

Disability Action Plan 2008 - 2011



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OVERVIEW

A Disability Action Plan provides a mechanism for coordinating an agency's efforts to meet its responsibilities under the Commonwealth Disability Strategy regarding equity, inclusion, participation, access and, in particular, accountability. The Commonwealth Disability Strategy is about ensuring that everyone, regardless of their disability, is able to access the services that are available to the general Australian population.

A Disability Action Plan also provides a mechanism for ensuring that in all areas of employment practice and recruitment the agency meets its obligations towards staff members and prospective staff members who have a disability.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the AEC's Disability Action Plan 2008-2011 (the Plan) is to outline:

- the actions the AEC will undertake over the next three years building upon the achievements of the AEC's previous Disability Action Plan (2004-2007); and
- the roles and responsibilities of AEC staff and managers for implementation of the Plan.

The legislative and policy context for development of the AEC's Disability Action Plan 2008 – 2011 is outlined in [Appendix A](#), and the outcomes of the previous AEC Disability Action Plan 2004-2007 are outlined in [Appendix B](#).

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The AEC's Disability Action Plan 2008-2011 has two key objectives:

1. To maximise the accessibility of the AEC's products and services for people with disability of all types, and to enable people with disability to effectively participate in the electoral process. This means ensuring that the AEC's key outcomes are delivered in a manner that takes into account the needs of people with disability wherever possible:

Outcome 1—An effective electoral roll

Australians have an electoral roll which ensures their voter entitlement and provides the basis for the planning of electoral events and electoral redistributions.

Outcome 2—An impartial and independent electoral system

Stakeholders and customers have access to and advice on impartial and independent electoral services and participate in electoral events.

Outcome 3—An informed community

An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters.

2. To ensure that the AEC is accessible as a workplace, affording equal opportunity for staff members (and prospective staff members) with disability. It seeks to ensure that processes for recruitment and promotion, as well as workplace conditions, allow equal opportunity for people with disability.

In relation to the achievement of the second objective, this Disability Action Plan will complement the AEC's Workplace Diversity Policy and Plan that identifies people with disability as one of the target groups and includes provision for the removal of physical and cultural barriers in the recruitment process; merit based selection; and the availability of necessary equipment to allow all employees to participate in the workplace.

1.3 KEY AUDIENCES

In seeking to ensure the accessibility of the AEC's products and services, the key audiences for the AEC's Disability Action Plan are:-

- the electors and future electors with disability;
- AEC staff who are responsible for delivery of electoral services; and
- current and prospective AEC staff members with disability, and their managers and co-workers.

"Disability" in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, and learning disabilities, as well as physical disfigurement and the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

The Plan has been developed taking into account the views of peak groups representing people with disability, including but not limited to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the member organisations of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

1.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.4.1 The AEC Access and Equity Officer

The day-to-day responsibility for coordinating the Plan and monitoring its implementation rests with the AEC Access and Equity Officer, who is located in the AEC's Communications and Information Strategy Branch in National Office.

1.4.2 Executive Sponsor

A member of the Executive is appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to sponsor action on disability issues in the AEC. The Sponsor's role is to provide strategic guidance to the Access and Equity Officer and play a lead role in promoting an organisational culture in which the needs of people with disability are considered and acted upon. The Executive Sponsor is the Assistant Commissioner, Communications and Information Strategy, who will work closely with the Assistant Commissioner, People and Performance, the Executive Sponsor for the AEC's Workplace Diversity Plan, in fostering appropriate cultural behaviour across the AEC towards people with disability.

1.4.3 Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Strategic Advisory Committee consists of the AEC's National Executive together with the State Managers and SES-level Deputy Managers of the AEC state offices. Its role is to assist the Electoral Commissioner by providing input to significant decisions and in determining those strategies that will most effectively position the AEC to achieve its outcomes now and into the future.

The responsibilities of SAC include:

- Overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of the AEC's Disability Action Plan; and
- Actively supporting and encouraging disability access and workplace diversity in the AEC.

1.4.4 Supervisors and Managers

In accordance with the Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct, Values and other legislation, all managers and supervisors must:

- Treat all employees and prospective employees fairly and with respect and select employees on the basis of merit;
- Encourage the delivery of services in a manner that is as accessible as possible for people with disability.

1.4.5 All Employees

All AEC employees must act in accordance with the APS Values and Code of Conduct. This means they must treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without discrimination and strive to provide electoral services in a manner that will enable people with disability to engage in the electoral process as fully and easily as possible.

1.5. CONSTRAINTS ON ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Whilst the AEC is committed to providing the best possible access and service to clients including people with disability, it should be noted that the AEC delivers a range of its electoral services in premises that it does not own or control (for example, polling places in local community venues).

Since the dates for federal elections are not known until the election is announced, it is not always possible to secure venues or deliver electoral services, in a manner that meets the full range of access requirements for people with disability.

In the case of polling places for federal elections, it is the AEC's policy to hire premises with appropriate access first. However, where full access for people with disability cannot be provided, the AEC will include this information in its advertising published prior to polling day.

1.6. CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

This Plan is aligned with the federal election cycle and will be reviewed in consultation with the peak disability groups represented in the AEC's Disability

Advisory Group and with AEC staff. Progress on implementation of the Plan will be reported on in the AEC's Annual Reports.

1.7. FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information or for copies of the Plan, please contact:

The Access and Equity Officer
Australian Electoral Commission
PO Box 6172
KINGSTON ACT 2604
Telephone (02) 6271 4678
Facsimile 02 6271 4558
TTY (02) 6271 4701
E-mail info@aec.gov.au

The Disability Action Plan can also be viewed or downloaded from the AEC's website: www.aec.gov.au

2. DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2011

This Plan is divided into four sections. The first three sections relate to the AEC's outcomes and outputs framework, as set out in the 2007-08 Portfolio Budget Statements – i.e. an effective electoral roll; an impartial and independent electoral system; and an informed community. The fourth section relates to the AEC's management and accountability in relation to AEC staff who have a disability.

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.1. AN EFFECTIVE ELECTORAL ROLL				
Australians have an electoral roll which ensures their voter entitlement and provides the basis for the planning of electoral events and electoral redistributions				
2.1.1 Ensure that electoral enrolment information is widely distributed and available in a range of accessible formats for people with disability. Formats should include large print, Braille, audio recordings, accessible web content, telephone based information and utilisation of Radio For the Print Handicapped (RPH) as well as conducting CALD community visits.	Ongoing. National Office; State Offices; Divisional Offices.	Greater opportunity for people with disability to be correctly enrolled.	Positive feedback from relevant disability groups obtained through standardized surveys. Number of complaints received, and client satisfaction with complaints resolution.	
2.1.2 Provide electoral enrolment information in a range of accessible formats to meet the needs of people with disability.	Ongoing. Roll Management Branch; Communications & Information Strategy Branch	People with disability have a high level of access to enrolment information.	Positive feedback from relevant disability groups Timely update of information. New resources created to assist people with disability not previously catered for.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.1.3 Ensure that electoral enrolment forms and associated enrolment information are widely available throughout Australia and on the Internet in suitable accessible formats to facilitate independent completion of such forms.	Ongoing. Roll Management Branch, State Offices, Divisional Offices.	People with disability are able to obtain enrolment forms.	Accessible formats available on AEC website. Number of complaints, timeliness of response and client satisfaction with complaints resolution.	
2.1.4 Ensure AEC staff are available to assist people with disability in the completion of enrolment forms.	Ongoing Roll Management Branch, State Offices, Divisional Offices.	People with disability are able to correctly complete enrolment forms	Positive feedback from relevant disability groups Number of complaints received, and client satisfaction with complaints resolution	
2.1.5 Develop and implement procedures to ensure that disability organisations are informed in an accessible manner of Electoral Roll Review activities when conducted.	Whenever Electoral Roll Review activities are undertaken. Communications & Information Strategy Branch; State Offices, Divisional Offices.	Disability organisations are informed of Electoral Roll Review activities.	Positive feedback from relevant disability groups. Procedures developed in consultation with Disability Advisory Group.	
2.2. AN IMPARTIAL AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM Stakeholders and customers have access to and advice on impartial and independent electoral services and participate in electoral events				
2.2.1 Review and where necessary amend the Polling Place Inspection Checklist in consultation with the Disability Advisory Group to ensure any changes in access standards or other relevant matters are incorporated.	Ongoing Elections Branch	Accurate information provided about the accessibility of polling places.	Polling Place Checklist includes relevant disability access standards. Number of complaints. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.2.2 Review polling places to maximise number complying with AS1428 (Australian standard for building accessibility).	As required between Federal elections. State Offices; Divisional Offices.	People with disability can easily identify polling places that are suitable for their needs.	Number of accessible and partially accessible polling places advertised and gazetted.	
2.2.3 Consult with local disability organisations re polling place locations and problems, especially during polling place reviews, and report back to State Offices.	As required between Federal Elections. State Offices; Divisional Offices	Greater access to appropriate polling facilities.	New accessible polling places are identified – increase in total number of accessible polling places. Divisional offices develop their own consultation plans. Number of complaints. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	
2.2.4 Provide Polling Place lists in accessible formats marked to indicate wheelchair access in pre-election advertising, on the Internet, through call centres and direct to Federal, State and Territory peak disability organisations. Include a clear explanation of what each of the accessibility ratings means and clear signposts on the website for people who do not have strong English language proficiency.	Each election. Communications & Information Strategy Branch, Elections Branch; State Offices, Divisions.	People with disability are able to easily identify polling places that suit their needs.	Clear and accurate information produced in timely manner. Number of complaints from people with disability. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	
2.2.5 Develop and display appropriate accessible signage to indicate wheelchair access available through an alternative entrance.	Each election Elections Branch (development of signage); Divisional Offices (display of	Improved access to polling places for people in wheelchairs.	Signage is developed and displayed. Number of complaints. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
	signage)		Client satisfaction with complaints resolution.	
2.2.6 Provide facilities for a voter to sit and vote, or to vote in a wheelchair, in private in all static polling places and pre-poll voting centres.	Each election Divisional Offices.	Voters with disability are able to cast their vote in private.	Number of complaints from people with disability. Timeliness of responses to complaints. Client satisfaction with complaints resolution.	
2.2.7 Provide election information in a range of media including print, radio, television and video (with all essential information verbalised), Internet, and audio- tape as appropriate, and Braille on demand.	Each election. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	Improved access to election information for people with disability	Number of complaints from people with disability. Timeliness of responses to complaints. Client satisfaction with complaints resolution.	
2.2.8 Ensure that the national enquiries contact number and the AEC's website address is prominently and widely displayed in election advertising (and verbalised) and in public information materials in a manner that is accessible to people with disability.	Each election Communications & Information Strategy Branch	Increased awareness of contact number and website	Number of calls to Infoline. Number of website hits Number of complaints from people with disability.	
2.2.9 Ensure that election call centres provide information on polling place access in disability categories for all static and pre-poll polling places.	Each election Communications & Information Strategy Branch	Accurate information on access categories for static and pre-poll polling places available from election call centres.	Relevant information in call centre staff training modules and included in call centre staff training. Number of complaints from people with disability.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
			<p>Timeliness of responses to complaints.</p> <p>Client satisfaction with complaints resolution.</p>	
<p>2.2.10 Provide and publicise alternative voting options, such as postal voting, early voting, mobile polling in hospitals and nursing homes, for people with disability who wish to utilise such options, and clearly differentiate between postal voting and being a general postal voter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore ways to make postal voting and mobile polling accessible to blind or vision impaired voters. 	<p>Each election</p> <p>State Offices, Divisional Offices.</p>	<p>Increased awareness in voters with disability of options for casting their vote.</p>	<p>Information provided in appropriate formats</p> <p>Number of complaints from people with disability.</p> <p>Timeliness of responses to complaints.</p>	
<p>2.2.11 Publicly promote the availability of assisted voting services for people with disability, when requested, in all polling places.</p>	<p>Each election</p> <p>Divisions; Communications & Information Strategy Branch</p>	<p>People with disability are aware of assisted voting options.</p>	<p>Number of complaints from people with disability.</p> <p>Timeliness of responses to complaints.</p> <p>Number of publications with message about voting assistance.</p>	
<p>2.2.12 Review current formats in which election publications (eg. Candidates Handbook, Scrutineers Handbook) are held with a view to maximising access by people with disability.</p>	<p>Each election</p> <p>Communications & Information Strategy Branch</p>	<p>People with disability can access election publications in accessible formats.</p>	<p>Number of formats in which election publications are produced or, where applicable, available on demand.</p> <p>Number of requests for publications in alternate formats.</p>	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.2.13 When the opportunity arises to provide advice to industrial organisations on election rules and procedures, this advice should include measures to assist in ensuring maximum access and participation by people with disability.	Ongoing Australian Electoral Officer NSW (National manager, Industrial Elections).	Better access to voting in industrial elections for people with disability.	Advice provided to industrial organisations where appropriate. Number of people with disability participating in industrial elections.	Note: Section 210 of the Workplace Relations Act requires the AEC to conduct Industrial Elections as per the rules of each industrial organisation. The Act also requires the voter to personally complete the ballot paper.
2.2.14 Where appropriate review and incorporate Disability Action Plan actions into AEC procedural documents.	After each update of the Plan. All relevant AEC business areas.	Measures re disability are built into everyday operations and are carried out consistently across the AEC.	Policy documents updated in timely manner to include content relating to disability.	
2.2.15 In conjunction with relevant organisations, evaluate trial of electronic voting for blind and vision impaired electors at the 2007 federal election.	2008	Further consideration of options for blind and vision impaired electors to cast a secret vote	Evaluation Report accepted and considered by Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
2.3. AN INFORMED COMMUNITY An Australian community which is well informed about electoral matters				
2.3.1. Ensure that people with disability are considered in the AECs Service Charter and make the Charter available in accessible formats.	2007-2008 People & Performance Branch.	The needs of people with disability addressed in the AEC's Service Charter Increased public awareness of AEC's	Specific reference to the needs of people with disability in the next update of the AEC Service Charter. AEC Service Charter available in alternative formats.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
		commitment to access and equity for people with disability.	Disability Advisory Group consulted in review of Service Charter.	
2.3.2 Review current publications to ensure that information is provided in a range of formats to provide for maximum accessibility by people with disability.	Ongoing. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	AEC publications are more accessible to people with disability.	Number of publications produced in new formats Positive feedback from Disability Advisory Group. Number of complaints from people with disability. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	
2.3.3 Ensure that people with disability are aware that accessible formats are available.	Ongoing. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	Greater awareness amongst people with disability of AEC publications in variety of formats.	Number of requests for publications from disability groups. Positive feedback from Disability Advisory Group.	
2.3.4 In consultation with relevant organisations, conduct a review of the telephone typewriter facilities in National Office and all State Office Information areas to determine which services, including the National Relay Service, would provide a better service.	2008. Communications & Information Strategy Branch; State Offices	AEC has improved communication facilities for people with hearing disability.	Review of current telephone type facilities completed and reported to National Executive. Review recommendations implemented.	
2.3.5 Ensure that the AEC website complies with the World Wide Web Accessibility Standards, the Australian Government Locator Service standards and follows the Guidelines for Information Published in Electronic Formats.	Ongoing. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	The AEC website is more accessible to people with disability.	The website complies with current standards.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.3.6 Ensure that election advertising and any videos produced for AEC clients are captioned in accordance with Commonwealth Government policy and are also audio described to convey non-verbal information.	Ongoing. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	AEC advertising and videos are more accessible to people with disability.	Captioned videos and advertisements produced. Timeliness of responses to complaints.	
2.4. MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY				
2.4.1 Set up a mechanism for regular review (including involvement of the Disability Advisory Group) and report to the Electoral Commissioner on progress and achievements against the Plan. Regular meetings with the Disability Advisory Group to be convened.	Annually Communications & Information Strategy Branch. At least once a year.	Senior management of AEC kept abreast of relevant issues.	Timely reports to Electoral Commissioner. Reports accepted by AEC Executive.	
2.4.2 Ensure that progress against the Plan is contained in the AEC's Annual Report and other relevant reports (e.g. Federal election reports).	Annually, commencing in 2006/07 Annual Report People & Performance Branch	Progress against the Action Plan is included in annual and other relevant reports and submissions.	Annual report contains section on implementation of Disability Action Plan.	Note: Archived copies of previous plans and reviews to be accessible.
2.4.3 Development and lodgment of a revised Plan, if necessary, with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.	2008 and in each subsequent election cycle. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	AEC continues to have framework for responding to disability issues.	Revised Plan produced in timely manner and available on HREOC website. Feedback from HREOC and from Disability Advisory Group.	
2.4.4 State Offices to identify and adopt strategies to implement the	2008	Improved access to AEC services for people	State implementation plans and	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
Plan at State/Territory level.	State offices	with disability on State/Territory level.	timetables developed. Reports to National Executive.	
2.4.5 Implementation of relevant aspects of the Disability Action Plan to be included AEC business plans.	Ongoing. All AEC offices.	Improved access to AEC services for people with disability.	Relevant sections included in AEC business plans.	
2.4.6 Develop a protocol for conducting consultations with people with disability. This protocol to be developed in consultation with the target group.	2008 Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	Consistent and transparent processes for consultation with people with disability.	Protocol developed and distributed. Feedback from Disability Advisory Group.	
2.4.7 Staff to be made aware of the existence and content of the protocol for conducting consultations with people with disability and the need to utilise the protocol.	2008 Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	Improved communication between AEC staff and people with disability.	Protocol and news item placed on staff Intranet. Consultation process incorporated in relevant project plans Protocol included in AEC induction materials.	
2.4.8 Ensure that all permanent premises occupied by the AEC meet access standard AS 1428 before any new premises are built, purchased or leased.	Ongoing (for all new premises built, leased or purchased). By 2012 (all premises). Business Support; State offices.	Improved access to AEC premises for staff and clients. Improved facilities for AEC staff with disability	Compliance with standards. Number of complaints from people with disability. Satisfaction with complaints resolution.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.4.9 Review and ensure that appropriate accessible signage is provided to facilitate access by people with disability.	As required. Business Support; State offices; Divisional offices.	Better access to AEC buildings for people with disability. Accessible signage provided.	Accessible signage produced and displayed. Number of complaints.	
2.4.10 Provide information to all staff on the relevant provisions of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> and requirements under the AEC's Plan by placing the Plan on the AEC's intranet and internet home page, and advertising it in <i>Scrutiny</i> , the AEC's electronic newsletter.	After each update of the Plan. Communications & Information Strategy Branch.	Staff are better informed of AEC's policy undertakings and responsibilities in regard to disability access.	Current Plan placed on intranet and webpage and promoted to all staff in timely manner.	
2.4.11 Develop a disability recruitment strategy.	People & Performance Branch	Disabilities do not affect merit selection processes	APSC requirements satisfied.	
2.4.12 Review attendance of staff members with disability at staff development and training activities. Encourage staff members with disability to identify their training and career development needs and to pursue relevant internal and external programs. The review to take into account that - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ external training providers are required to cater for the access needs of staff with disabilities; ▪ specifically tailored training is available to staff with disabilities where necessary; and 	Ongoing People & Performance Branch; All Supervisors.	Improved access to career development opportunities for staff with disability.	Relevant training programs identified and reported on in IPP agreements. Number of staff with disability attending development and training opportunities. Special needs options included in AEC staff development and training request forms.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal training provides for the needs of staff with disabilities. 				
<p>2.4.13 Ensure that selection panel members are provided with an understanding of access and equity issues that may have an impact on people with disability in the recruitment process including information about the abilities of specific disability groups in the workplace.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>People & Performance Branch</p>	<p>Improved access to career opportunities for people with disability.</p>	<p>Staff selection course materials include section on access and equity issues for people with disability.</p> <p>Training available to and taken up by members and chairs of selection panels.</p> <p>Compliance with APSC access and equity requirements for recruitment</p>	
<p>2.4.14 Review the content of relevant training courses to ensure that information on the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> and the AEC's Disability Action Plan is incorporated. In particular: Management and Supervision, Public Contact Orientation and Induction courses and Polling Official training.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>People & Performance Branch; Elections Branch; State offices</p>	<p>AEC staff, especially supervisors, and those having contact with electors, have better understanding of AEC's responsibilities under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> and the Plan.</p>	<p>Training course content includes up to date information on the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> and the Plan.</p>	
<p>2.4.15 Review and revise as necessary job descriptions, selection criteria and selection practices to ensure that opportunities are not unfairly denied to people with disability, and monitor complaints and grievances about the selection process.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>People & Performance Branch, State offices.</p>	<p>Improved access to career opportunities for people with disability.</p>	<p>Recruitment practices comply with or exceed APSC standards and requirements.</p> <p>Applicants for positions include people with disability.</p> <p>Biannual review of recruitment practices submitted to Director, Human Resources.</p>	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.4.16 Ensure that flexible working arrangements consistent with the needs of the position – such as part time or home based work – are considered in relation to meeting the needs of an employee with disability., and that the availability of such arrangements is known by employees with disability.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch; All Supervisors	People with disability are aware of the flexible working arrangements that may be available to them in the AEC.	Options for flexible working arrangements for employees included in the AEC's Collective Agreement and People Management Manual.	
2.4.17 Encouragement of applicants with disability to self identify, including any specific needs relating to job information and interview arrangements.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch, State offices.	Improved access for people with disability to AEC recruitment process.	The needs of applicants with disability included in AEC recruitment documentation. Number of people with disability self-identifying.	
2.4.18 Provide guidelines to ensure that the needs of people with disability are taken into consideration during the recruitment process.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch, State offices.	Disabilities do not affect merit selection processes	Guidelines included in AEC recruitment package and are reviewed periodically.	
2.4.19 Ensure that all policies and procedures in use within the AEC take account of the needs of people with disability in the workplace.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch, all managers.	Improved environment and conditions for people with disability within the AEC.	Compliance with <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> , APSC and OH&S requirements.	
2.4.20 Ensure that Workplace Harassment Officers and OH&S Officers across the AEC are aware of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> , the Plan, and their applicability in the workplace.	2008 People & Performance Branch; State offices; Divisional offices	AEC EEO Contact Officers and Workplace Harassment Officers are aware of and responsive to disability issues.	<i>Disability Discrimination Act</i> and the AEC Disability Action Plan distributed to Workplace Harassment Officers and OH&S Officers.	

Action	Timeframe and Area Responsible	Outcome	Success Measures	Progress/ Comment
2.4.21 Ensure that staff with disability have access to support and other assistance (including appropriate adaptive technology) to facilitate their careers and participation in AEC activities.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch	Improved job satisfaction and access to career development advice for staff with disability.	Retention of staff with disability Supports for staff with disability included in HR services such as the Employee Assistance Program and furniture/equipment purchasing program.	
2.4.22 Develop and ensure timely implementation of reasonable adjustment strategies for all new staff with disability.	2008. People & Performance Branch	Improved induction and job satisfaction for staff with disability.	Retention of staff with disability. Record of distribution of ergonomic equipment.	
2.4.23 Provide a mechanism to consult employees with disability regarding appropriate environmental and ergonomic standards for the AEC (such as building standards, job design and appropriate use of technology), ensuring that this mechanism is in a format considered appropriate by these staff.	2008 People & Performance Branch; Property Management.	AEC staff with disability have input into standards that affect them. AEC disability standards met.	Establishment of, and participation in, AEC Staff disability consultation mechanism. AEC disability standards articulated and included in specifications for building refurbishments, office refits and workstation upgrades	
2.4.24 Provide infrastructure and promotion for support networks for staff with disability.	Ongoing. People & Performance Branch	Improved support and job satisfaction for staff with disability	Participation in support networks by staff with disability. Support networks (eg discussion database) for staff with disability established in a manner chosen by staff with disability.	

APPENDIX A

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT OF THE AEC'S DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2011

There are three tiers of legislation and policy that govern the development and implementation of the AEC's Disability Action Plan:

- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Discrimination Act) and the 1993 United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities provide the legislative framework for the Australian Government's approach to people with disability
- The Commonwealth Disability Strategy 1999 is a practical framework that obliges Commonwealth organisations to remove barriers that prevent people with disability from gaining access to policies, programs and services
- The Discrimination Act and the Commonwealth Disability Strategy both provide for the development of Disability Action Plans (Action Plans). Action Plans are a means by which each organisation can develop and document detailed strategies for eliminating disability discrimination in their operations.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Discrimination Act, which came into effect on 1 March 1993, makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability. The objects of the Discrimination Act are (section 3 of the Discrimination Act):

- (a) to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
 - (i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
 - (ii) the provision of goods, facilities, services and land; and
 - (iii) existing laws; and
 - (iv) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
- (b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disability have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
- (c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disability have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The Discrimination Act recognises that people with disability have the same fundamental rights as other people and should have equal opportunities to participate in community life.

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy provides a practical framework to meet the Commonwealth's obligations under the Discrimination Act and the Standard Rules and encourages organisations to:

- Provide information in accessible formats;
- Employ people with disability;
- Purchase accessible services;
- Recognise people with disability as consumers of services;
- Consult people with disability to find out what they need; and
- Use existing planning instruments to plan for and take into account the needs of people with disability.

The Disability Strategy is based on the following five broad principles:

Equity: People with disability have the right to participate in all aspects of the community including the opportunity to contribute to its social, political, economic, and cultural life;

Inclusion: all mainstream Australian Government programs, services and facilities should be available to people with disability. The requirements of people with disability should be taken into account at all stages in the development and delivery of these programs and services;

Participation: people with disability have the right to participate on an equal basis in all decision-making processes that affect their lives;

Access: people with disability should have access to information in appropriate formats about the programs and services they use; and

Accountability: all areas of Australian Government organisations should be clearly accountable for the provision of access to their programs, facilities and services for people with disability. This includes specifying the outcomes to be achieved, establishing performance indicators and linking reporting on outcomes of the Strategy to mainstream reporting mechanisms.

Disability Action Plans

Section 61 of the Discrimination Act states that the action plan of a service provider (such as the AEC) must include provisions relating to:

- (i) the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act;
- (ii) the communication of these policies and programs to persons within the service provider;
- (iii) the review of practices within the service provider with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices;
- (iv) the setting of goals and targets where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed;
- (v) the means, other than those referred to in paragraph (iv), of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (i); and
- (vi) the appointment of persons within the service provider to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (i) to (v) inclusive.

A service provider may include provisions in addition to those listed above provided they are not inconsistent with the objects of the Discrimination Act.

APPENDIX B

OUTCOMES OF THE AEC'S DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2004-2007

Achievements of the AEC's first Disability Action Plan (2004-2007) include:

- Conduct of an electronic voting trial at the 2007 federal election in 29 locations that allowed blind and vision impaired voters to vote independently and in secret. This trial was developed in consultation with relevant peak disability groups.
- Provision of election information and education in audio and video (via the AEC website and the production of physical tapes) and print formats.
- Advertising of polling places with "full" or "assisted" wheelchair access in the press and on the AEC website.
- Review of polling places between federal elections with the aim of maximising the number with wheelchair access. The polling place inspection checklist was updated in consultation with the AEC's Disability Advisory Group and a specialist access architect. The AEC's Polling Place Inspection Form includes relevant parts of AS1428. The checklist incorporates an improved description of partial and full access categories. Polling place inspections for the 2007 election were undertaken using this revised checklist.
- Widespread promotion of alternative methods of voting - such as postal voting and pre-poll voting.
- Addition of a luminous strip to voting screens to assist voters with depth perception difficulties.
- Provision of wheelchair-friendly and table top voting screens in static polling places and pre-poll voting centres.
- The AEC website meets AGLS and W3C standards for providing access to people with disability and includes a broad range of electoral information.
- Provision of a facility for people to check their electoral enrolment on the Internet.
- Delivery of a "Householder Leaflet" to each household prior to each Federal election to ensure that appropriate information is made available in hard copy format direct to householders. This leaflet is also made available in Braille, large print, audiocassette and accessible web format.
- Focus on the needs of electors with disability included in training of polling place staff.

AEC State Offices liaise with local disability groups and in some cases have established agreements on the distribution of enrolment and voting information.