilities in their planning and training.

1.12 Training of staff - strategies

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
1.12.1 Development of a Disability Awareness Training package to foster greater staff awareness of the range of disabilities, and to improve staff sensitivity to the needs of people with disabilities.	\$10,000 developmental cost for resource material	Human Resources	June 2000
1.12.2 & 1.12.3 Provision of disability awareness training to all staff, supported by the wide availability of the 'best practice' access resource material.	DA Training Program @ \$30,000 Staff time	Human Resources Corporate Services	Dec 2000
1.12.4 Incorporation of findings of the regional planning process on access issues into the key training areas for policy development, program design and refinement, and service monitoring.	Staff time	Human Resources Planning	Dec 2000, then ongoing
1.12.5 Review the process for the monitoring of the number of employees with disabilities to provide a more accurate indication of the number of people with disabilities, the range of their disabilities and of their training and support needs.	Staff time	EEO Committee Human Resources ODEOPE input	Dec 2001
1.12.6 Review of emergency and fire drill procedures and training, to ensure appropriate support to people with disabilities.	Staff time	Occupational Health and Safety Committee	May 2000

Performance indicators

- 1.12.1 A Disability Awareness Training package is developed by June 2000 to provide 'best practice' resource material for both internal and external use.
- 1.12.2 & 1.12.3 All ADD staff have received disability awareness training by December 2000.
- 1.12.4 Key outcomes of the regional planning process are incorporated into the training program by December 2000, with adjustments each December, (particular application to the areas of policy development, program design and refinement, and service monitoring).
- 1.12.5 ADD, through its joint efforts with ODEOPE, has a mechanism in place which accurately measures the number of staff with disabilities and their training and support needs by December 2001.
- 1.12.6 Emergency and fire drill procedures include provision of appropriate support to people with disabilities by May 2000.

1.13 Information about services

Goal/outcome

- People with disabilities, their families and carers, are able to obtain appropriately produced information by ADD about its own programs.
- People with disabilities, their families and carers, are able to obtain appropriately produced information about services funded by ADD.
- Information provided through the Population Group Planning process by people with disabilities, their families and carers, and service providers is incorporated in ADD's database and reflected in the way services are delivered.
- Other government agencies are able use/share databases on service targets and delivery.

ADD context

ADD is a small Department which does not directly deliver services, but is the funder of other organisations to deliver services. It has very varied stakeholders, and thus its information provision must meet a wide range of needs.

General information about the Department and its services is available:

through the Internet on the Department's website:

<http://www.add.nsw.gov.au>,

in hard copy from Head Office and Regional Offices, and

in alternate print from the Department's Communications and

Community Liaison Unit on **tel: 9367 6822**, or by email on

add.info@add.nsw.gov.au.

As part of the Disability Policy Framework process, ADD produced guidelines on the holding of meetings and strategies for communicating in an accessible way (Communication Handbook). There has been a wide external demand for this type of resource material, as organisations become aware of the need to provide for people with disabilities, and strive to make their services accessible.

However, ADD's staff awareness survey revealed that some staff are either unaware of the availability of the guidelines or of the need to use them.

The Department's Communication Strategy is currently being reviewed and the opportunity exists for inclusion of a shortened version of the guidelines to be included as a best practice policy.

The move to a Regional Advisory structure opens up the opportunity to encourage the widespread adoption of such best practice.

The Department's introduction of regional planning processes, with their regional advisory Groups, will provide an important source of information on local needs, both within programs and across programs. The process will inform program design and monitoring, and will help provide for a fairer distribution of new resources across the State.

A number of other government agencies also provide services to people with disabilities and older people. ADD has been working with the NSW Health Department, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services in the development of protocols for the sharing of information and cooperation in the development of data. A Memorandum of Understanding has been put in place to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each agency, and to identify common policy objectives and outcomes. This provides a sound basis for ongoing liaison, and joint efforts to improve the on-the-ground outcomes for users of the services.

Identified barriers

- 1.13.1 Existing resource material, such as the Communication Handbook on accessible information and meetings, is not used by all staff.
- 1.1.3.2 Areas of special need, such as people with disabilities from non-English speaking background and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, may not be captured in the normal distribution processes for ADD communications and information.
- 1.13.3 The range of service users, or potential users of services funded by ADD, has remained unclear because of past approaches to data collation and program administration. Information about programs and services was thus not able to be targeted at the people who needed it. The Department's shift in approach will take some time to become fully operational.
- 1.13.4 Government agencies at State and Federal levels with responsibilities in the same areas as ADD often work of different data and information bases, restricting opportunities for joint planning and complementary service provision. Information for consumers, when provided, can be very confusing as a result.

1.13 Information about services - strategies

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>1.13.1 Review of ADD Communication Strategy to include 'best practice' access resource materials on publications, communication and meetings, and to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ these are built into induction training as 'best practice' procedures ➤ all staff are required to implement 'best practice' procedures ➤ staff are evaluated on their compliance with 'best practice' access requirements. 	Staff time	Communications Unit Disability Policy Unit	May 2000
<p>1.13.2 Distribution strategies for publications and materials are reviewed to ensure coverage of non mainstream media outlets for people with disabilities from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking background.</p>	Staff time	Communications Unit Diversity & Equity Unit	Dec 2000

<p>1.13.3 Communication and distribution strategies are reviewed and updated to reflect changes in organisational approaches under the new regional planning process, and the improved understanding of the range of potential users and their information needs.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Communications Unit Planning Unit</p>	<p>June 2000 & ongoing</p>
<p>1.13.4 Communications with other government agencies continue to aim for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ improved outcomes from data collation, information sharing and alignment of policy objectives and outcomes. ➤ information in publications and brochures that is clearer for people wanting to access services. 	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Director Strategic Planning & Policy Planning Policy</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Performance indicators

- 1.13.1 (a) The ADD Communication Strategy is finalised by May 2000 and provides for a 'best practice' approach to accessible publications, communication and meetings;
- (b) All staff are instructed by Senior Unit Managers by June 2000 to implement the 'best practice' procedures.
- 1.13.2 Distribution strategies for publications and materials cover media outlets for people with disabilities, their families and carers, of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds by December 2000.
- 1.13.3 The design and monitoring of ADD funding programs is informed by information gathered through the regional planning process from service users and service providers, from June 2000 onwards.
- 1.13.4 ADD is an active participant in meetings with other Human Services agencies at State and Federal levels, with responsibilities for common target groups, and supports common objectives through the sharing of data and information to improve the outcome for service users.

1.14 Employment in the public sector

Goal/outcome

- People with disabilities participate in the ADD workforce at all levels and are supported in their career development objectives.
- ADD meets the targets in the Disability Policy Framework of 11% for employees with a disability and 4% for the number of people requiring workplace adjustment.
- Contractors with disabilities have opportunities to work for ADD.

ADD context

The Staff Awareness Strategy revealed that the Department's efforts to date in encouraging people with disabilities to participate in the workforce, have had some success. 15% of staff indicated they have a disability, covering a wide range of disabilities. Additionally 4% (12) of the ADD workforce require workplace adjustments.

ADD will review its recruitment, training, and career development approaches to ensure that any systemic barriers to people with disabilities are removed and so that opportunities are equally available for people with disabilities.

This will occur within an ADD workforce that is characterised by:

- a combination of permanent full time employees and contracted staff, with the latter providing opportunities for one-off projects on both a short term and longer term basis
- a number of new positions being offered as reform strategies take effect
- opportunities provided for staff to act in higher positions and to gain broader work experience
- opportunities for flexible work practices, with job sharing and part time work options being available.

An example of the way ADD can contribute to improved employment opportunities for people with disabilities, can be seen from its development of a Register of Access Advisors. ADD recognised that agencies and organisations, within the public sector in particular, would need reliable

contractors to undertake access audits for them as they begin to tackle the task of making their premises more accessible. ADD established a process to begin filling that gap, inviting Expressions of Interest from contractors experienced in disability issues, and provided training as part of the accreditation process for contractors able to demonstrate the necessary competencies. ADD then played, and continues to play, an important role in giving publicity to register.

Identified barriers

- 1.14.1 EEO statistics (as compared to the anonymous Staff Awareness Survey) do not appear to provide an accurate reflection of the full extent of disabilities within the Department, suggesting a staff perception of disadvantage arising from disclosure.
- 1.14.2 EEO statistics (as compared to the anonymous Staff Awareness if people do not feel free to discuss a disability without concern about negative reaction, the support and assistance they need will not be made available.
- 1.14.3 There may be a perception that selection processes will work against a person with a disability where the person is unable to provide written applications, or to easily demonstrate their skills, experience, knowledge and outlook in an interview situation.
- 1.14.4 Some staff with disabilities consider they do not have equal access to opportunities for employment and career development.
- 1.14.5 There may be a perception that the tendering process will work against a contractor with a disability.

1.14 Employment in the public sector - strategies

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
1.14.1 ODEOPE to be consulted on refinement of the method of collecting EEO statistics on disabilities and reasonable adjustments to identify reasons for probable under-reporting. (see 3.5 Training)	Staff time	Human Resources ODEOPE input	March 2000
1.14.2 As part of Human Resources Strategy, a process to be developed for the monitoring of the expanded staff training and awareness program to ensure staff generally demonstrate positive attitudes, sensitivity and support for employees with a disability. (see 3.1 Training)	Staff time	Human Resources	June 2000
1.14.3 Review and adjustment of recruitment action procedures to ensure people with disabilities are not disadvantaged. To cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ position descriptions ➤ advertising of positions ➤ receipt of applications ➤ interview technique and ➤ staff selection panels. 	Staff time	Human Resources EEO Committee ODEOPE input	Aug 2000

1.14.4	Review processes for staff recruitment and career development, through the Human Resources Strategy, to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.	Staff time	Human Resources EEO committee	Dec 2000
1.14.5	Review of tender processes for contractors to ensure removal of any barriers to competition by contractors with disabilities, to ensure that they can compete on an equitable basis.	Staff time	Human Resources Senior Unit Managers	Jun 2000

Performance indicators

- 1.14.1 Negotiations with ODEOPE start in March 2000 regarding the development of an improved monitoring mechanism for identification of the range of people with disabilities working in ADD and the level of adjustments needed.
- 1.14.2 The Human Resources Strategy puts in place a process to monitor the effectiveness of the expanded staff training and awareness program on staff awareness, sensitivity and support for staff with disabilities by June 2000. (see also Training).
- 1.14.3 Staff selection guidelines have accessibility provisions in place by August 2000 to better cover the advertising of positions, the receiving of applications in alternate format, and selection processes so that people with a disability know that they will not be disadvantaged in seeking employment in ADD.
- 1.14.4 The Human Resource Strategy ensures that barriers to recruitment, training and career development, are removed for people with disabilities by December 2000.
- 1.14.5 Review of tender processes for contractors to ensure removal of any barriers to competition by contractors with disabilities, to ensure that they can compete on an equitable basis.

1.15 Complaints procedures

Goal/outcome

- ADD's complaints system is accessible to people with disabilities, their families and carers and provides an important information tool to management.
- Service providers funded by ADD are required to have a complaints process which is accessible to people with disabilities, and is monitored by ADD as part of its quality control process.

ADD context

In its role of funding service providers, and in not being a service provider itself, ADD's complaint system is mainly concerned with the conduct of its staff and the adequacy of the programs it funds.

Complaints about members of staff are dealt with by the officer's supervisor or a director. The person making the complaint is advised within one week of how the matter is being handled, and in most cases the complaint is able to be finalised within 28 days. A written response is made to every complaint.

Comments or complaints about program structure can be made either by writing or by telephoning the Department and asking to speak to the person in charge of the area. Alternatively, issues can be raised through peak disability groups or regional advisory groups.

ADD also obtains information on the adequacy of services from users of the services, via their contributions to the self assessment process that service providers are required to carry out for the Department.

Identified barriers

- 1.15.1 People with disabilities, their families and carers, may be unaware of their right to lodge a complaint, or may hesitate to use the complaints process for fear of reprisals, in view of their dependency on the service/s.
- 1.15.2 Complaints are dealt with within the area of ADD with responsibility for the issue and thus emerging access issues of

significance, or issues of organisation-wide consequence, may not be coming to the attention of management.

- 1.15.3 Service users may be hesitant to indicate dissatisfaction with services in the service evaluation process, given their dependency on the service.
- 1.15.4 Service providers may not recognise the value of having a complaints mechanism in place unless it is made a formal requirement of their funding contract.

1.15 Complaints procedures – strategies

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
1.15.1 A review is undertaken of the information available on the various complaints procedures and action taken to ensure stakeholders are provided with clear information.	Staff time	Corporate Services	December 2000
1.15.2 Review and refinement of ADD complaints system to ensure provision is made for complaints on access issues to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ registered and monitored at central level treated confidentially ➤ analysed and the analysis forwarded to senior management to assist in service modification or enhancement. 	Staff time	Corporate Services	June 2001
1.15.3 Review of ADD's self assessment process for users of services to determine its effectiveness for ADD as a part of monitoring of service provision, and to determine whether a provision needs to be made within service provider contracts for a complaints process.	Staff time	Contracts Management	December 2001
1.15.4 Review of ADD's contract management arrangements to determine the need for a mandatory complaint mechanism.	Staff time	Contracts Management	December 2001

Performance indicators

- 1.15.1 Information about complaint procedures is widely disseminated to ADD stakeholders by inclusion in routine information exercises by December 2000.
- 1.15.2 ADD has a more refined system in place by December 2001 that ensures a consistent approach is taken to complaints across the organisation and which prompts the appropriate policy or reform response upon identification of emerging issues.
- 1.15.3 ADD's system of self assessment by clients of services, is reviewed by June 2001 to determine the effectiveness and the value of the input to ADD in its monitoring of service adequacy from an access perspective.
- 1.15.4 A review of contract management arrangements, investigating the possible inclusion of a requirement for a complaints procedure within the contracts of service providers, is completed by December 2001.

PART 2:

Joint Planning Initiatives

2.1 Older people with disabilities

Goal / outcome

- Develop a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of older people with disabilities, beginning with an emphasis on supported accommodation options and life long learning and education services.

Other participating organisations

- Community-based service providers
- Department of Community Services
- Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, and
- Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services.

Identified barriers

- 2.1.1 Lack of access to mainstream aged care services for people with long standing disabilities.
- 2.1.2 Lack of adequate support in residential settings and in the community for people with long standing disabilities.

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
2.1.1 & 2.1.2 i. Establishment of an inter-unit project team within ADD ii. Review of data to identify trends iii. Community and government consultation iv. Exploration of joint funding options with the Commonwealth Dept of Health and Aged Care v. Development of draft strategy vi. Program adjustments	ADD staff: coordination ADD staff time: Strategy development Consultation and negotiations	Senior Project Officer, Disability Policy	i & ii: May 2000 iii. Aug 2000 iv. Dec 2000 v. Jan 2001 vi. Dec 2003

Performance indicators

2.1.1 ADD's draft Strategy on meeting the needs of people with long standing disabilities is developed by January 2001, and provides options for increased access to aged care facilities, and for support services within both the community and residential settings.

2.1.1.1 Where agreement is reached on implementation of specific components of the Strategy, by ADD and other State and Commonwealth providers of human services, adjustments to those programs occur by December 2003 where possible.

2.2 Accommodation and support

Goal/Outcome

- Develop a coordinated approach across government to the planning of accommodation and support services to people with disabilities.

Other participating organisations

- Non-government service providers
- Department of Community Services
- Boarding House sector.

Identified Barriers

- 2.2.1 People with disabilities with high support needs have not had access to a wide enough range of accommodation support options to meet their individual needs, and are sometimes inappropriately housed in boarding houses and DOCs facilities.
- 2.2.2 There is no common protocol in place for authorities to respond appropriately to the needs of a person with high support needs with an accommodation crisis, or to manage the individual through the crisis.

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>2.2.1 & 2.2.2</p> <p>i. Development of a crisis protocol with the Department of Community Services for the management of individuals in crisis</p> <p>ii. Implementation of the crisis protocol and allocation of available supported accommodation places on a priority basis</p> <p>iii. Allocation of new Attendant Care places to people with the highest priority from the waiting list.</p> <p>iv. Provision of Supported Accommodation places for individuals currently placed inappropriately in boarding houses</p> <p>v. Provision of a range of supported accommodation options targeted to individual need for a number of residents currently living in DoCS facilities</p> <p>vi. Provision of a range of living support for people with disabilities remaining in boarding houses</p>	<p>ADD staff resources in coordination and protocol development</p>	<p>Disability Services Program</p> <p>Boarding House Team</p> <p>Community Living Development Unit</p>	<p>i. & ii.: Dec 2002</p> <p>iv. Dec 2003</p>

Performance indicators

- 2.2.1 A structured approach is put in place by ADD, in conjunction with DoCs, to provide 760 additional Supported Accommodation places for people with disabilities with high support needs by December 2003.
- 2.2.2 ADD, in conjunction with DoCs, puts a crisis protocol in place by December 2002 to guide the allocation of Supported Accommodation places on a priority basis, along with protocols to guide authorities in the management of the individual through the crisis.

2.3 Respite

Goal / outcome

- Develop a coordinated approach to the provision of respite services.

Other participating organisations

- Department of Community Services
- Commonwealth Department Health and Aged Care
- Community based service providers and
- Consumer organisations.

Identified barriers

- 2.3.1 The absence of a cross government framework for the provision of respite services results in inconsistency in service availability, and which is exacerbated by:
- a significant proportion of short term residential respite places being allocated to consumers requiring permanent or intensive support, and
 - inflexibility in the way services are provided under existing program parameters.

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>2.3.1</p> <p>i. Establishment of a Respite Working Group to provide Ministerial advice on reform options for the respite service system in NSW. To include Government agencies at State and Federal levels, peak service providers, peak user groups (completed December 1999).</p> <p>ii. Development a Ministerial Report outlining options for improving the provision of respite care.</p> <p>iii. Defining of a strategy for improving respite service delivery.</p> <p>iv. Implementation of strategy.</p>	<p>ADD staff: co-ordination</p> <p>ADD staff: report preparation for Working Party</p>	<p>Senior Policy Officer, Disability Policy</p>	<p>i. Task completed in December 1999.</p> <p>ii. Report to Minister by March 2000.</p> <p>iii. ADD strategy for implemented developed by June 2000.</p> <p>iv. Implementation to commence by September 2000.</p>

Performance indicators

- 2.3.1 A Respite Strategy is developed by ADD, with input from key stakeholders, by June 2000 to provide new respite policy directions for the DSP and HACC Programs, with linkages to Commonwealth programs, and providing options for:
- the releasing of residential respite places for short term respite
 - achieving a more flexible way of delivering respite services, so that the specific needs of the person with the disability, and their family and/or carers are taken into account.

2.4 Reduction in abuse

Goal / outcome

- Finalise the policy for the prevention and responding to abuse of people with disabilities.

Other participating organisations

- Department of Community Services
- Community Services Commission
- NSW Health
- Police Service
- Attorney General's Department
- Office of the Public Guardian
- Department of Public Prosecutions
- Legal Aid Commission
- Guardianship Tribunal

Identified barriers

- 2.4.1 Lack of clear policies and procedures for prevention and response. Research shows that situations are often exacerbated when service providers do not:
- take the necessary action to prevent incidents
 - respond appropriately when incidents occur
 - report matters or protect people who have reported matters
 - build on, or learn from, past practice or events, or
 - utilise the expertise and resources of disability and mainstream services with a role in prevention or response.
- 2.4.2 People with disabilities are at risk of abuse and/or assault through a combination of often complex factors influencing their circumstances, including:
- the inexperience of service providers in identifying situations where a service recipient may be at risk of abuse or assault, arising from the lack of training and skills of managers and staff, high rates of staff turnover and use of casual and inexperienced staff
 - service insularity, reluctance to change practices and lack of collaboration
 - poor service environments, coupled with a lack of systems, policies and procedures
 - lack of skills in, or access to, expertise in behavior management

- the incompatibility of service recipients when combined with the limitations on individual's choice of where they live, and their sense of loss of control over their lives and environments, and
- negative stereotypes about people with disabilities.

Strategies	Resources	Team and / or unit responsible	Timeframe
2.4.1 & 2.4.2 i. Production of draft Policy ii. Undertaking of small area trials supported by inter-agency committee review. iii. Revision of Policy to build in trial outcomes iv. Distribution of final Policy to stakeholders, particularly service providers v. Provision of induction sessions vi. Development and release of supporting resources vii. Implementation	ADD staff: co-ordination ADD staff: report & resource material preparation	Strategic Policy & Planning Unit Division - Disability Policy Unit	i. July 2000 ii. Oct 2000 iii. Jan 2001 iv. Sep 2001 v. Feb 2002 vi. Jan 2003 vii. Dec 2003

Performance indicators

- 2.4.1 ADD draft policy position is produced by July 2000 and covers proposed prevention strategies for both disability-specific and mainstream agencies, as well as proposed procedures for response to situations, or emerging situations where a person with a disability may be at risk of abuse or assault.
- 2.4.2 Strategies are implemented by December 2003 to reduce the factors contributing to the vulnerability of people with disabilities to abuse and or assault, including the provision of information sessions and support materials to service providers.

2.5 Specialist disability services

Goal / outcome

- Develop a Specialist Disability Services Forward Plan

Other participation organisations

- Department of Community Services
- Department of Education and Training

Identified barriers

- 2.5.1 People with disabilities and their families and carers do not always receive appropriate services early enough to enable them to participate in the community.

Specialist disability services

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>2.5.1</p> <p>Strategy developed to cover provision of specialist services eg. behaviour management support, diagnosis & assessment, and & case management/ coordination</p>	<p>ADD staff resources for coordination and strategy development</p>	<p>CLDU</p> <p>Disability Policy Unit</p> <p>Planning</p>	<p>Dec 2000</p>

Performance indicator

- 2.5.1 A report of the review of specialist services, including behaviour management support, diagnosis and assessment, and case management coordination services, be completed by December 2000.

PART 3:

Whole of Government Planning

3.1 Development of a coordinated approach to physical access for people with disabilities.

Goal/outcome

- Develop a coordinated approach to physical access for people with disabilities in NSW.

Participating agencies

- Premier's Department
- NSW Tourism
- Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
- Department of Transport
- Department of Public Works and Services
- Roads and Traffic Authority
- Department of Local Government
- NSW Treasury, and
- NSW Government Architect.

Identified barriers

- 3.1.1 The lack of knowledge and/or experience within individual agencies in the provision of accessibility measures.
- 3.1.2 Consideration is often not given to access requirements at the planning and design stage of infrastructure developments, resulting in costly and difficult remedial works having to be done at a later stage.
- 3.1.3 The fragmentation of responsibility for the planning and provision of infrastructure by individual agencies, with each only dealing with their immediate responsibility, rather than ensuring that related agencies provide the necessary linkages to, for example, essential transport services.

Strategies	Resources	Officer responsible	Timeframe
<p>3.1.1 to 3.1.3</p> <p>i. Development of Universal Planning Protocols as a basis for co-operation and common approaches by Government agencies responsible for the planning and provision of public infrastructure.</p> <p>ii. Dissemination of draft UP Protocols for feedback from Chief Executive Officers of designated agencies.</p> <p>iii. Development by OCA of access guidelines into a resource kit for agencies, and for attachment to the UP Protocols.</p> <p>iv. Finalisation of UP Protocols and dissemination in October for signature by December 2000 by the Chief Executives of designated agencies.</p>	<p>ADD staff resources</p> <p>ADD staff resources</p> <p>OCA staff resources</p> <p>ADD staff resources</p>	<p>Senior Project Officer, Disability Policy Unit</p>	<p>i. October 1999 (completed)</p> <p>ii. December 1999 (completed)</p> <p>iii. September 2000</p> <p>iv. December 2000</p>

Performance indicators

- 3.1.1 An access resource kit is developed and adapted for general use by the Olympic Coordination Authority (OCA) by August 2000, to inform agencies of access requirements and to enable them to take advantage of OCA's experience in the preparation of the Olympics and Paralympics
- 3.1.2 The Universal Planning Protocol, developed by ADD, and the OCA Access Resource kit, are distributed by September 2000 to designated agencies with responsibility for the planning and provision of public infrastructure, to provide a consistent framework for incorporation of access requirements into the development of public spaces.
- 3.1.3 The Chief Executive Officers of participating agencies become signatories to the Universal Planning Protocol by December 2000, creating the basis for a common approach to the planning and development of public infrastructure.