

# Outcome 7 Guide

## Introduction

The introduction of Outcome 7 into Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) means public authorities are required to develop strategies to improve opportunities for, and break down existing barriers to, employing people with disability. The legislative requirements under the Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) are outlined in Appendix 1.

## Outcome 7

**People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.**

Meaningful employment is essential to an individual's economic security and is important to achieving social inclusion and independence. Employment contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity. At the same time, local governments are seeking a diverse and wide pool of skills, knowledge and experience, and a workforce that reflects their local community.

Local governments are also required to prepare workforce plans under Western Australia's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for Local Government (see the [Department for Local Government and Communities' Workforce Planning Toolkit](#)).

The workforce plans ensure that local governments identify and put strategies in place to attract and retain the workforce they need to deliver their strategic community plans and corporate business plans.

Attracting employees with disability using strategies to make workplaces accessible and inclusive can help to address workforce development issues which many local governments identify in their workforce plans. This will also assist in making the overall system of work more equitable. Accessible and inclusive workplaces tend to be better managed and can provide a competitive advantage as an "employer of choice". Local government workforce plans and DAIP Outcome 7 are therefore complementary and in many cases will cross-reference each other.

Finding employment is something many West Australians take for granted. For people with disability, finding, securing and retaining employment can be challenging. People with disability are often overlooked by employers for a variety of reasons and are only half as likely to be employed as people without disability.

Local governments are typically one of the most significant employers in the community. Difficulties with skill shortages, recruitment across diverse communities and an ageing workforce, indicate that local councils and regions cannot afford to ignore this segment of the labour market.

This guide outlines a process to assist local governments to develop best practice strategies on employing people with disability. This will also address the Outcome 7 requirement in their DAIPs. It includes information, explanations and checklists. While it has been prepared specifically for a local government audience, state

government agencies and other public authorities may find aspects of the guide, including the strategy development and action planning process, relevant to their DAIP requirements.

To assist you with the task of including strategies to achieve Outcome 7 in your DAIP, the Commission has produced an information pack to assist public authorities meet their legislative requirements under the Act. Download the [Outcome 7 information pack](#).

### **A note on “readiness”**

As part of the strategy development process, it is important that local governments recognise each DAIP is likely to be different, according to the level of “disability readiness” of the organisation. To ensure local governments develop meaningful and achievable strategies, a staged approach is necessary.

The Lighthouse Project has developed a framework to assist local governments identifying where they are at in regards to “disability readiness” and some examples of strategies and interventions that will assist them in moving to the next phase of maturity. There are four phases in the framework:

- **Phase 0: Resistant.** We really don't have the time or capacity to deal with people with disability.
- **Phase 1: Open.** We want to employ people with disability if we can. If we can do it easily, it's a good thing to do.
- **Phase 2: Keen.** We're going to take significant steps to employ people with disability.
- **Phase 3: Committed.** We'll do whatever it takes to ensure people with disability see us as an employer of choice.

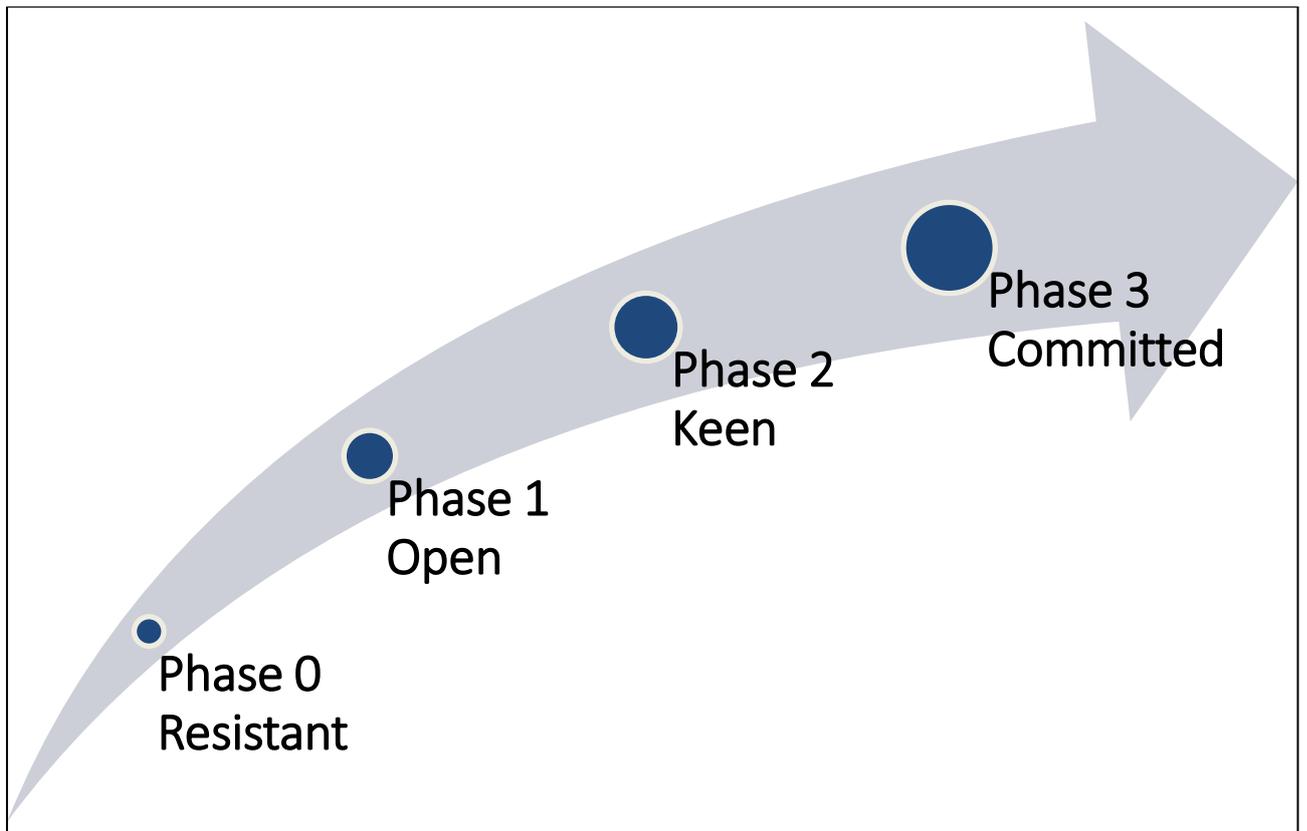


Figure 1: Disability Readiness Framework

The phases of the journey may not be as discrete as the framework suggests and some phases will last longer than others. The purpose of the framework is to assist local governments to develop strategies that can make their journey as fast, efficient and constructive as possible.

Visit the [Disability Readiness Framework](#).

### **Outcome 7 planning process**

There are five steps in the planning process:

- gather information
- identify issues and barriers
- develop strategies
- plan implementation
- evaluate and report on progress.



Figure 2: Outcome 7 Strategy Development Process

### Step 1: Information gathering

The first step of the Outcome 7 planning process is to collate and consider relevant data. This desktop exercise will provide baseline information on your current workforce and how it reflects the local community profile. It will also provide information on projected workforce needs.

The information for this step will most likely be sourced from the workforce plan, Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) policy and a workplace self-assessment.

Relevant data to collect and analyse includes:

- current workforce profile
- community profile
- EEO context
- workforce needs
- workplace self-assessment (including staff input).

Local government is a unique and diverse business that the community engages with regularly in a number of ways from rubbish collection to road maintenance, library services, community events and everything in between. It is important for local government to recognise that their local community is also a key source of their

potential workforce. There are many opportunities for local government to visibly reinforce its commitment to disability access and inclusion (as an employer and service provider) through its activities in the community.

Local governments are encouraged to gauge the community's perception of them as a disability friendly employer, for example, by including relevant questions in community surveys. Local governments are required to engage the community at least four yearly as part of their Integrated Planning and Reporting. As part of this engagement local governments should consider including a question about how the community see them as an employer. This information can then be used to inform the DAIP as well as the workforce plan.

Another part of information gathering includes assessing the organisations' disability "friendliness". A self-assessment tool has been developed to assist local governments to undertake a physical site assessment, as well as collect data from a range of other sources. It is available via digital or hard copy formats.

The tool produces a comprehensive report that will assist local governments to identify barriers and issues, and assist in informing the Strategy Development and Implementation Plan (outlined in Steps 2 and 3).

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of all the relevant Australian Standards and building legislation that local governments must meet. It will not be used by an external agency to audit or rate local governments.

For more information on accessing the tool and how to conduct a self-assessment, please see the [self-assessment documents on the Commission's website](#).

## **Step 2: Identify issues and barriers**

Step 2 involves using the data collected to identify any issues and barriers in the organisation that can be addressed to improve employment opportunities for people with disability.

The following key focus areas provide a useful framework to think through the issues and barriers, and develop effective strategies. Note that in some cases, existing strategies (which may or may not be documented) are already being successfully implemented. In such cases, those existing strategies should be incorporated into your Outcome 7 planning. Maintaining effective approaches can be just as important as initiating new ones.

Key focus areas are:

- an inclusive organisation culture
- an accessible workplace
- effective management practices.

Each of these is outlined below.

## **2.1 Inclusive organisation culture**

Merit-based appointment still applies and that includes consideration of potential employees with disability who have the relevant skills to undertake the work. That means the potential barriers to that person being able to do their job, or even apply for it, need to be considered.

Some barriers may be cultural. People's attitude, assumptions about disability, longstanding practices that do not take account of disability, a lack of confidence that can lead to avoidance, can be barriers to people with disability gaining employment. Perceptions that a workplace does things a certain way and is not likely to be responsive can result in people with disability not applying for positions, even though their skills would be valued.

Sometimes people are unsure about how to respond to disability, not from a lack of interest or commitment to equality but because they lack confidence in dealing with the issue. Assumptions can be made or, just as limiting, people sidestep the issue. Bias in the workplace, often sub-consciously, may lead to decisions not to interview, or affect the interview process in ways that can disadvantage an equally skilled person with disability.

Becoming a "disability confident" organisation requires investment of effort in becoming more informed. In return, your staff will be able to more effectively tackle practices which can act as barriers to employment and open your organisation up to the benefits of employing people with disability.

The following checklist provides some guidance on three hallmarks of an inclusive organisation culture. You may wish to add others. If issues or barriers are identified in these areas, there is potential to develop strategies to improve the culture. These elements could encompass, but are not limited to, disability access and inclusion.

### **Checklist: is my organisation inclusive?**

#### **Are your values of inclusion and embracing diversity articulated, engaging and consistently applied?**

It is important that organisations are clear about ways to value diversity, treat people and behave. These values may be expressed in various places including recruitment advertising, corporate or organisational development plans and EEO policy. These values would include but not be limited to, disability access and inclusion.

The organisation's values will only be words on a page unless staff have a sense of ownership of the values, and they see that the values are consistently applied. For example, if the organisation professes to value diversity but doesn't implement its EEO policy, the stated value will not have any credibility.

#### **Do you regularly survey and engage staff?**

Organisational culture is shaped and reflected by the attitude and practice of individuals, so it is critical staff are engaged in the process. They can provide information on how the organisation's culture is viewed and understood on a day-to-day level. Where gaps in understanding, a lack of disability confidence or other cultural issues exist, action can be taken to address them. In addition, you are more

likely to capture the input of those with an impairment and have decided not to disclose or identify as having a disability.

### **Does the induction and training program reflect values of inclusion and embracing diversity?**

Both training and induction programs are essential to good workplace culture. The approach to induction will inevitably vary with an organisation's size. Larger organisations may run group sessions for new employees and smaller local governments will be more likely to use a one-on-one approach with the new employee's manager or supervisor. Whatever the approach, it is important that the induction process address the organisation's values and expectations with respect to inclusion and embracing diversity. Induction for a person with disability needs to cover the general policies and specific support systems available, as relevant.

Induction and training needs to be sensitive to the fact that there may be people who have chosen not to disclose an impairment. There is no legal obligation for a person with a disability to disclose information about their disability, unless it is likely to have an effect on:

- their ability to meet the requirements of the job
- their ability to work safely
- the safety of co-workers.

## **2.2 Accessible Workplace**

Making the workplace physically accessible and productive for employees with disability is an essential step and is about making sure infrastructure is supportive and capable of adaptation.

The following checklist provides some guidance on three hallmarks of an accessible workplace. Further guidance and specifications should be sought from the relevant Australian Standards and building legislation which can also help identify any minimum legal requirements. If issues or barriers are identified in these areas, there may be potential to develop strategies to improve workplace accessibility. While these elements enhance disability access, they are also likely to create a more inclusive and productive work environment for everyone.

### **Checklist: Is my workplace accessible?**

#### **Is your workplace easily accessible by wheelchair or other mobility aids?**

The level of investment in wheelchair accessibility will depend on the needs of the workforce, although most organisations now consider accessibility needs when work spaces are being constructed or refurbished. Wider doorways and hallways also benefit larger people, staff who may require crutches if injured and visitors using a mobility aid or a pram.

#### **Does your workplace provide a quiet, well lit environment?**

Considerations such as noise mitigation and good lighting are important to minimise stressors in the case of some common types of impairments.

### **Do you undertake reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis?**

Reasonable adjustments in this context are modifications or changes to the physical work environment that will enable a person with a disability to:

- have equal opportunity to be considered for selection, appointment, promotion, transfer, training or other employment opportunities
- perform the requirements of the job
- experience equal terms and conditions of employment

Reasonable adjustments make the workplace more useable and safe.

### **2.3 Effective Management Practices**

This section identifies corporate practices, systems and planning which will support increased employment of people with disability.

The following checklist provides some guidance on five effective management practices. If issues or barriers are identified in these areas, there is potential to develop strategies to improve the standard of practice. As noted above, effective management practices in this area are likely to reflect capable management and integrity at the highest levels. This reflects in the overall management and leadership of the organisation which benefits everyone.

#### **Checklist: Does my organisation have effective management practices?**

##### **Does your job design and workplace flexibility reflect a systematic approach to removing barriers to employment?**

Job design based on untested (and often subconscious) assumptions about how a job has to be performed can limit the range of people who can apply for or do the jobs. A flexible workplace allows flexibility around hours of work, work location and work practices. This involves thinking creatively about how work can be better structured to match individual and business needs.

Flexible workplace arrangements can also assist you and your employees to improve the way your workplace operates. With an ageing population and current skills shortages, adopting a flexible approach to work and job design will assist in attracting a diverse workforce, including people with disability.

##### **Do you have non-discriminatory recruitment?**

Making sure your recruitment practices don't discriminate needs a conscious effort to review all steps in the recruitment process from the perspective of a person or persons with disability.

Best practice, non-discriminatory recruitment practices provide the best opportunity for all potential applicants, regardless of their cultural background, disability or gender, to feel welcome to apply for the position.

Advertising for recruiting any staff person costs time and money. It is important to ensure the best person for the job is selected first time around and that all suitable

applicants participate, whether they have a disability or not. It makes sense to make the most of your recruitment opportunity.

**Do you have a relationship with one or more DES providers?**

It is important for local governments to establish ongoing and effective relationships with Disability Employment service (DES) providers. DES Providers are contracted to the Australian Government Department of Social Services to help people with disability obtain and maintain employment. DES Providers assist people with disability to prepare for and find employment opportunities. They also provide placement support including longer term employment related assistance in some cases. DES providers can also help employers to access funding for workplace modifications, support services, and Auslan interpretation in the workplace.

**Plans, policies and procedures: Do you have effective plans, policies and procedures in place?**

To ensure local government workplaces are fair and equitable, it is critical that a corporate framework of plans, policies and procedures is in place. The intent of this framework is to underpin and deliver the desired organisational culture by outlining the required processes and expectations of staff. It also ensures that legislative requirements are met.

An Equal Employment Opportunity policy is a basic building block. It makes clear reference to disability alongside other considerations with respect to diversity. It is an important aspect in complying with legislative requirements to take reasonably practicable action to eliminate discrimination in the workplace. This policy can then be referenced in job advertisements, job descriptions, employee work plans and performance management processes.

**Do you provide support and issues resolution for staff?**

It is desirable for staff to have access to appropriate support mechanisms. These can be provided in a range of ways such as internal support networks for staff with disability or access to an Employee Assistance Program. Organisations should also ensure that corporate issue resolution processes are transparent, accessible, effective and equitable.

**Is your organisation responsive to staff who acquire disability?**

Ensuring equality of opportunities for people with disability in the workplace does not always refer to employees who had a disability at the time of employment. There is a chance that existing employees could acquire a disability during their time of employment with your organisation.

Someone might have an injury or accident at work or at home. They may develop a condition with a gradual or sudden onset or something that only affects them from time to time.

If this happens, and the employee is willing and able to continue working, it is critical to ensure your organisation has the processes, systems and practices to be adaptable and supportive in the ongoing employment of that person.

### **Step 3: Develop strategies**

Once the issues and barriers have been identified, it is time to develop strategies, having regard to resource implications. As noted above, new or improved Outcome 7 planning should include effective strategies and practices already being implemented. It is important to determine relative priorities and identify how you will monitor progress so you can adapt your strategies from what you learn and meet DAIP reporting requirements.

### **Step 4: Implementation Planning**

Local governments are encouraged to develop an implementation plan to sit under their DAIP. An implementation plan provides greater detail about the actions the organisation will take to achieve the strategies identified in the DAIP. Unlike the DAIP, an implementation plan is not a legislative requirement and does not have to meet the same requirements for consultation, lodgement and reporting. This allows greater flexibility to make amendments at implementation level.

Your Implementation Plan should identify actions that are SMART:

- **Specific** – clear action and impact to be accomplished and who is responsible.
- **Measurable** – how you will demonstrate and evaluate the extent to which the action has been completed and the impact has been achieved.
- **Achievable** – actions should be realistic and, if there is a cost involved, they should be included in the budget.
- **Relevant** – related directly to your Outcome 7 strategies.
- **Time bound** – set timeframes for when the action will occur/be completed.

### **Step 5: Evaluate and Report on Progress**

Under the Disability Services Act 1993, public authorities must include a report about progress on delivering their DAIP strategies in their annual report. The report contains information on the progress of the public authority and any agents and contractors in achieving the desired outcomes specified in the Act. The report also includes the strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of the DAIP.

In relation to Outcome 7, organisations may wish to consider going beyond the legislative requirements and engage with staff to report on actions and progress at the implementation level. This may form part of the annual review process and involve staff engagement to monitor any culture change and inform the revised plan.

## **Appendix 1: Outcome 7 Legislative Requirements**

The Disability Services Act 1993 (amended 2004) has been reviewed, resulting in a key change for public authorities. The introduction of Outcome 7 into Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) requires agencies to include information in the DAIP about how they will improve employment opportunities for people with disability and break down existing barriers, by 1 July 2015.

The Disability Services Amendment Regulations 2013 also included a change of procedure when carrying out public consultation. There is now a requirement to advertise for submissions in the printed media as well as on the website and draft copies of advertisements are included in these attachments.

The reference to “disabilities” has also now been amended to “disability” and correct terminology is now people with disability.

### **Changes to consultation**

Additional changes to the Disability Service Regulations are that all public authorities are now required to place a notice of consultation in a local or state newspaper as well as on the website as shown below:

### **Advertisement calling for consultation**

1. (Insert name of public authority) is calling for consultation from members of the community to amend the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). The DAIP will now include Outcome 7 “People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority”. Please visit our website at (insert website) to make comments by (insert date). The Plan is available in alternative formats upon request.

2. (Insert name of public authority) is requesting feedback as part of the amendments to the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). The DAIP will now include Outcome 7 “People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority”. Please contact (insert contact name and number) to make comments by (insert date). The Plan is available in alternative formats upon request.

### **Feedback survey**

The Outcome 7 Guide was one of the tools and resources that were created as part of the Lighthouse Project in 2015. We would appreciate your feedback on the Guide so we can monitor its effectiveness and make continuous improvements. Please complete a short survey by using the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Outcome7Guide>