



State Library of Western Australia and State Records Office of Western Australia

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2023

Draft for public consultation – January 2019

This document is available in alternative formats upon request, see page 9 for how to request a copy.

The State Library of Western Australia and the State Records Office of Western Australia acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land and culture. We are honoured to be located on Whadjuk Country, the ancestral lands of the Noongar people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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## **Outline of organisations**

In 2017, administrative responsibility for the State Records Office of Western Australia was transferred from the then Department of Culture and the Arts to the State Library of Western Australia. Previously the State Records Office was included in the department's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan sets out the strategies of both the State Library and the State Records Office, offering synergies in the implementation of improvements to access to building the two agencies share and the development of joint and shared access and inclusion initiatives.

## **State Library of Western Australia**

The State Library has a strong commitment to ensuring that all Western Australians have access to free library and information services. The Library's key objective is to be a State Library for everyone; one that embraces digital transformation and builds skills for the future.

This is achieved by providing an extensive range of resources, services and facilities to clients of all ages and abilities who visit the State Library in person or online or who use the Western Australian public library network.

## **Services and facilities provided by the State Library**

- A significant collection of Western Australia's published and private documentary resources that are collected, organised and maintained for future generations. The Library is working to make as many of these resources as possible available online.
- A general reference collection of resources in print and online to support client's work, education and recreation needs.
- Information and reference services to meet client needs provided in person, over the telephone and online.
- An accessible website that includes the State Library's catalogue of resources as well as resources held in public libraries throughout the State. The website also features access to digital heritage materials, online databases and online exhibitions.

- Education programs, events, tours, exhibitions, public talks and group activities based on Library resources.
- Promotional and outreach services to inform and educate people about resources, facilities, services and events.
- Resources provided to public libraries including normal and large print books, audiobooks in a variety of formats and DVDs. These resources are available to people with a disability through the inter library loan services available in all public libraries.
- State-wide access to electronic resources including e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines available to download for free at home.
- Public facilities in the State Library building include study, research and reading spaces, incubator space, theatre, meeting rooms, exhibition space and café used by a wide range of people and community organisations.
- Access to information technology for visitors to the State Library building including public access computers, digital micrographic equipment, copying devices, wireless Internet access and digital photography. A range of equipment is available suited to the needs of people with disability.
- The Better Beginnings family literacy program that supports parents and carers to build early childhood literacy skills so that all children can become good readers and succeed at school. A number of resources have been developed specifically for families with children or parents with disability.

The State Library welcomes everyone and aims to ensure that all services and facilities are accessible. Further information about the State Library can be found at [slwa.wa.gov.au](http://slwa.wa.gov.au).

### **State Records Office of Western Australia**

The State Records Office is responsible for managing, preserving and providing access to the Western Australian government archives, delivering best practice records management services to State and local government organisations, and providing the community with access to the State's government archives. It is also the government information management authority which, on behalf of the State Records Commission, regulates information management practices through the development of a whole-of-government framework.

### **Services and facilities provided by the State Records Office**

- The largest and most significant government documentary heritage collection in Western Australia.
- Leads archival practice in Western Australia; the State Records Office fosters good information management processes throughout State and local government to enable effective, efficient, open and accountable business practices.
- Provides assistance to Western Australian government agencies and local governments to meet their obligations under the State Records Act.
- Identifies government information of permanent value to the State.
- Protects and preserves the State Archives Collection and ensures permanent accessibility to the collection by government, the people of Western Australia and researchers world-wide.
- Supports the statutory role of the State Records Commission.
- Provides a comprehensive suite of standards, guidelines and advice to assist contemporary and evolving information management practices throughout government.

- Outreach programs and events to promote the use and value of State Records Office collections to the broadest possible audience.
- Supports Aboriginal people and communities to access and connect with Government archives.
- Public facilities at the State Records Office including study, research and reading spaces.
- Access to information technology for onsite visitors to access State archives. This includes public access computers, digital micrographic equipment, multifunction devices, free wireless Internet access and digital photography.

The State Records Office welcomes everyone and aims to ensure that all services and facilities are accessible. Further information about the State Records Office can be found at [sro.wa.gov.au](http://sro.wa.gov.au).

### **Planning for better access**

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2015), in Western Australia 14 percent of the population identify themselves as having some form of disability, that's 365,000 people. As the population ages, the number of people with disability continues to rise.

A disability is any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities that the Western Australian Disability Services Act defines as a condition that:

- is attributable to an intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments; and
- is permanent or likely to be permanent and which may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature;

Which results in:

- a substantial reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
- a need for continuing support services.

Under the Act it is a requirement that the State Library and the State Records Office develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that outlines the ways in which they will ensure that people with disability have the same opportunities to access services, information and facilities.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act.

### **Significant achievements of previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plans**

The State Library and the State Records Office continue to develop and implement plans to improve access to facilities, collections and services.

The State Library's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 to 2017 included the following achievements:

- Presented events and functions that were accessible for people with disability. Auslan interpreters were used for the SLWA's annual Disrupted Festival of Ideas. Festival sessions were also livestreamed and made available as videos on the Internet.
- Refurbished public and staff lifts complied with accessibility standards.

- Provided public access computers suitable for people with disability.
- Provided the framework for public libraries across the State to select resources in alternative formats to assist people with disability. At 30 June 2018, the following library resources in alternative formats was available:
  - Large print books - 157,035;
  - DVDs – 233,418 ;
  - Audio CDs / MP3s / e-audiobooks – 158,072;
  - E-books – 58,274;
  - E-magazine titles – 462; and
  - CD-ROMs – 3,583.
- Provided funding to Visibility WA for the provision of library services for people with a visual impairment. Visibility WA manages a large library of resources specifically for people with vision impairment and people accessing the State Library online catalogue can now see the holdings of this library.
- Supported staff with an ongoing disability by refining the work that they do, adjusting their working hours and providing appropriate workplace modifications.
- Installed public Information Kiosks that are physically accessible and compliant with Internet accessibility standards.
- Provided training to staff including assisting clients with mental disability, creating accessible documents in Word and creating accessible websites.
- Provided new staff with information about assisting and providing services for people with disability.
- Collaborated with Visibility WA to develop Better Beginnings family literacy program resources for families or a parent with blindness, vision impairment or a print disability.
- Upgraded public and work areas were redeveloped to accessible standards.
- Launched a new State Library website that complied with State Government accessibility standards.
- Welcomed volunteers with disability and provided suitable work, training and workspaces.
- Contracted the Spine and Limb Foundation for the disposal of public library materials that are no longer required, giving meaningful employment to people with disability.
- Contracted the Spine and Limb Association between August 2016 and July 2017 to operate the metropolitan van service between public libraries. The contract is now managed by the Western Australian Local Government Association.

The Department of Culture and the Arts Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2013 to 2017 included the following State Records Office achievements:

- Implemented a service to digitise State archives for users that cannot visit the State Records Office reading room with digital copies mailed to clients.
- Presented events and functions that were accessible for people with disability.
- Supported staff with an ongoing disability by refining the work that they do, adjusting their working hours and providing appropriate workplace modifications.
- Provided new staff with information about assisting and providing services for people with disability.
- Provided an accessible complaints system.

## **Policy statement**

Libraries and archives represent an essential part of any community's social infrastructure and are centres for communication, research, learning and culture. One of the important qualities of these institutions is that they provide an environment where all members of society can feel welcomed. Libraries and archives can play a pivotal role in the lives of people with disability by facilitating their participation in society.

The State Library of Western Australia and the State Records Office of Western Australia are committed to ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed as others to access the services and facilities provided by these organisations.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan identifies initiatives to improve access and inclusion under the seven outcome areas specified in the Disability Services Act:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access services and events;
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and other facilities;
3. People with disability receive information in a format that will enable them to access that information as readily as other people are able to access it;
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from staff as other people receive;
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints;
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation; and
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the State Library or the State Records Office.

## **Development of the plan**

The development of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2023 involved the review of the State Library and State Records Office's previous plans to identify initiatives that had been completed and those that would be ongoing. A literature search was undertaken to identify best practice in the delivery of facilities and services to people with disability. These informed initiatives for the new plan.

The State Library and State Records Office along with other Culture and Arts Portfolio agencies of the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries engaged Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia (DADAA) to conduct a review of their previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plans through public consultation with department-funded agencies, as well as with artists and audiences with disability, their families and carers.

The consultation identified the strengths and weaknesses of previous plans and collected suggestions for strategies for the development of new plans. Information was gathered through interviews, an on-line survey, and venue audits. Desktop research was conducted to isolate best practice in DAIPs nationally and internationally.

These actions led to the drafting of a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2023 that was then released to staff and members of the public for comment.

An online survey was advertised on the State Library and State Records Office websites and in the West Australian newspaper in January 2019. The survey was promoted to staff and volunteers, disability service providers and their networks, members of the State Library and members of the public. The survey remained open for six weeks with responses accepted online, in writing and over the telephone. Feedback was incorporated into the final plan.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2019 to 2023 was approved by State Library and State Records Office senior management and the Library Board of Western Australia.

**Consultation on the plan (this section will be updated after the public consultation is completed)**

The positive role that libraries and archives play in the lives of people with disability was highlighted during the consultation process. Consultation found that while progress has been made in achieving the outcomes of previous Disability Access and Inclusion Plans, there remain a number of barriers to facilities and services:

- Implementation of plans has been hampered by restructuring, resourcing and budget constraints.
- Technology should be used to improve access to collections, programs, events and exhibitions.
- Ongoing disability awareness training and induction of staff and volunteers is required. This training would best be delivered by people with disability and should include the complaints management process.
- Staff are unaware of the organisation's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. Awareness raising sessions should be provided to staff and volunteers.
- Staff are unaware of the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and its impact on cultural organisations. Awareness raising sessions should be provided to staff and volunteers.
- Strategies mostly focus on access and participation in existing services, and not on new programming. New programming, developed with the input of people with disability, is required specifically designed for people with disability.
- Increase marketing targeted specifically to people with disability, their families and carers.
- Partner with disability organisations to deliver programs and services.
- Main entrance to the State Records Office is not easily accessible. Staff assistance may be required to enter the building.
- Websites are suitably accessible but there is room for improvement.
- Deaf people are poorly catered for in programming and events. Auslan is only available for some events.
- Language barrier may exist for people with disability whose first language is not English.
- Items made available online may not be accessible. For example, captioning should be part of the process where the State Library digitises film resources.
- Accessible information available is not comprehensive – available online on State Library and State Records Office websites and AccessWA.com.au. Information should include hireable venues and meeting rooms. Nearest Acrod parking or suitable drop off points. Equipment offered in ALB to assist people with disability. Availability of information in alternative formats.

- Lack of clear Disability Access and Inclusion Plan targets and measures prevents confirmation of success.

### **Communication of the plan**

The plan will be published on the State Library and State Records Office's websites and advertised in the West Australian newspaper. Public library staff will be made aware through the Public Librarians Online website. Alternative formats will be supplied upon request.

### **Implementation of the plan**

The plan will be implemented over five years and is the responsibility of all State Library and State Records Office staff, volunteers and contractors. Some initiatives will apply to all work areas of the State Library and the State Records Office while others will apply to a specific work area.

An annual Implementation Plan will be developed in conjunction with the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to provide guidance and structure to the achievement of the objectives, including the identification of people responsible for the proposed strategies, timelines and performance indicators for completion of the strategies.

The State Library and State Records Office will form a Disability Services Committee responsible for developing and monitoring the annual Implementation Plan. The Committee will meet regularly to plan and implement strategies and make recommendations and report to management.

Initiatives from Implementation Plans will be incorporated into operational, project and budget planning.

Contractors will be supplied a copy of this plan and their responsibilities under the plan will be agreed. Where appropriate, contractors will report annually on progress and achievements on access for people with disability to contracted buildings work, programs and events.

### **Review and reporting on the plan**

The State Library's Disability Services Committee will meet regularly to review progress on the implementation of the strategies in the DAIP.

Regular presentations will be made to staff at staff meetings and updates on achievements promoted to staff.

Annual Implementation Plans will be regularly reviewed by the Disability Services Committee and management to monitor progress and to flag any access and inclusion issues that may arise.

The Library Board of Western Australia will approve the annual Implementation Plan and receive annual reports on progress.

An annual report on progress will be supplied to the Disability Services Commissioner as required by the Disability Services Act. This report will form the basis of reporting in the Annual Report of the Library Board of Western Australia (State Library) and the

Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (State Records Office). These Annual Reports are presented to Parliament.

The plan will be fully reviewed prior to its expiry in 2023 in accordance with the Disability Services Act.

### **Feedback on the plan**

Feedback on the plan is welcome at any time. Feedback can be given:

- In person to any staff member. Verbal feedback can be recorded by a staff member and submitted upon request.
- In writing on a feedback form available at the State Library Welcome Desk and the State Records Office Reading Room.
- By email to [info@slwa.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@slwa.wa.gov.au) or by letter addressed to:  
Manager Strategic Projects  
State Library of Western Australia  
Perth Cultural Centre  
Perth WA 6000
- By telephone on 08 9427 3355 or 1800 198 107 (country callers).
- On Facebook [facebook.com/StateLibraryWA](https://facebook.com/StateLibraryWA) or [facebook.com/StateRecordsOfficeWA](https://facebook.com/StateRecordsOfficeWA)
- On Twitter [twitter.com/statelibrarywa](https://twitter.com/statelibrarywa) or [twitter.com/archives\\_wa](https://twitter.com/archives_wa)

### **How to get a copy of the plan in an alternative format**

Any of the above feedback methods can be used to request a copy of the plan in an alternative format.

### **Strategies to support people with disability, their families and carers (this section will be updated after the public consultation is completed)**

The following strategies will be undertaken by the State Library of Western Australia and or the State Records Office of Western Australia between 2019 and 2023 to improve access to services, events, facilities and information.

### **Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access services and events.**

- Establish a Disability Services Committee from across work areas in the organisations to progress, report and maintain awareness of the plan.  
Timeline - established by March 2019, then ongoing regular meetings.
- Review policies, guidelines and procedures to ensure they reflect the access and participation needs of people with disability, their families and carers.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Ensure programs and events are accessible for people with disability, their families and carers, and access information is included in promotional material.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Partner with disability service providers to develop new programs and events specifically for people with disability.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Implement a communications strategy to build awareness and engagement with the plan amongst staff, volunteers, contractors and clients.  
Timeline – communications strategy available July 2019.
- Provide free entry to Companion Card holders to paid programs and events.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Raise awareness of State Library and State Records Office collections, services, programs and events for people with disability, their families and carers.

Timeline – ongoing.

**Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and other facilities.**

- Monitor, evaluate and respond to collections, services, facilities, equipment and event barriers reported by people with disability, their families and carers.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Implement new technology and equipment to assist people with disability access collections, services, programs and events.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Work with public library staff to ensure public library resources in alternative formats are available to people with disability through the State-wide public library network.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Investigate ways to improve access to the State Records Office entrance.

Timeline – investigation complete July 2020.

- Work cooperatively with relevant public authorities to ensure Perth Cultural Centre facilities, such as accessible parking, drop off zones and toilet facilities meet the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Ensure new and redevelopment building works comply with State Government access standards.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Ensure up to date information on accessibility is available on the State Library and State Records Office websites and the Access WA website.

Timeline – July 2019.

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

- Ensure that State Library and State Records Office websites comply with State Government access standards.

Timeline - July 2020.

- Provide access to information in alternative formats upon request.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to provide information in alternative formats.

Timeline – training provided by December 2020.

- Ensure public corporate documents are accessible and written in a language and style that makes them appropriate to their target audience. Make these documents available in alternative formats upon request.

Timeline – ongoing.

- Raise awareness of staff, clients and public library staff to changes to Copyright legislation that enables format shift of resources for people with disability requesting access.

Timeline – training provided by July 2019.

**Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from staff as other people receive.**

- Partner with disability service providers to provide ongoing staff training in disability awareness and how to engage with people with disability.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Provide training to staff on the operation of equipment for clients with disability to enhance customer service delivery.  
Timeline – training provided by July 2020.
- Ensure that the induction of new staff and volunteers includes access awareness, customer service and other requirements of this plan.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Ensure all contractors and their agents are aware of their responsibilities under this plan.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Review site evacuation procedures and training to include evacuation procedures for people with disability.  
Timeline – January 2020.

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

- Review complaint handling policies and procedures to ensure they cover how complaints from people with disability are handled and what a person with a disability can do if they feel that their complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved.  
Timeline – reviewed policy available December 2019.
- Ensure that complaint mechanisms are accessible for people with disability and that complaints can be made in a flexible manner.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Ensure staff have the knowledge to facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with disability.  
Timeline – training provided by July 2019.

**Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation.**

- Ensure people with disability, their families and carers are consulted when reviewing client service standards and other plans, policies and proposed services.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Ensure consultation documents are available for comment on the State Library and State Records Office's websites and that they are also made available in alternative formats upon request.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Develop a database of service organisations and people with disability and their carers for consultation.  
Timeline – database established by January 2020.

**Outcome 7 – People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the State Library or the State Records Office.**

- Encourage and provide opportunities for people with disability to be employed and to receive training development opportunities.  
Timeline – ongoing.

- Provide a supportive and accessible workplace for staff and volunteers with disability.  
Timeline – ongoing.
- Provide appropriate training for selection panels on how to communicate with people with disability.  
Timeline – training provided by July 2020.