



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2018-2022



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Background

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 2014

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 in 2014 ChemCentre endorsed its second Disability Access Inclusion Plan (DAIP) and registered this with the Disability Services Commission. ChemCentre has worked progressively towards achieving the desired results in the key outcomes.

Planning for better access

The 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) released in April 2016 showed that disability prevalence rate in Australia has remained relatively stable over time, with 18.3% of people reporting disability in 2015, and 18.5% in 2012 and 2009.

Disability

Disability may affect a person's mobility, communication or learning. It can also affect their income and participation in education, social activities and the labour force. The collection of information about people with disability is important for many reasons including the provision of appropriate services and support.

In 2015:

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).
- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioural disorders.

More than half of those with disability aged 15 to 64 years participated in the labour force (53.4%), which is considerably fewer than those without disability (83.2%). These results are consistent with those in the 2012 SDAC.

Discrimination

The 2015 SDAC introduced a new disability discrimination module designed to estimate the prevalence of discrimination for those with disability and identify the nature of this discrimination. Included in this publication is information about Australians with disability who were living in households, aged 15 years and over, and their experience in the last 12 months with discrimination because of their disability.

In 2015:

- Almost one in 12 Australians with disability (281,100 people or 8.6%) reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their disability.
- Young people with disability (aged 15 to 24 years) were more likely to report the experience of discrimination (20.5%) than those aged 65 years and over (2.1%).

Over one-third (35.1%) of women and over one-quarter (28.1%) of men aged 15 years and over had avoided situations because of their disability.

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

In accordance with the *Disability Services Act 1993* (The Act), ChemCentre has adopted a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure people with disability have the same opportunity as other people to access our services and information, wherever applicable.

This will be achieved through ChemCentre's continuing commitment to achieving the seven desired DAIP outcomes, namely that:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, 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 ChemCentre 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 consultation by ChemCentre
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with ChemCentre

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 Act ChemCentre undertook to review its DAIP 2014 – 2018 and to draft a new five year plan to guide further improvements to access and inclusion. The review process included examination of the 2014 – 2018 DAIP, a review of recent annual reports and strategic documents and significant program evaluations. The review showed ChemCentre’s inclusion of information on DAIP as part of the staff induction program and that it had endeavoured to make all ChemCentre events as accessible as possible. ChemCentre established a Disability Access and Inclusion Planning Committee to inform 2018-2022 plan to oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the plan.

Community consultation process

In 2018, 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 **18 July 2018** 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 2018 - 2022 plan

Findings of the consultation

The consultation identified the following potential barriers to accessing the Commission's facilities, services and functions:

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.
- Documents produced in ChemCentre will be made available electronically or by post. By special request documents will be printed in alternate formats. The Website will continue to be reviewed to meet government accessibility standards.
- ChemCentre maintains the same quality of service regardless of the client. To achieve this goal with respect to DAIP, additional 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-2019 and 2021. 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.
- ChemCentre will participate in and promote National Disability Strategy, Disability Awareness Week and the Count Me In message where possible. The intention is that this will increase staff awareness and confidence, where needed, in providing service to people with disability.
- Inclusive recruitment processes will continue to 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 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 apply to all areas of ChemCentre while others will apply only to a specific area. The Plan identifies strategies to assist against each action these will include monitoring progress on a regular basis. The DAIP planning committee will guide the overall plan.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability

In **July 2018** 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 **August 2018** 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 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 Department of Communities.

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 Department of Communities, 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 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 Department of Communities 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 by communicating it on our website, a broadcast email to staff and including regular articles in ChemCentre's newsletter.

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 2018-2022 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
Ensure that appropriate activities organised by ChemCentre are accessible to people with a disability.	Ongoing

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 continue to be 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
Ensure all future premises leased by ChemCentre are accessible.	Ongoing

Outcome 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.

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.	Ongoing
Ensure that ChemCentre’s website meets accessibility compliance and complies with relevant frameworks, with an emphasis upon using text to actively describe the trends displayed in charts.	Ongoing

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

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

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.	Ongoing
Ensure staff have information to facilitate the receipt of complaints by people with disability.	Ongoing

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.	Ongoing
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 ChemCentre.

Strategy	Timeline
ChemCentre will ensure that staff recruitment activities are accessible to people with a disability.	Ongoing
Provide support to ensure that staff with a disability are able to carry out their employment responsibilities as specified in the Job Description Form.	Ongoing
Ensure that staff with a disability is provided with appropriate development opportunities to meet longer term plans for career development.	Ongoing
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

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print and electronic format.