



Great Southern Development Commission

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

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This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or e-mailed), audio or Braille

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) is a State Government agency.

The vision of the GSDC is the sustainable development of our region's economy in harmony with our unique heritage and natural environment.

The GSDC's role is to build partnerships for regional prosperity by planning, coordinating and promoting sustainable development. .

In pursuing its vision, the GSDC works closely with Local Government Authorities, business organisations, investors, community groups and individuals.

Objectives and Functions

(Based on the Regional Development Commissions Act [1993]) are to:

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

Corporate Structure and Area of Responsibility

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) comprises of a Board of ten members which is its executive and policy making body.

The Board meets every two months and is comprised of members from the Great Southern region, with the exception of the CEO, who is an ex officio Board member.

The GSDC has fourteen full time operational staff who manage the day to day administrative affairs of the GSDC and its main development projects. The Commission runs two offices; the Albany Office houses thirteen staff and the Katanning Office which houses one staff member.

The activities of the GSDC are focussed in the Great Southern region, which specifically covers eleven local government authorities, from Denmark in the west to

Jerramungup in the East and north as far as Woodanilling. Albany has city status and is the major regional centre.

The GSDC is mindful of the needs of all members of the Community and delivers its services to include people with disabilities, families and the elderly. The Commission recognises all people of the public have the equal rights and will be catered for accordingly.

The GSDC has advertised its services widely and has also prepared a Customer Service Charter.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan of the Commission is regarded as a sub level of the Customer Services Charter. The GSDC is committed to providing quality services to clients and to deliver value for money.

The GSDC acknowledges that all clients have a right to consultation, courtesy, information and the opportunity to express their views on Government services.

ABOUT THE PLAN

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) has adopted this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to ensure all members of the public can access the Commission's services and facilities. The Plan is subject to review and may be amended and extended as priorities and needs change, as new capabilities emerge with respect to disabled access methodology and with the introduction of new technologies.

The Plan includes:

- Information on the Commission's facilities and services;
- A policy statement about the Commission's commitment to addressing the issue of access for people with disabilities, their families and carers;
- Information on how this plan was developed;
- The identification of objectives and strategies to overcome barriers faced by people with disabilities;
- Expected timelines and persons responsible for the proposed strategies;
- A method of review and evaluation for the plan; and
- Information about how the plan is being communicated to staff and people with disabilities.

How the Plan was developed

The GSDC's original Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (then known as Disability Services Plan) was developed by the then Manager Corporate Services who was charged with the responsibility for developing, reviewing and evaluating the Plan.

The Manager Corporate Services sought the assistance and guidance from the local office of the DSC in the development of the Plan. In addition, the Plan was made available on the GSDC website for comment.

Since 2009 the Commission's Regional Manager Community & Corporate Services has reviewed the original Plan on an annual basis to ensure it continues to meet the requirements of the Act.

In June 2014 the Plan was again reviewed to bring it in line with the updated *Disability Services Act 1993*, as revised on 2 August 2013.

The GSDC has implemented initiatives and continues to identify initiatives to improve accessibility and safety to all members of the community. These achievements are highlighted in Appendix 1 – Action Plan.

The GSDC's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is available on the GSDC's website.

SERVICES OF THE COMMISSION

The Great Southern Development Commission:

- Supports and develops industry and community projects
- Coordinates approaches to government on strategic, economic and social issues
- Provides access to information on government programs and industry support services
- Identifies and promotes investment opportunities in the region
- Provides access to services for existing and potential exporters

The GSDC will respond to requests from individuals and the general public for information and assistance with projects that relate to the mandate of the GSDC.

ACCESS POLICY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

The GSDC is committed to ensuring that all people, including those with disabilities, their families, carers and the elderly are able to fully access the range of services and facilities of the GSDC. It is also committed to ensuring that all members of the public are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of their community through the consultative process with local business, industry and the three levels of Government.

The GSDC recognises that all members of the public are valued community members who make a variety of contributions to community, economic and cultural life. The GSDC is committed to consulting with people with disabilities, their families and their carers, and where required, disability organisations, to ensure that barriers to access are addressed appropriately.

This includes a commitment to outsourced services, that agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes and are informed about the Commission's Disability and Access Inclusion Plan.

The GSDC has always been supportive of agencies and businesses which facilitate the employment of people with disabilities. The GSDC has engaged the services of a local business which employs people with disabilities for various tasks such as mail-outs, car washing and detailing, and general administrative duties such as filing. The GSDC will continue to use personnel from this local agency to ensure that people with disabilities can access a range of employment opportunities and gain confidence in an office workplace environment.

The GSDC is committed to achieving the following outcomes.

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS

Outcome 1: All members of the Public will be provided with access to the services of, and any events organised by the GSDC

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Be flexible and adaptable in responding to barriers experienced by people due to various disabilities, including physical, sensory, cognitive and psychiatric disabilities;
- Be responsive in addressing the barriers experienced by the families and carers of people with disabilities;
- Ensure that all policies and practices that govern the operation of departmental services are consistent with the Commission's policy on access; and
- Ensure that all members of the public are included, to access the services of the GSDC and any events organised by the GSDC.

Outcome 2: Public access to the buildings and other facilities of the GSDC is available and easily accessible to all members of the Public

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Provide access to its offices to all members of the community, including people with disabilities and the elderly;

- Provide access to toilet facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly and all other members of the public;
- Develop awareness and a culture within the Commission that ensures that people with disabilities, the elderly and all other members of the public do not encounter barriers to the Commission's offices or services available from the Commission; and
- Ensure staff of the Commission are available to assist community members to gain access to facilities when required.

Outcome 3: All members of the Public can access information from the GSDC in a format that meets their individual needs.

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Produce all of its information on services, and workshops using clear and concise language; and
- Advise the community that, upon request, information about Commission services can be made in alternative formats.

Outcome 4: GSDC will offer non discriminatory service of high quality to all members of the community regardless of their circumstances.

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Provide training, accessed from DSC to all staff to ensure that, in relation to service provision and community consultation, they are aware of the key access needs of people with disabilities, their families and carers who use the Commission's services; and
- Seek advice from the local DSC office and the disability field on how to meet the access needs of people with various disabilities, including physical, sensory, cognitive and psychiatric disabilities.

Outcome 5: All members of the Community will be provided with equal opportunity to lodge complaints to the relevant public authority

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Include all members of the Community, including those with disabilities and the elderly when obtaining Customer Feedback on services provided;
- Receive complaints in a variety of formats to include the needs of all members of the Community;
- Provide alternative complaint lodgement directives should the complaint not be adequately resolved within GSDC; and

- Provide clear instruction in simple English outlining grievance procedure and policy.

Outcome 6: All members of the Community will be provided with equal opportunity to participate in any public consultation conducted by the GSDC.

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Create opportunities for people with disabilities to be included in invitations to attend public workshops, public forums or community consultation processes of the GSDC, including notifying the local DSC office of future public consultations or workshops to ensure that people with disabilities are included in invitations;
- Ensure information is available in clear and concise language on how customers can participate in decision making processes, public consultations and grievance mechanisms. GSDC will seek advice and appropriate information formats from the DSC;
- Advise customers that this information can be made available in alternative formats upon request; and
- Support people with disabilities, their families and carers to attend public community consultation processes arranged by the GSDC.

Outcome 7: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Commission.

Specifically the Commission will to the best of its ability:

- Enhance the employment of people with disability and medical conditions through the provision of employment practices and continuing staff disability awareness programs. This includes finding opportunities for people with disabilities to gain work experience and employment at the GSDC.
- Review guidelines for staff interviews and employment to ensure they meet Equal Employment Opportunity principles.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS

Review and monitoring

The Regional Manager Corporate & Community Services will maintain an on-going review of the Plan and provide information for the Commission's staff on issues concerning people with disabilities and the initiatives of the DSC.

The Regional Manager Corporate & Community Services will also review and undertake to make ongoing improvements as set out in the Commission's Action Plan and report the achievements in the Annual Report.

Evaluation

Annually the Regional Manager Corporate & Community Services will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial Plan.

The GSDC will make the Plan available to the Albany office of the Disability Services Commission and seek feedback on the plan and its strategies.

The Plan will be amended, based on the feedback received and, once endorsed by the Board, will be available to the community, including alternative formats, if requested.

Endorsed amended plans will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission on an annual basis.

The GSDC will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year.

COMMUNICATE THE PLAN TO STAFF AND THE COMMUNITY

The staff of the Commission have been notified of the Plan and been made aware of their responsibilities under the Plan. The Plan has been posted to the GSDC Web Site. As noted above, a copy of this Plan has been provided to the local office of the Disability Services Commission.

APPENDIX A

GREAT SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by a public authority.

Produce clear and easy-to-read invitations and flyers for events that include contact details.

All staff advised of requirement and Communications Officer monitors compliance

Ensure that events are held in an accessible venue.

All staff advised of requirement

Read the contracting public authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Information available for clients and staff in hard and soft copy formats.

2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.

Provide clear access ways free of boxes, displays and other obstructions.

All staff advised of requirement
Monitored during office inspections

Use buildings that are accessible - if there is no lift make sure all direct service points are located on the ground floor.

Compliant

Avoid abrupt vertical changes of level (kerbs, steps, ruts, gutters) to ensure a continuous accessible path of travel.

In Progress

Provide adequate space into doorways and within rooms to allow for wheelchair dimensions and turning circles.

Compliant

Place colour contrast strip on steps.

Compliant

Provide surface finishes that are slip-resistant, evenly laid and free of hazards to minimise risk of injury.

Compliant

Provide signage with clear lettering and good colour contrast.

Compliant

Provide an appropriate number of ACROD accessible parking bays.

Compliant
Bays at door

3. People with disabilities receive information in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people.

Provide clear and easy to read information by using a sans serif font such as Arial or Helvetica in a minimum size of 12 point.

Standard font in all templates to Arial 12;
Monitored by
Communications
Officer

Use text of a dark colour to significantly contrast with the background.

Compliant

Display important information in bold font, avoid using upper case text only, use a minimum of italics.

Compliant

Design websites to meet accessibility guidelines developed by W3C.

Compliant

Provide Auslan interpreters when requested by people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment.

Source when required
Staff informed of
necessity

Incorporate captioning in DVD and TV advertisements.

Complaint

Provide business cards with good colour contrast and easy-to-read font size.

Compliant

Be prepared, if requested, to provide information in alternative formats, such as a larger sized font for brochures.

Compliant

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

Make the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan information available to all staff.

Available for all staff on IT system and on Website

Provide staff with information about the needs of people with disabilities and where to locate extra resources.

Compliant

Provide disability awareness training for staff who deals with the public.

Ongoing

Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats such as large print, Braille or audio tape.

Ongoing

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

Accept complaints in a variety of formats such as by telephone, email, written or in person.

Compliant

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

Provide media releases and advertisements about public consultation in both print and electronic media, including Information Radio and the website.

Compliant

Consult people with disabilities in a range of different consultation mediums, for example focus groups, interviews, surveys. Request information about access requirements from participants prior to attending consultations.

Ongoing

Hold consultations in accessible buildings.

Compliant
Staff provided with this information

7. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Commission.

Enhance the employment of people with disability and medical conditions through the provision of employment practices and continuing staff disability awareness programs. This includes finding opportunities for people with disabilities to gain work experience and employment at the GSDC.

Compliant

Review guidelines for staff interviews and employment to ensure they meet Equal Employment Opportunity principles.

Ongoing