



Department of  
Education

Public education  
**A world of opportunities**

# DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN 2018–2023

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**This plan is available on request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disc and email), audio and Braille.**



I am pleased to present our *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018–2023*.

This plan is our commitment to meet the diverse needs of students in public schools in partnership with parents, staff and school communities. It identifies strategies we are adopting to enable equitable access and inclusion of people with disability in our services, schools and employment.

Fulfilling our obligations under the *Disability Services Act 1993*, the plan provides the framework in which each school and workplace across the Department works towards providing inclusive, accessible, safe and welcoming environments.

Our broader equity and diversity employment initiatives continue to develop and support a diverse workforce, recognising that inclusive schools and workplaces benefit not just staff but also students, their families and the wider community.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Western Australian community, Department staff and disability service organisations in developing this plan. Their involvement has been valuable in ensuring we have practical strategies that can be implemented across our organisation.

We are committed to ensuring that every child in a public school is provided with a high quality education – whatever their ability, wherever they live, whatever their background.

The *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018–2023* reflects this commitment and is underpinned by our strategic plan [High Performance – High Care](#).

SHARYN O'NEILL

**NOTE:**

Following Machinery of Government changes, from July 2017 the Department of Education has assumed functions and responsibilities that relate to non-government schools as well as continuing to provide public school education across Western Australia.

With regard to school education, this plan is applicable to public schools only as the Department does not control nor have any delivery role in non-government schools.

# 1. Our commitment to access and inclusion

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The Department of Education provides high quality public education for children and young people throughout Western Australia.

We provide programs for every student – for those who are academically gifted, students with special learning needs, those with a flair for the arts or a passion for sports, and students from vulnerable communities.

We have more than 305 000 students in 800 schools in communities across our State.

Our commitment is to ensure that every child, including those with special educational needs, has access to a high quality education, and parents and carers are valuable partners in their children's education.

We provide accessible and inclusive services, facilities, events, information, employment, consultations and complaint processes to support the participation of our students, staff and community members with disability.

This includes a broad range of education and employment policies and programs contributing to building and enhancing inclusive and equitable learning and work environments.

Our equity and diversity focus enables our:

- students with disability to participate in programs aligned with their learning needs and not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability;
- teachers to have high expectations for students with disability and teach in ways that enable them to achieve their potential;
- workplaces and school communities to be positive environments where diversity and uniqueness are valued and embraced; and
- staff with disability to be supported with inclusive and equitable workplaces and work practices.

In addition to the seven disability access and inclusion plan outcomes required by the *Disability Services Regulations 2004*, we have included *Outcome 8: Learning outcomes are improved for students with disability*.

The strategies in this plan are supported by an implementation framework with specific initiatives to achieve outcomes.

Through the [student-centred funding model](#), the disability allocation is provided to schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disability and additional needs. There are two components of the [disability allocation](#):

- The Individual Disability Allocation is for students with eligible disability and is based on application, approval and review.
- The Educational Adjustment Allocation is for mainstream schools to implement programs and supported learning for students with additional learning needs who are not eligible for the Individual Disability Allocation. Through this funding, more students are able to access assistance without the need for diagnosis of disability.

Further information is available for:

- parents, students and community members at [Disability Services and Support](#); and
- teachers and staff at [One Classroom](#).

## 2. Significant achievements 2012–2017

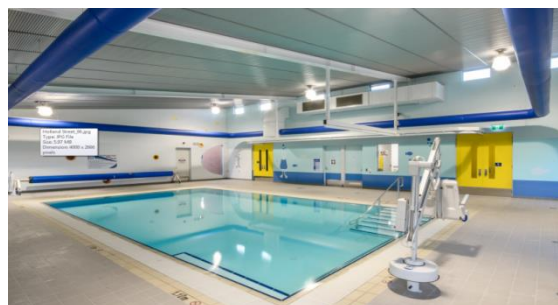
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A range of achievements was delivered under the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012–2017*.

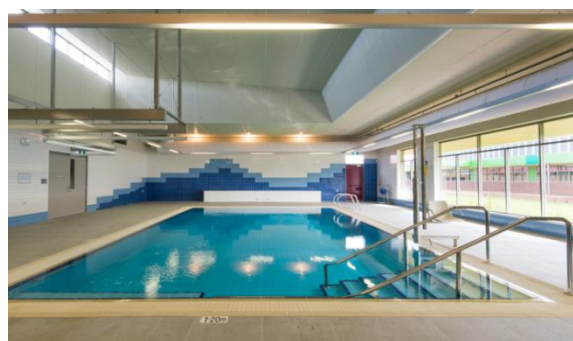
- A new model of service delivery, the Schools of Special Educational Needs (SSEN), was established in 2012, with teams of teachers supporting students with disability and diverse needs across four schools.
  - SSEN Disability: Builds the capacity of teachers and school-based staff to deliver effective classroom programs.
  - SSEN Sensory: Provides education support to students who are deaf, hard of hearing and those with vision impairment.
  - SSEN Medical and Mental Health: Provides education support for students whose medical and/or mental health prevents them from participating in their enrolled school programs.
  - SSEN Behaviour and Engagement: Provides education support and services for students with extreme, complex and challenging behaviours.
- Specialist learning programs for the specific needs of students with autism who have very complex support needs started in 2017 and will be located in 16 mainstream primary and secondary schools by 2020. The Kindergarten to Year 12 program targets age appropriate academic engagement and achievement, with investment of \$32 million.
- Schools were supported during the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to contribute to individual student planning. In 2016, a best practice NDIS model was implemented in schools in the Kwinana area, creating an integrated and seamless approach to support students' development and align with interventions in the home, community and classroom programs.
- Professional learning enhanced staff knowledge and practice in meeting the education needs of students with disability.
  - More than 7900 principals, teachers and education assistants received professional learning, classroom or online support from 13 Teacher Development Schools with expertise in evidence-based training and teacher development for students with disability. This included TEACCH programs for students with autism; Alternative and Augmentative Communication; and Communication and Oral Language.
  - More than 5800 teachers, school administrators, school psychologists and education assistants completed the Disability Standards for Education online course or attended workshops on obligations of education providers under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1993* and *Disability Standards in Education 2005*.
  - More than 600 teachers completed 10-week online tutor-led courses in Understanding Dyslexia and Significant Difficulties in Reading, Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders, Understanding Personalised Learning and Support, and Understanding and Supporting Behaviour.
- Expertise was shared among school networks.
  - Student Support Network Program: In 2016–17, 63 sessions were provided to eight education regions, 23 networks, 212 schools and 465 participants.
  - More Support for Students with Disability: Exemplary teaching and learning practice and resources in leading diversity and curriculum planning; best practice transition planning and support; curriculum, assessment, reporting and teaching and learning adjustments to enable students with communication impairment or disability achieve curriculum outcomes.



- In 2017, College Row School in Bunbury won the [International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication award](#) in the School/Organisation category for giving a voice to students with disability. The award recognised the school’s commitment to improving the lives of students with complex communication needs and to changing community perceptions. Students have their own customised communication system that is carried everywhere to enable them to communicate more effectively.
- Seven new schools with universal designed facilities were built, providing state-of-the-art amenities for students with disability and diverse learning needs.
  - Holland Street School: A new building with a hydrotherapy pool, change room and ablution facilities was completed in January 2017.



- Byford Secondary College incorporates universal designed facilities built within the mainstream secondary school and was completed in June 2016. It includes five teaching areas, a lifeskills classroom, hydrotherapy pool and gymnasium.



- John Butler Primary College is a fully inclusive school incorporating universal designed features built within the main primary school. It includes an early childhood education building with four teaching areas and an education support administration building. Specialist facilities include therapy rooms, a low-stimulus room and multi-sensory room, a hydrotherapy pool and gymnasium.

- The Student Services Improvement Program provided facilities upgrades for 20 education support schools and centres totalling \$13.2 million. A minor works upgrade program completed 612 jobs initiated by schools totalling \$11.2 million involving passenger lifts, access ramps, automatic doors, universal access toilets, luminance contrast work, accessible car parking bays and widening doorways.
- Accessible information was provided through: a web platform compliant with the Western Australian Government’s *Website Accessibility Policy* and phased content migration from 2016; captioned Department videos; an AUSLAN translation service available to schools; documents in alternative formats; and disability specific information communicated through captioned information videos for parents.
- The [Equity and Diversity Management Plan 2015–2019](#) and revised [Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment policy](#) included a focus on reducing barriers to employment for people with disability. An enhanced network of 142 trained equal opportunity contact officers supported staff to address equal opportunity and diversity matters in the workplace.

### **3. Developing the *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018 –2023***

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#### **Consultation**

Strategies for the plan were developed in consultation with staff from all divisions and regional offices.

An opportunity to provide comment on the strategies for the plan was communicated through:

- a public notice in *The West Australian* newspaper;
- letters to 24 professional and disability service organisations; and
- information to staff.

The consultation document for feedback was published on the Department's website and available in alternative formats. Feedback confirmed the strategies for the plan were relevant and responsive to the needs of Western Australians with disability and was used to inform the content and form of the final plan.

#### **Implementation and communication of the plan**

The plan is published on the Department's internet and available to community members and staff.

Promotion of the plan includes:

- a public notice in *The West Australian* newspaper; and
- information to staff.

Agents and contractors who provide services to the public are informed about the plan's implementation and reporting through their contracts of service.

Copies of the plan are available, on request, in alternative formats such as large print, audio, braille and electronic format. E: [equity@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:equity@education.wa.edu.au) T: 9264 4138

#### **Compliance, review, monitoring and reporting**

As required by the *Disability Services Act 1993* and *Disability Services Regulations 2004*, the Department will:

- report on implementing the plan in its annual report;
- report to the Department of Communities by 30 June each year on progress towards achieving the plan's strategies, and how agents and contractors are informed about its implementation and reporting; and
- review the plan every five years, undertake public consultation and submit a revised plan to the Department of Communities.

## 4. Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018–2023 outcomes

An implementation framework will be used to monitor and report specific initiatives for public schools and Department workplaces.

### Outcome 1

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the Department of Education.**

#### Strategies

Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and improved to ensure they promote inclusion and participation of people with disability and comply with the disability legislation.

Communications relating to the availability of additional support for staff and students with disability, their carers, parents and guardians are reviewed regularly and improved.

Agents and contractors working for and with the Department are aware of their responsibilities and assisted to comply with requirements of the plan.

Staff are aware of and enact the Department's equity and diversity policies.

Events comply with the [State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities](#), ensuring that people with disability can attend and participate along with other guests.

### Outcome 2

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access buildings and other facilities of the Department of Education.**

#### Strategies

Capital works programs continue to provide buildings and facilities that meet Australian design standards and are accessible to people with disability.

Minor works programs respond to emerging needs of school communities and staff by modifying existing premises, on a needs basis, to provide access for people with disability.

Agents and contractors working for and with the Department are aware of their responsibilities and assisted to comply with requirements of the plan.



## Outcome 3

**People with disability receive information from the Department of Education in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.**

### Strategies

Information for all people with disability complies with the *State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities*.

Information is available in alternative formats on request.

Information provided on Department and school websites complies with the Western Australian Government's *Website Accessibility Policy*.

## Outcome 4

**People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the Department of Education as other people receive from the staff of the Department of Education.**

### Strategies

Staff awareness and understanding of disability and access issues are developed to enhance service delivery for people with disability.

Staff knowledge of their responsibilities under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and associated *Disability Standards for Education* is enhanced.

Inclusive and equitable learning and work environments are fostered through the [Equity and Diversity Management Plan](#), and equity and diversity policies and resources.

## Outcome 5

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Department of Education.**

### Strategies

Complaints handling procedures enable complaints to be made by alternative methods.

Staff, school communities, agents, contractors and the general public are aware of the Department's complaints processes.

Staff are supported with the knowledge and resources required to receive and respond to complaints from people with disability.

## Outcome 6

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the Department of Education.**

### Strategies

Public consultation complies with the [State Government Access Guidelines for Information, Services and Facilities](#).

## Outcome 7

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the Department of Education.**

### Strategies

Inclusive and equitable workplaces free of discrimination and harassment continue to be promoted.

Inclusive recruitment and employment practices are used to reduce barriers to employment for people with disability.

Information and support are available to public schools and workplaces to recruit and employ people with disability.

## Outcome 8

### Learning outcomes are improved for students with disability.

#### Strategies

The capacity of school leaders, teachers and support staff is enhanced to provide all students with disability access to the general education system, with reasonable accommodation of the individual student's requirements.

School staff have high expectations for students with disability and teach in ways that enable students to achieve their potential.

Students with disability are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability.

Positive participation, communication and interaction between staff, students with disability, their parents and carers are fostered.

Professional learning builds capacity of school leaders, teachers and support staff to support the education needs of students with disability.