



contents

2	foreword from the Minister for Disability Services
3	the vision
4	introduction
5	scope of the policy statement
6	disability and the South Australian context
7	directions for South Australia
8	principles
9	key outcomes for South Australians with disabilities
10	strategies to achieve key outcomes
15	reporting, monitoring, evaluation and review

foreword from the Minister for Disability Services



This document, *Promoting Independence - Disability Action Plans for South Australia*, is a further illustration of the Government's commitment to people with disabilities.

In the past, many people have presumed that disability meant a life of dependence. We now recognise that people with disabilities want to, and can, lead independent lives and participate in all dimensions of social, economic and community life.

In August 1999, I invited the All of Government Disability Strategy Steering Committee to assist in devising a whole of government policy outlining a framework for future action. This Committee included a broad cross section of senior officers from government portfolios. Work was undertaken in consultation with key disability interest groups that include and represent the views of people with disabilities. I would like to thank all those who have given their time to assist in its preparation.

Promoting Independence provides a coordinated and active agenda that stands and builds on the foundations of the *South Australian Disability Services Act, 1993* by promoting independence, participation and inclusion.

The key outcome statements provide a strong and flexible framework for portfolios and their agencies to reflect the Government's priorities for people with disabilities within their activities.

By implementing the strategies at every level of government, there will be great benefits to South Australia, socially and economically, as more people with disabilities are enabled to fully participate in all aspects of the wider community.

Promoting Independence - Disability Action Plans for South Australia is part of a great cultural change which is seeing people with disabilities acknowledged and recognised for their continuing contribution to our community.

I encourage people with disabilities as well as the wider community to use this document as an invitation to engage in dialogue with Government departments and their agencies to support its successful implementation and further promote the enhancement of the opportunities for people with disabilities in South Australia.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Lawson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Lawson, Minister for Disability Services
October 2000



the vision

From the Principles, the South Australian Government has distilled our vision as:

“An enhanced quality of life for people with disabilities through their effective participation and independence in the community as citizens of South Australia.”

The *South Australian Disability Services Act, 1993* includes the following principles in relation to services for people with disabilities:

1. Persons with disabilities, whatever the origin, nature or degree of their disabilities might be, are individuals-
 - (a) who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity; and
 - (b) who have the same fundamental human rights and responsibilities as other members of the Australian community; and
 - (c) who have the same right as other members of the Australian community to realise their potential for intellectual, physical, social, emotional, sexual and spiritual development; and
 - (d) who have the same right as other members of the Australian community to choose their own lifestyle and generally to control their own lives.
2. Persons with disabilities have a right to protection from neglect, abuse, intimidation and exploitation.
3. Persons with disabilities have the same right as other members of the Australian community to the assistance and support that will enable them to exercise their rights, discharge their responsibilities and attain a reasonable quality of life.



introduction

The Government is committed to promoting equal opportunity for people with disabilities and to encouraging the development of responsive services to enhance independence, self-sufficiency, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society.

In 1997, the Minister for Disability Services announced that the Government would develop a disability strategy as a commitment to South Australians with disabilities and that all government portfolios and their agencies would be required to develop disability action plans. In addition, the statement articulated the Government's resolve to ensure that South Australians with disabilities do not suffer discrimination in contravention of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) or the disability discrimination provisions of the *South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

The release of this document, *Promoting Independence*, is an important step in realising the Government's vision. It sets in place a framework of action for government portfolios and their agencies to address the requirements of the DDA. It emphasises the leadership role of the Government in meeting the objects of the DDA in a wide range of government activities.

The Government recognises the rights of people with disabilities to have, as far as is practicable, the same opportunities as other community members to access and participate in all facets of community life. Government portfolios and their agencies have a key role to play in ensuring that the rights of people with disabilities in the South Australian community are recognised.



scope of this policy statement

The DDA makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful¹. It requires employers and service providers to make whatever adjustments are necessary and reasonable to allow people with disabilities to use those services to the same extent as other people - irrespective of whether these services are provided by government agencies, community organisations or business enterprises.

Portfolio responsibilities

The policies contained in *Promoting Independence* apply to all publicly funded services and programs of South Australian Government portfolios and their agencies. The focus is on ensuring that mainstream services are accessible for people with disabilities and on eliminating all practices within those services that unlawfully discriminate against people with disabilities.

This policy statement allows for an approach to implementation that is sufficiently flexible for the broad and different roles, obligations and structural relationships of the portfolios. The objective is for government portfolios, agencies and service providers to build accessibility considerations into strategic planning, policy development, budgeting and reporting processes of government service delivery.

This policy statement also supports initiatives that focus on improving access and participation for people with disabilities in their capacity as employees of the State public sector. In 1998, the South Australian Commissioner for Public Employment endorsed *People Mean Business - Managing Diversity in the South Australian public sector* - an approach which assists portfolios and their agencies to realise the full potential of the diversity of its workforce including employees with a disability. This initiative is acknowledged as the primary mechanism by which employment issues for people with disabilities are addressed in the State public sector.

¹ There are a number of exemptions provided for under the DDA that may apply to particular State Government functions. For example, Section 46 of the DDA contains an exemption for the insurance and superannuation industry.



disability and the South Australian context

In 1998, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers² estimated that there are 333,300 South Australians with disabilities.

Of these, it is estimated that almost 93,300 experienced profound or severe core activity restrictions in communication, mobility and self care, or in their ability to participate in schooling or employment. The survey also shows that most people with disabilities live in households in the community. Only 5% live in supported accommodation: most of whom are older people living in aged care facilities.

The DDA provides a definition of the term “disability”³ which is broader than the categories of persons with disabilities covered under the *South Australian Disability Services Act 1993*.

For the purposes of this policy statement the DDA definition of disability has been used to promote consistency with the objects of the DDA as well as support participation and independence. The DDA recognises people with disabilities as being equal before the law and makes discrimination on the grounds of disability unlawful.



³ Under Section 4 of the DDA, disability means:
a. total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
b. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
c. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
d. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
e. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
f. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
g. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour.
It includes a disability that:
h. presently exists; or
i. previously existed but no longer exists; or
j. may exist in the future; or
k. is imputed to a person.

² The definition of disability used in the survey is based on the World Health Organisation International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps that links the concept of disability with the consequences of disease and injury.



directions for South Australia

The *Directions for South Australia* concept was endorsed and launched by the South Australian Government in July 1999. The second annual *Statement of Directions* was issued in May 2000. It sets out both the foundations the Government has already laid down and the further steps it is taking. Directions sets the ongoing context and plans to maximise the State's economic performance, to provide support for regional communities, education, culture, environment and lifestyle and to optimise access to services, justice and community safety and the performance of the public sector.

Promoting Independence will become integrated into the whole of government structural framework of *Directions for South Australia* as part of the future directions and planning for the delivery of services to the South Australian community.



principles

Promoting Independence is underpinned by the following principles that people with disabilities, as individuals:

- have the inherent right to respect for their human dignity and worth; and
- have the same fundamental rights and responsibilities as other members of the Australian community; and
- have the same right as other members of the Australian community to realise their potential for intellectual, physical, social, emotional, sexual and spiritual development; and
- have the same right as other members of the Australian community to choose their own lifestyle and generally to control their own lives.

This policy statement provides guidelines for portfolios and their agencies to:

- promote an increased awareness that recognises the rights, needs, potential and contribution by people with disabilities as valued members of the community;
- support access and equity for all South Australians with disabilities and prevent discrimination on the basis of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture;
- ensure that the interests of people with disabilities are always considered in the planning and provision of services;
- undertake measures to make the physical environment accessible and provide access to information and communication for people with disabilities;
- work collaboratively with people with disabilities and in partnerships with other portfolios, government agencies, service providers, professional groups, educational institutions, other levels of government and community organisations to ensure optimal levels of services appropriate to the needs of people with disabilities;
- facilitate equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the field of employment;
- ensure training of service providers involved in the planning and provision of programs and services as important elements of promoting full participation and equality for people with disabilities; and
- advance equal opportunity for people with disabilities by striving for continuous quality improvement in the implementation of disability action plans.



key outcomes for South Australians with disabilities

The primary focus of this policy statement is to ensure that government services are appropriate and accessible to people with disabilities. A focus on employment opportunities in the State public sector is an important dimension where government can promote inclusion of people with disabilities in broad participation of community life.

To achieve the Government's vision, the Minister for Disability Services has endorsed five key outcomes to provide a practical framework for Government portfolios and their agencies to meet the State Government's obligations under the DDA.

Under each key outcome, broad strategies are provided so that the portfolios and their agencies can best target their efforts to identify and reduce discriminatory practices in government programs, service delivery and employment. These strategies are the pathway for supporting and underpinning the government's vision and will be carried out in consultation and partnership with people with disabilities, their associates, service providers and other levels of government.

Government portfolios and their agencies will integrate the strategies of this policy statement within the whole of government framework as well as their core business activities.

The portfolio Chief Executives⁴ will be responsible for the achievement of the following five key outcomes:

- Portfolios and their agencies ensure accessibility to their services to people with disabilities
- Portfolios and their agencies ensure information about their services and programs is inclusive of people with disabilities
- Portfolios and their agencies deliver advice or services to people with disabilities with awareness and understanding of issues affecting people with disabilities
- Portfolios and their agencies provide opportunities for consultation with people with disabilities in decision making processes regarding service delivery and in the implementation of complaints and grievance mechanisms
- Each portfolio Chief Executive will ensure that their portfolio has met the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

⁴ For the most part, the content of *Promoting Independence* will be applicable to portfolios and their agencies alike. Although portfolios and their agencies are expected to conduct their business consistent with this policy, it is recognised that these outcomes and strategies will not cover every situation and some outcomes and strategies will have to be adapted to suit specific requirements. For example, implementation of this policy may be required of non-government organisations or private contractors for the provision of government services. In these circumstances the role of the portfolio Chief Executive will be to monitor and report on progress in accordance with the contractual arrangements.



strategies to achieve the key outcomes

Outcome 1

Portfolios and their agencies ensure accessibility to their services to people with disabilities

Strategies

1. Include equal opportunity objectives for people with disabilities in policy development, corporate planning and all relevant program and service delivery planning.
2. Ensure existing services are inclusive of people with disabilities and develop strategies to assess services as appropriate.
3. Identify opportunities to work collaboratively with Commonwealth and local governments to promote and develop inclusive communities.
4. Develop plans with time lines to improve physical access to buildings and facilities where government funded services and programs are provided.
5. Support and implement the Managing Diversity initiative to promote merit and equity for the recruitment, retention and selection opportunities for people with disabilities including more flexible arrangements for accommodating the needs of people with disabilities.
6. Ensure an integrated approach to the planning of programs and services that incorporates broad diversity principles and recognises the needs of people with disabilities from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Examples of supporting strategies and initiatives

- Promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities that support access to the arts, recreation, sports and tourism facilities and events.
- Support initiatives to ensure equity of access to health services for people with disabilities.
- Develop a disability services planning framework to outline the structure for the provision of disability services based on the needs and aspirations of people with disabilities.
- Support equity programs in education and training for students with disabilities to maximise their educational and life opportunities.
- Develop initiatives to promote inclusion of people with disabilities, which facilitate access to a range of government and non-government services and activities.
- Ensure that people with disabilities can utilise appropriate advocacy mechanisms.
- Ensure that emergency planning and procedures address the needs of people with disabilities.
- Ensure that inclusivity for people with disabilities is a performance measure when purchasing services.
- Develop awareness and marketing strategies, in partnership with local communities, to promote community inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Ensure compliance with accessibility provisions of the *Building Code of Australia, the Development Act (Building Rules) (SA) 1993* and the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- Develop guidelines to assist portfolios and agencies to promote accessibility of built environments through the use of signs, audible signals and announcements, tactile indicators and orientation aids.
- Ensure the appropriate design and placement of signs and other information in buildings and facilities for people with a vision or intellectual disability.
- Develop a whole of government employment strategy to enhance participation of people with disabilities in the State public sector.



strategies to achieve the key outcomes

Outcome 2

Portfolios and their agencies ensure information about their services and programs is inclusive of people with disabilities

Strategies

1. Identify the information needs of people with disabilities and develop strategies for the provision of appropriate and readily available information to address these needs.
2. Develop whole of government strategies in partnership with people with disabilities to improve communication and information flow including use of telecommunication options and the exploration of innovative approaches to access the internet using non-discriminatory information technology.
3. Review the provision of public access to information about services paying particular attention to the communication requirements of people with disabilities from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse backgrounds.
4. Ensure services and programs publicise information on the physical accessibility of buildings and facilities as an integral part of information provision.

Examples of supporting strategies and initiatives

- Establish effective communication and information systems to ensure accessibility to information services by people with disabilities.
- Establish accessibility guidelines for web site development across government to promote access to government information and services.



strategies to achieve the key outcomes

Outcome 3

Portfolios and their agencies deliver advice or services to people with disabilities with awareness & understanding of issues affecting people with disabilities

Strategies

1. Ensure education and awareness training programs are delivered to staff on access and participation issues for people with disabilities and their associates or advocates.
2. Ensure that existing mainstream training programs are reviewed to include components on DDA obligations and understanding of people with disabilities.

Examples of supporting strategies and initiatives

- Develop a training and resource framework for the provision of in-service education and training that will equip staff with the skills and awareness necessary to ensure that services are inclusive and do not discriminate against people with disabilities.
- Review emergency evacuation procedures and training to ensure they are inclusive of people with disabilities.





strategies to achieve the key outcomes

Outcome 4

Portfolios and their agencies provide opportunities for consultation with people with disabilities in decision making processes regarding service delivery and in the implementation of complaints and grievance mechanisms

Strategies

1. Promote representation and appointment of people with disabilities on advisory bodies, committees and networks.
2. Develop timely and meaningful consultation processes with people with disabilities, their associates or advocates to inform decision making and review processes in relation to the development, delivery and evaluation of policies, programs and services that impact on people with disabilities.
3. Develop and implement mechanisms to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities and their associates and educate the community about their rights.
4. Ensure people with disabilities, their associates or advocates have appropriate access to internal complaint handling mechanisms within services and to external independent complaint authorities.

Examples of supporting strategies and initiatives

- Promote community capacity to contribute to the planning, development and delivery of policies, programs and services.
- Promote the use of accessible and participatory complaints procedures for people with disabilities, their associates or advocates as part of broader complaints handling processes.



strategies to achieve the key outcomes

Outcome 5

Each portfolio Chief Executive will ensure that their portfolio has met the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1994*.

Strategies

1. Advise the Minister for Disability Services on the best ways of advancing the objectives of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
2. Ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of disability action plans by portfolios, their agencies and service providers.
3. Participate in the feasibility studies for Disability Standards under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
4. Participate in national processes to review the *Building Code of Australia* to bring it into line with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
5. Ensure major projects developed in partnership with the private sector and/or other levels of government comply with accessibility provisions under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Building Code of Australia*.

Examples of supporting strategies and initiatives

- Adopt a coordinated approach to the oversight and development of portfolio disability action plans under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- Ensure that portfolios and their agencies report on the impact of the disability action plan in program planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Encourage the lodgement by portfolios and their agencies of their disability action plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

reporting, monitoring, evaluation and review

The Senior Management Council comprising the Chief Executives of the portfolios will have oversight for the monitoring, evaluation and review of the implementation of *Promoting Independence*.

The Senior Management Council will report to the Minister for Disability Services on progress on the implementation of the policy by each of the portfolios before 30 September each year.

The Chief Executive of each portfolio will provide progress reports on the implementation of the policy within their Annual Reports. Portfolios and their agencies will also demonstrate that the policy has been integrated into their planning processes.

Promoting Independence will be reviewed after a period of two years.

For further information:

Department of Human Services Website:
<http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au>

Department of Human Services
PO Box 287
Rundle Mall SA 5000
Telephone (08) 8226 8800



