



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2014-2018

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ChemCentre

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

2014 -2018

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Background

ChemCentre

ChemCentre provides a range of chemistry-based services. These services which are summarised in Section 5 of this manual and, for the most part, fall between the pure research of Universities and high volume analytical work typically undertaken by the private sector analytical laboratories.

ChemCentre tends to focus on advanced analytical work, one-off requests, problem solving, investigations and sponsored research. Many of these services are critical to government for the management of chemistry-based risk and are also important to industry, providing capabilities that are not readily available in the market. The scientific information and advice is provided by professionally and technically qualified scientists working with sophisticated equipment using an extensive range of tests accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA). This scientific expertise ensures clients are provided with accurate analytical and scientific information. The multi-disciplinary scientific and professional team provide interpretative and expert advice, solutions to problems, investigative assistance and a rapid scientific response to emergencies.

The comprehensive range of scientific capabilities and associated quality systems are continually upgraded and respond to client needs and new opportunities. These increased capabilities are achieved by undertaking complex investigations, developing and validating new procedures and by commissioning new equipment.

The specialist analytical and characterisation skills and scientific expertise of ChemCentre are also provided to tertiary institutions and CSIRO in collaborative projects which strengthen the scientific infrastructure in Western Australia.

Progress since 2008

ChemCentre is committed to facilitate the inclusion of people with disability through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities.

In working towards this goal, ChemCentre endorsed its first Disability Access Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and registered this with Disability Services Commission. ChemCentre has worked progressively towards achieving the desired results in the key outcomes, our success' include:.

- DAIP available on our Website
- Confirmed our Building meets the standard required
- Improved ChemCentre staff understanding of how to assist the public to obtain information in other formats

Planning for better access

The 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) estimated that 4.2 million Australians, or 18.5% of the population, had a disability. SDAC defines disability as any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months. In 2012 the prevalence of disability in Australia remained steady at 18.5% compared with 2009 (when the survey was last conducted). After removing the effects of different age structures, the age standardised rate was 17.4% in 2012. This compares to 17.7% in 2009 and 19.8% in 2003.

Disability can impact on a person's opportunities to participate in the labour force. People aged between 15 and 64 years with disability have both lower participation (53%) and higher unemployment rates (9.4%) than people without disability (83% and 4.9% respectively). Lower employment rates, along with the older profile of people with disability, contribute to people with disability aged 15 years and over being more likely to live in a household in the lowest two equivalised gross household income quintiles than those without disability (48% compared with 22%).

The prevalence of disability in Australia has fallen 1.5 percentage points since 2003. In 2003, 20% of Australians had a reported disability, compared with 18.5% in 2009. After removing the effects of different age structures the age standardised rate also fell by 2.1 percentage points.

Disability

Just under one in five people (4.2 million people or 18.5% of Australians) reported having a disability in 2012. A further 4.7 million people (21%) had a long-term health condition that did not restrict their everyday activities. The remaining 60% of the population had neither a disability nor a long-term health condition. For those people with disability, 3.7 million (88%) had a specific limitation or restriction that meant they were limited in the core activities of self care, mobility or communication, or restricted in schooling or employment.

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act 1993 that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which ChemCentre will ensure that people with disability have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

Access and inclusion policy statement for people with disability, their families and carers

In accordance with the Disability Service Act, ChemCentre has adopted a Disability Access and Inclusion Policy (DAIP) to ensure people with disability have the same opportunity as other people to access our services and information, wherever applicable. The 2014 -2018 Plan was approved by the Director General, Disability Services Commission in a letter dated TBA

This will be achieved through ChemCentre's commitment to achieving the seven desired Disability Access and Inclusion Plan outcomes, namely that:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of ChemCentre
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of ChemCentre
3. People with disability receive information from ChemCentre in a format that will enable them to access the information, as readily as other people are able to access it
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of ChemCentre
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to ChemCentre
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultations by ChemCentre
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public sector

This requirement is aligned with the following legislation, standards or other reference sources:

- Disability Services Act 1993 (Western Australia, amended 2004)
- Access and Inclusion Resource Kit – Disability Services Commission
- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Equal Opportunity Act (Western Australia, amended 1988)

ChemCentre is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of ChemCentre services and facilities (both in-house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community
- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP
- achieving the seven desired outcomes of its DAIP.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Review and consultation process

As required under the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) ChemCentre undertook to review its DAIP 2008 – 2013 and to draft a new five year plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The review process included examination of the 2008 – 2013 DAIP, a review of recent annual reports, strategic documents and significant program evaluations. ChemCentre established a Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee to incorporate the 2014-2018 plan to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Community consultation process

In 2013, ChemCentre undertook to consult with key stakeholders and draft a DAIP to guide access and inclusion improvements.

The process included:

- Advertisement in the *West Australian* newspaper on **23rd April 2014** inviting public comment for 28 days;
- A broadcast email to all ChemCentre staff.
- Article in the 'about us' pages of the ChemCentre's website, including a feedback form; and
- Email to the disability sector organisations that made comment on the review of the 2008 -2013 plan

Access barriers

Access barriers identified through this process include the following needs:

- Enable access to the services of ChemCentre to be organised telephonically and electronically (email) as well as in person. Similarly samples for analysis will be received by post and courier.
- a) Documents produced in ChemCentre will be made available electronically or by post. By special request documents will be printed in a large format.
b) The Website will continue to be reviewed and the accessibility guidelines developed by W3C will be implemented where possible.
- ChemCentre maintains the same quality of service regardless of the client. To achieve this goal with respect to the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, two presentations will be made to staff relating to disability awareness. These presentations will take place during our monthly Communication Session and are planned to take place mid 2014 and 2016. Staff who routinely deals with the public will attend disability awareness training course as time and costs allow.
- Complaints received by post, in person and electronically receive the same treatment. A Continuous Improvement Form is generated, documenting the complaint which is then investigated. Suggested improvements are implemented and a reply is sent to the complainant. The Freedom of Information Officer will also accept request for information by post, in person and electronically.
- Elements of ChemCentre's website requires improvement to best meet the needs of people with disability.
- ChemCentre will participate in and promote Disability Awareness Week and the Count Me In message where possible. It is hoped that this will increase staff awareness and confidence, where needed, in providing service to people with disability. Staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to provide the same level of service to people with disability.
- Future recruitment processes will encourage, where applicable, people with disability to apply or to contact the nominated persons to discuss accessibility and suitability in the role.

The identification of these barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been prioritised in order of importance, which assists in setting timeframes to complete strategies to overcome those access barriers.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that public authorities take all

practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of ChemCentre. Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of ChemCentre while others will apply only to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The DAIP planning committee will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability

In **April 2014** ChemCentre sent copies of the draft DAIP to all those who contributed to the planning process (staff, people with disability, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups) for feedback. In **June 2014** the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by ChemCentre's Executive.

ChemCentre has advised, via a notice placed in **The West Australian** newspaper, and through ChemCentre's Internet page, people with disability that ChemCentre's DAIP is available online and in alternative formats upon request.

The implementation plan may be amended and both staff and community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

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

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

Review and monitoring

- The Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee will meet every four months in the first year, and as required thereafter, to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.
- The committee will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to ChemCentre's Executive for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

- The Executive will endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process annually.
- Once a year, prior to 31 July, ChemCentre will provide a DAIP progress report to the Disability Services Commission, which will inform the report that the Minister for Disability Services tables in Parliament each year.
- In seeking feedback the committee will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.
- The committee will use some of the consultation processes used during the initial consultations including: questionnaires, meetings with people with disability and disability organisation phone-ins.
- ChemCentre staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.
- Implementation Plans will be amended based on the feedback received. Copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by ChemCentre, will be available to the community in alternative formats.

Reporting on the DAIP

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

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

Strategies to improve access and inclusion

As a result of the consultation process the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that ChemCentre will undertake from 2014-2018 to improve access to its services, buildings and information. The seven desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability.

Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by ChemCentre.

Strategy	Timeline
Provide opportunities for people with disability to comment on access to services and advice provided by ChemCentre.	Ongoing
Monitor ChemCentre's Access and Inclusion policy to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disability throughout the various functions of ChemCentre.	Ongoing
ChemCentre's plans, policies and procedures will include references to people with disability and responsibilities where applicable	May 2015

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure all buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disability.	Ongoing
Ensure adequate ACROD parking to meet the needs of people with disability in terms of quantity and location.	Ongoing
ChemCentre website will have information about the physical access for people with a disability	Dec2014
Ensure all future premises leased by ChemCentre are accessible.	Ongoing

Outcome 3: People with disability can access information from ChemCentre as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Timeline
Improve community awareness that ChemCentre information can be made available in alternative formats upon request.	Ongoing
Improve staff awareness of accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats. Improve the awareness of staff about information needs of people that are hearing impaired, hard of hearing, deaf, and people with speech impediments.	November 2014
Ensure that ChemCentre's website meets accessibility compliance and complies with relevant frameworks, with an emphasis upon using text to	Dec 2014

actively describe the trends displayed in charts.	
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Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of ChemCentre as other people receive.

Strategy	Timeline
Improve general staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disability.	June 2014
Monitor feedback from existing customer comment system and other correspondence.	June 2016
Improve the awareness of new staff about disability and access issues.	June 2014

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

Strategy	Timeline
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disability. Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	June 2014

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

Strategy	Timeline
Improve access for people with disability to the established consultative processes of ChemCentre, including the capacity to accept verbal complaints.	May 2014
Ensure all public consultation opportunities are clearly advertised in a variety of media.	Ongoing
Where feasible, provide consultation material in alternative formats as required.	Ongoing

Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public sector

Strategy	Timeline
ChemCentre will ensure that staff recruitment activities are accessible to people with a disability.	Jan 2014
Provide support to ensure that staff with a disability are able to carry out their employment responsibilities as specified in the Job Description Form.	June 2014
Ensure that staff with a disability is provided with appropriate development opportunities to meet longer term plans for career development.	Jan 2015
ChemCentre will consider ways of enhancing the employment of people with a disability, such as by job design, working from home and other innovative and flexible employment practices.	Ongoing