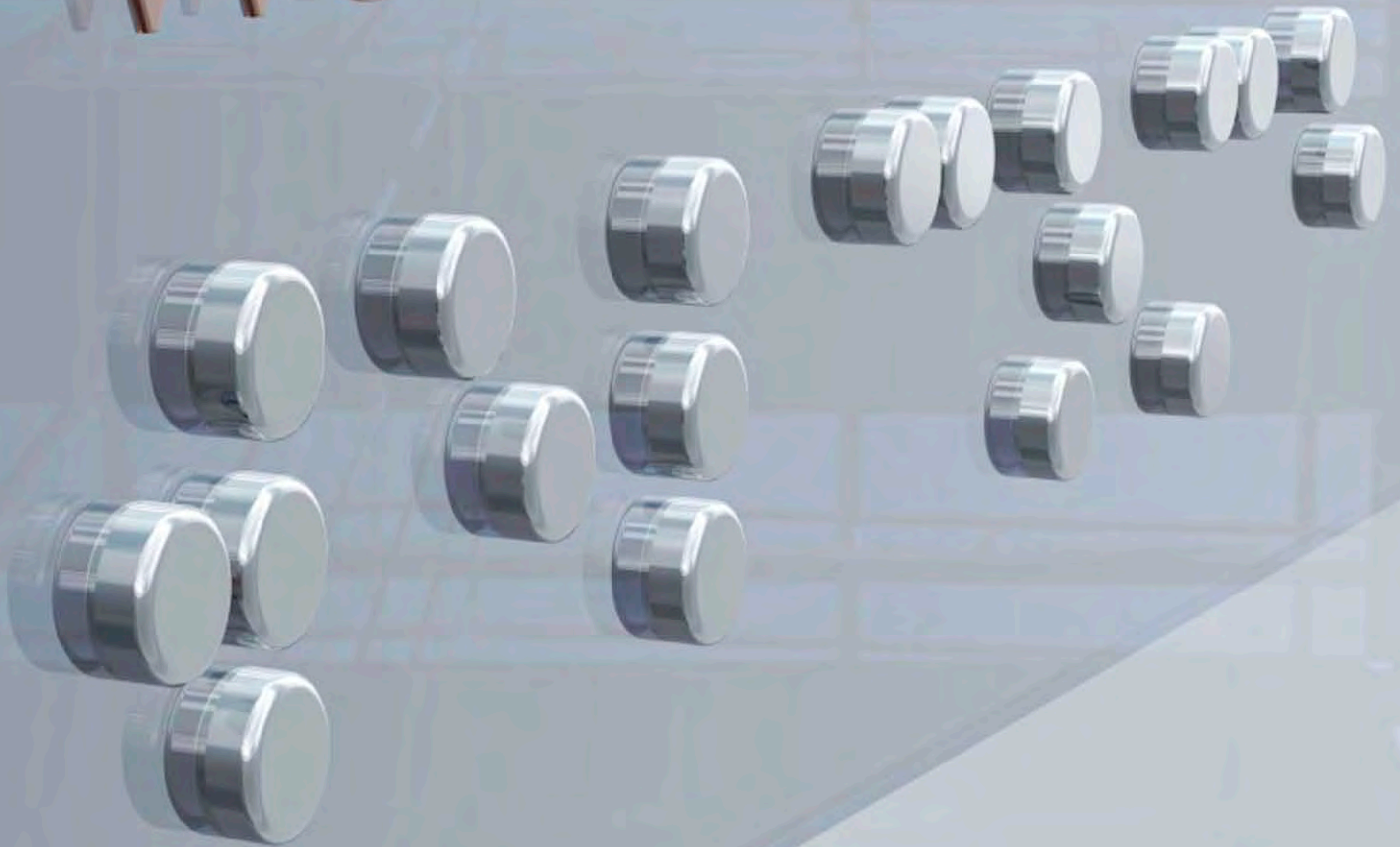


Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2010 - 2015

Welcome



Acknowledgements

Western Power acknowledges the valuable input from many individuals and groups within the community during the development of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Special thanks to Blind Citizens WA, Council On The Ageing (COTA), the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre, Rocky Bay, People with Disabilities WA, Western Australian Council of Social Service and WorkFocus Australia.

Also to Sarah Jarman from the Disability Services Commission, Western Power's employees and Access and Inclusion Committee and members of the Western Australian community.

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1 Background

1.1 Western Power

Western Power connects people with energy. We build, maintain and operate the electricity grid known as the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) in the south west of Western Australia, bringing power to more than 1.5 million West Australians every day.

We manage around 95,000 kilometres of powerlines, 787,000 power poles and towers, 224,000 streetlights, 13,500 distribution substations and make 22,000 new connections each year.

Our purpose is to connect people with energy in a way that is safe, secure and reliable. By managing our network of poles, wires, substations and terminals, we provide the connections between electricity generators and consumers.

We are constantly monitoring, planning and improving the SWIS, connecting new customers and making sure the network meets the energy needs of our customers today and into the future, in a sustainable way.

Our work impacts on diverse stakeholders, ranging from our owner – the State Government – to regulatory bodies, other government agencies, local governments, industry, businesses and the community.

1.2 Services provided by Western Power

Our business provides an extensive range of services to a wide range of customers, from individuals and small business operators to large corporations. We are committed to working with our customers to understand their needs and expectations, develop optimal solutions and deliver excellent service. Examples of in-house and contracted services we provide to the public include:

- restoring power to distribution and transmission assets
- repairs to the electricity network
- construction to modify the electricity network
- moving electricity wires underground
- energising new connections for homes, businesses and community facilities
- providing escorts for vehicles with high loads that require navigation around power lines
- street lighting (repair and maintenance, not installation)
- training through our Power Training Services
- school education programs such as ShockProof! and Power Down

Other services relevant to retailers, generators and large load customers include:

- connection access to the network by electricity generators and large load customers
- meter data for the Independent Market Operator (who manages the operation of the new Wholesale Electricity Market)
- power consulting services
- customer transfers
- interruptible and curtailable loads

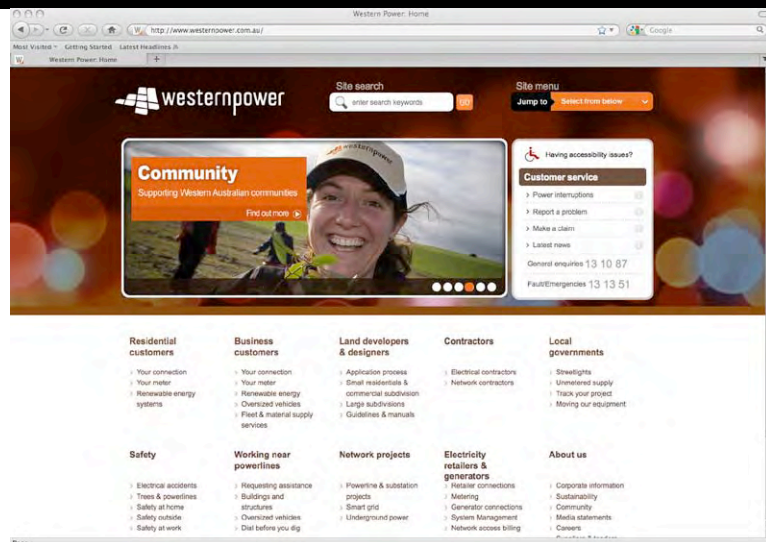


1.3 Planning for better access and inclusion

Disability affects one third of the Western Australian population. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6 per cent of Australians, or one in five people, identify themselves as having some form of disability, while a further 12.6 percent of the population are carers for people with disabilities. The number of Western Australians affected by disability is forecast to increase substantially as 'baby boomers' move into age groups in which disability is more prevalent.

Mindful that creating an accessible and inclusive community reduces the impact of disability, the *Disability Services Act 1993* was amended in 2004 to require that all public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). These plans provide a structured framework for improving the accessibility of information, services and facilities within the community.

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



1.4 Review of progress

Western Power is committed to helping develop an accessible and inclusive community by providing information, services and public facilities that are easy for all community members to access. This commitment was formalised in our inaugural Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, developed and registered with the Disability Services Commission in 2007.

Since then, we have implemented a number of initiatives in the area of access and inclusion for people with a disability. These include:

- a public website that meets the W3C¹ web accessibility guidelines for level 1 and 2 as well as some level 3. Our intranet also has good accessibility
- availability of information in a variety of formats, including electronic, fax or hard copy, that can be provided in other languages or large print
- advertising major messages for safety and energy efficiency through the disability access channel Radio 6RPH
- revision of our letterhead, invoice and electronic presentation templates, application forms, brochures and customer information cards, such as the Planned Outage Notification card, to make them easier to read
- access to our Customer Service Centre via telephone typewriter (TTY), Auslan Interpreters and the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) in addition to telephone, email, fax and post
- training and information for all new Customer Service Centre staff to improve their awareness of, and skills to assist, people with a disability
- incorporation of access and inclusion requirements into contracts for sponsorships and for services provided by contractors to the public on our behalf
- a dedicated access and inclusion page on our public website with information on contractor requirements
- availability of all reports and policy documents relevant to the public on the Western Power website, some in both MS Word and PDF format
- scheduling the refurbishment of our older facilities under the guidance of an Access Consultant to ensure they will meet, and exceed where possible, current building access obligations
- a register of people on life support that is maintained to facilitate appropriate service and restrict disconnection

¹ For further information on W3C's web accessibility initiative go to www.w3.org

2 Access and inclusion policy statement

Western Power is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of Western Power information, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community
- ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to be involved in community consultation activities associated with the planning and development of new electrical infrastructure
- consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately
- ensuring that its staff, agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP
- achieving the seven desired outcomes of its DAIP

Our commitment to providing access for staff with a disability is reflected in our Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan 2010 – 2012.

3 Development of the DAIP

3.1 Responsibility for the planning process

Western Power's DAIP 2010 – 2015 was developed by the DAIP Coordinator with assistance from the Access and Inclusion Committee. The Committee was established in March 2010 and has nominated representatives from areas of the business directly related to the seven DAIP outcome areas; services, buildings, information, service quality, complaints, public consultations and employment.

Committee members reviewed the feedback received via the public consultation process and developed strategies for the new plan to address the feedback. They were invited to participate in stakeholder interviews conducted by the DAIP Coordinator. Two of the six members attended an interview as a result.

3.2 Community consultation process

Consultation with internal / external stakeholders and the community was a key part of the development of Western Power's DAIP 2010 – 2015. The aim of the consultation was to establish whether Western Power's information and services were inclusive and easy to access, and if not, why not. The feedback received helped identify potential strategies to be incorporated into the new DAIP. A total of seven external stakeholders, 19 staff and community members including people with disabilities, and their families or carers, contributed feedback through written submissions, face-to-face and telephone interviews and surveys.

The consultation was advertised or promoted:

- in *The West Australian* newspaper
- in peak body publications such as the Blind Citizens Australia (WA) newsletter, WACOSS e-News, the Disability Services Commission's newsletter for Local Area Network Coordinators and the COTA News
- on the Western Power website
- through the Western Power Intranet

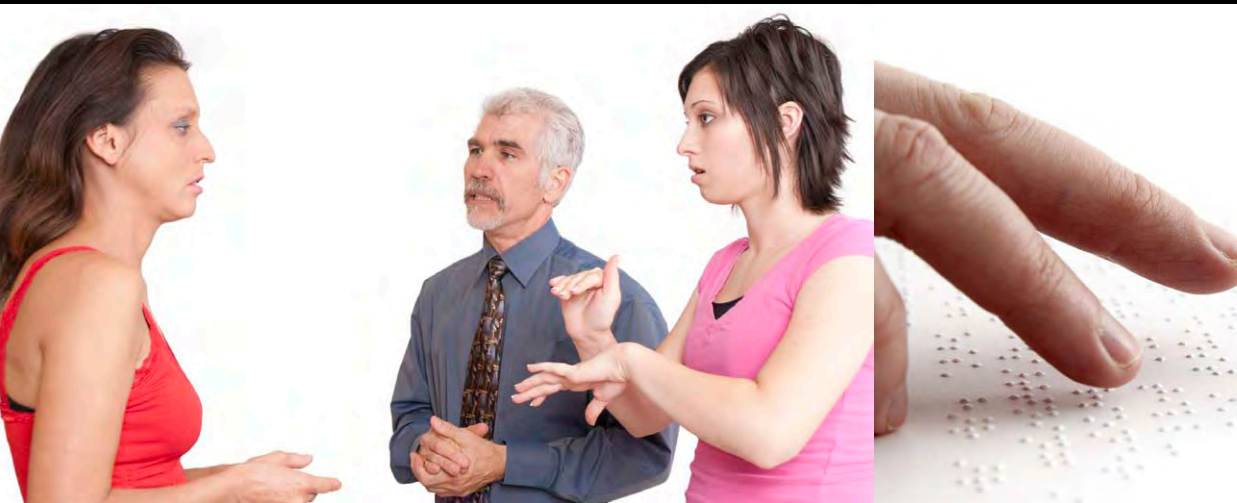
Consultation methods included:

- written responses - one submission was received
- face to face and telephone interviews with external stakeholders - seven interviews were conducted
- an on-line survey for the general public and Western Power staff – 18 surveys completed

3.2.1 Findings of the consultation

The consultation provided a variety of views on access and inclusion in relation to Western Power. The following list summarises possible access barriers as identified by community members:

- the broader community may not be aware of Western Power's role and range of services. For example, people with a disability may not be aware they can register as a Life Support Sensitive Customer
- our quoting service for Customer Funded Work may be difficult to use and understand
- deadlines for customers who read their own meter to return 'self-read' cards may be too tight for people with a vision impairment, particularly in regional areas where the postal service may have a longer turnaround time
- electricity meter boxes and Smart Meter in-house displays may not be fully accessible to all our customers
- our buildings and facilities may not be fully accessible to all our customers (for example, people of short stature, people with a vision impairment, people who speak a language other than English or people who use a wheelchair)



- people with disabilities may not receive the same level of service from our call centre staff
- services available during business hours may not be accessible for people who take medication late at night or early in the morning
- information on our website, such as claim or application forms and our Annual Report that are in PDF format may not be fully accessible to all our customers

Some community representatives also provided their contact details as people willing to be involved in further improving inclusion and access to Western Power.

The following list summarises possible access barriers that were identified by Western Power staff:

- lack of training for staff outside the Customer Service Centre to equip them with the necessary skills and resources to deliver access and inclusion outcomes
- emergency exiting procedures may pose a problem for people with mobility impairment or who use a wheelchair
- limited awareness of ability to communicate with customers face-to-face or via a sign language interpreter
- no capacity to record access needs or preferred method of contact in a customer database for future reference
- the head office building may not be fully accessible to all visitors, for example:
 - corridors have limited space
 - no accessible parking
 - no Braille signage or tactile ground surface markings
- other offices / depots (including Balcatta, Jandakot, Kewdale and regional depots) may not be fully accessible to all visitors. For example:
 - heavy doors into and between buildings
 - narrow hallways
 - lack of accessible toilets
 - numerous steps and different floor levels, particularly at sites using demountables

3.3 Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Western Power's Access and Inclusion Committee is accountable for implementation of the DAIP 2010 – 2015. Each member was nominated by an area of the business directly related to one of the seven outcome areas of the DAIP and as such is responsible for implementation of the strategies linked to that particular outcome area.

3.4 Communicating the plan

In July 2010 Western Power sent copies of the draft DAIP 2010- 2015 to all those who contributed to the planning process including staff, external stakeholders, and community members who provided their contact details, for feedback. In July 2010 the finalised DAIP 2010 – 2015 was formally endorsed by Western Power and in August 2010 it was registered with the Disability Services Commission.

Western Power has advised, through its website and the media – newspaper and radio, that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette or CD, by email and on Western Power 's website.

If / when the plan is amended, both staff and the community will be advised of its availability using the same methods.

3.5 Review and evaluation mechanisms

Western Power's DAIP will be reviewed at least once every five years. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

3.5.1 Review and monitoring

- Western Power's Access and Inclusion Committee will maintain a detailed report on the implementation of the DAIP each year and will report to the DAIP Coordinator quarterly on their progress
- The DAIP Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring overall progress and ensuring Western Power meets its annual DAIP reporting obligations
- The review of Western Power's DAIP 2010 - 2015 will be included in the DAIP 2015-2020. This will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in July 2015. The report will outline what has been achieved under Western Power's DAIP 2010 - 2015

3.5.2 Evaluation

- The Group Manager, Customer Service will endorse any progress reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation annually
- At least once prior to 31 July 2015 Western Power will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented
- A notice about the consultation process will be placed in The West Australian newspaper, posted on Western Power's website, distributed to key disability organisations and announced on Information Radio 6RPH (radio for the print handicapped)
- In seeking feedback Western Power will also look to identify any additional barriers that were not previously identified
- Western Power will conduct evaluations using a combination of face-to-face meetings, telephone interviews, surveys and written feedback
- Western Power staff will be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement



4 Reporting on the DAIP

The Disability Services Act sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

Western Power will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its annual report and the prescribed proforma 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 desired outcomes
- the strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP

4.1 Strategies to improve access and inclusion

As a result of the review and consultation process, Western Power will adopt the following strategies for 2010-2015, to improve access to its services, facilities and information.

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

Strategy	Timeline
1.2 If other utilities are receptive, to develop a strategy that will be implemented across all participants work sites in the metropolitan area that ensures a consistent level of access and safety for all pedestrians required to pass around the work area.	30 June 2012
1.4 As part of the strategy, a process for auditing compliance to the agreed standard will be developed.	30 June 2012

Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of Western Power.

Strategy	Timeline
2.1 Engage an Access Consultant as part of the design team throughout the planning and construction of major Western Power building projects to provide expert advice regarding adherence to the Access to Premises Standards.	Implement as required
2.2 Improve staff awareness of Western Power's building standards in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act, Building Code of Australia and Occupational Safety and Health Act, by providing information on the Intranet.	30 June 2011
2.3 Complete the renovations of Western Power facilities that are within the scope of the current refurbishment program. This includes head office (ground floor, basement and level 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 2 and 1) and five metropolitan depots: Kewdale, Balcatta, Mt Claremont, Landakou (Pinsep Rd) and Mandurah.	as per project schedule
2.4 Engage an Access Consultant to conduct access audits of the major public Western Power buildings and facilities not currently in the scope of the Vista refurbishment program. The consultant is to provide a written report outlining required access improvements for each building/facility.	30 June 2012
2.5 Budget for and schedule any required access improvements to the major public Western Power buildings and facilities identified in strategy 2.4 above.	June 2014

Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from Western Power in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Timeline
3.1 Improve public access to Western Power's community brochure suite.	ongoing
3.2 Ensure Western Power's information is easy for people with disabilities to access.	ongoing
3.3 Provide web based documents and application forms in accessible formats on Western Power's public website.	June 2014
3.4 Actively promote services available to customers with disabilities.	annually from 2012
3.5 Provide electrical safety information tailored for people with different cultural backgrounds.	June 2012

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

Strategy	Timeline
4.1 Ensure frontline customer service staff are aware of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.	ongoing
4.2 Engage with Disability Service Agencies to develop and conduct accessibility training specific to the call centre environment for Customer Service Centre staff.	as required, but no less than once per year
4.3 Ensure that all documents are available in an alternative format, a translator and convert information into an alternative format, is readily available to customer service staff on the Intranet.	ongoing
4.4 Build capability to record a customer's preferred method of communication.	30 June 2011
4.5 Work with the business to develop improved standards for planned outage notifications to sensitive / life support customers.	30 June 2011
4.6 Provide AUSLAN interpreters for people with a hearing impairment.	as required

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Western Power.

Strategy	Timeline
5.1 Ensure complaint mechanisms continue to meet the needs of people with a disability.	ongoing
5.2 Monitor and address complaints received about disability access.	ongoing

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

Strategy	Timeline
6.1 Ensure all community and stakeholder engagement contact sessions comply with the access and inclusion guidelines and checklists in Western Power's Community Engagement Manual.	ongoing
6.2 Update the community engagement dashboard (tracking tool) to include a measure of adherence to access and inclusion guidelines.	June 2011
6.3 Conduct an Awareness workshop with Community Engagement Champions (25 frontline managers).	June 2012
6.4 Incorporate the Disability Services Commission's 'Putting People First' guidelines into Western Power's Writing Style Guidelines.	June 2013

Outcome 7: People with disabilities have the same employment opportunities as other people at Western Power.

Strategy	Timeline
7.1. Recognising the diversity of the community in which we operate, we are committed to having a workforce profile that reflects this. We are committed to increasing the number of employment opportunities for people with an on-going disability to 85 (or more) positions by 2015. We will do this by becoming an employer of choice for people with disabilities.	June 2015

5 Contact us

Western Power welcomes your feedback. If you would like to comment on our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan or make a suggestion to improve access, please contact us by one of the following methods:

- Phone** 13 10 87
- TTY** 1800 13 13 51
- TIS** 13 14 50
- Fax** (08) 9225 2660
- Email** daip@westernpower.com.au
- Mail** Access and Inclusion Officer
Western Power Customer Service Centre
GPO Box L921
Perth WA 6842
- Website** www.westernpower.com.au



