

# Disability Action Plan

## July 2001

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**Queensland  
Government**  
Emergency Services



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## Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to endorse the Department of Emergency Services Disability Action Plan.

This Plan is a tangible symbol of this Department's commitment to equity and diversity in its workforce and represents a strong collaboration between the Department and the disability sector.

The Department has already taken significant steps to enhance the physical accessibility of the Kedron Park complex, with more initiatives planned so that there is unhindered access throughout for people with disabilities. Similarly, as new facilities are built throughout the State, appropriate access requirements will be incorporated.

This Plan complements other departmental initiatives which aim to increase equity and diversity amongst our staff and volunteers and takes us into a new arena of service provision.

I commend the document to you for action.

MICHAEL KINNANE  
Director-General

# Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Methodology

The *Disability Discrimination Act (C'wlth) 1992* (DDA) came into effect in March 1993. The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis that they have, or may have, a disability. Part Three of DDA provides for an organisation such as the Department of Emergency Services (DES) to prepare and implement an Action Plan, which may be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

An Action Plan aims to assist an organisation to achieve and implement the main principle underlying the DDA – that is, that people with a disability should be able to experience and enjoy the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The development of this Action Plan comprised a highly communicative process with stakeholders within the Department and with those agencies and individuals actively involved in the disability sector.

## 1.2 Development of the Action Plan

The DES Action Plan had its genesis in discussions with other parties interested in disability issues across government, who comprised the membership of the Disability Directions Committee and Sub-Committee in 1996–1997. The necessity for the development of Action Plans as required by the DDA was recognised and, within the then Policy Unit of the Department, it was determined that a departmental initiative should ensue.

The project proposal was supported by the then Director-General and an internal working group comprised of representatives of each division and Statutory Authority was convened. The need for stakeholder input to the content of the plan was quickly recognised and invitations were provided to 30 key disability agencies across Brisbane to assist through provision of information and critique of the developing document.

A preliminary workshop was held on 30 October 1997 to inform stakeholders of the Department's progress to that date, to present the proposed project plan and to solicit participants' views and experiences of the interface of disability and emergency services. Seventeen agency delegates attended, representing a sound coverage of Queensland on disability issues and useful comments were made on the information sought. A report from this workshop was provided to the Director-General and senior managers within the organisation and a copy was provided to the workshop participants.

The development of questionnaires to gather relevant information upon which to base action statements was augmented by the advice and comment of several agencies. Of particular concern to the Department was the format and content of the "Access Awareness" questionnaire. The advice provided by agency stakeholders clarified the intent and format of the questionnaire.

Communication with the Department's regional offices ensured the information about the Action Plan reached all regional and district offices and staff of all services. Staff were invited to contribute experiences or thoughts about disability and emergency services and to comment on the Action Plan.

A second workshop was held on 2 April 1998 to enable the agency representatives to comment on the development of the Action Plan to that date and to constructively critique its content.

Following the relocation of the Department to the Kedron Park complex, a third workshop considered a 'working draft' and provided advice on implementation methods. This workshop also allowed the agency representatives to assess the accessibility of the centre for people with disabilities.

Following suggestions received from the agency representatives, a Disability Access Audit Report on the complex was prepared by an authority in access issues and submitted to the Executive Management Team (EMT). The EMT determined that an immediate start be made in addressing various issues which were completed in the 1999–2000 financial year, with others more complex to be costed and included in a longer-range implementation plan.

### 1.3 Objective and Purpose of this Action Plan

The objective of this Action Plan is to inform and guide staff of the Department, including the Counter Disaster and Rescue Services (CDRS), Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority (QFRA) and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), to meet their obligations in respect of the DDA and the policy statement applicable to their employing Department/Authority.

The Department, the QAS and the QFRA recognise the need to implement the aim of the Action Plan throughout their organisations, including equitable access to information and facilities/services.

It is not mandatory to prepare an Action Plan under the DDA. However, the development and implementation of such a Plan encourages a greater focus on clients' needs and improved service delivery.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to provide the framework within which to:

- align the goals of Queensland emergency services organisations with the goals of the DDA;
- enable Queensland emergency services to fulfil their social obligations as required by the DDA and the Commonwealth Disability Strategy; and
- ensure the needs of people with a disability are considered in future planning activities.

The Action Plan is a means of identifying areas of potential discrimination in the delivery of products, services and facilities (including buildings) and for generating an implementation plan to redress the instances of discrimination which are revealed through the audit process.

### 1.4 Benefits of Using the Action Plan

Implementation of this Action Plan will bring a range of benefits to the Department and associated Statutory Authorities, as well as to the community.

Benefits which will accrue to the Department and the Statutory Authorities will include:

- a. greater awareness of the needs of a significant proportion of the client base;

- b. enhanced preparedness to meet these needs and elimination of existing barriers to services and facilities;
- c. improved client service; and
- d. recognition and management of a vital risk management issue through the implementation of the Action Plan's recommendations.

Intended benefits for the target group (people with disabilities) include:

- a. development of greater access to emergency services' information resources;
- b. enhanced opportunity to access emergency services' facilities when necessary;
- c. enhanced likelihood of personal and community needs being managed appropriately in times of emergency or disaster by emergency services' officers; and
- d. enhanced ability to make appropriate preparations prior to disasters occurring.

## Action Plan Coverage

This Action Plan covers:

- The DES, including CDRS
- QFRA
- QAS

## Deliverables to the Community and Strategies

**Community Deliverable 1.**  
**Advice, information and services are delivered by staff who are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities.**

### Strategy 1.1:

Develop a DES Corporate Disability Policy and DDA compliance program – Ensure that a disability policy (to include all emergency service organisations) is developed and procedures are instigated to secure the Action Plan's implementation.

### **Strategy 1.2:**

**Develop a disability awareness program for all staff** – Ensure that a program is developed to educate staff at all levels about the needs of people with a disability, relevant issues and to encourage the identification of barriers on an ongoing basis.

### **Strategy 1.3:**

**Ensure ongoing community consultation and consideration of developments external to DES** – Ensure continued consultation with community groups involved in the development of the Action Plan and communicate regularly about ongoing implementation of the Action Plan across the State.

### **Strategy 1.4:**

**Maintain the emergency services' commitment to elimination of discrimination in the workplace in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy** – Review employment policies and practices to ensure all are non-discriminatory.

### **Strategy 1.5:**

**Incorporate DDA requirements into existing emergency services' policies and programs** – Ensure that policies and programs reflect disability issues and needs.

## **Community Deliverable 2. Existing services are adapted to ensure they meet the needs of people with disabilities.**

### **Strategy 2.1:**

**Develop processes to provide opportunities to comment on access to services** – Ensure processes are in place to provide opportunities for people with disabilities, their families and carers to comment on the access to services they received.

## **Community Deliverable 3. Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.**

### **Strategy 3.1:**

**Develop systems to make processes and/or events involving the public more accessible** – Ensure that changes are made to permit people with disabilities greater access to service/facilities/employment opportunities.

## **Community Deliverable 4. Access to services is improved.**

### **Strategy 4.1:**

**Improve accessibility of emergency services** – Assess all services to ensure they are readily contactable by people with disabilities.

## **Community Deliverable 5. Information about services is provided in formats which meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities.**

### **Strategy 5.1:**

**Improve accessibility to information on emergency services and protective behaviours for people with a disability** – Continually examine public information formats to ensure that all people with disabilities can access and obtain information in a format relevant to their needs.

## **Community Deliverable 6. Approaches to buildings and facilities are improved to facilitate access by people with disabilities.**

### **Strategy 6.1:**

**Improve accessibility to emergency services' buildings and facilities** – Conduct ongoing assessment of emergency services' facilities to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the DDA and facilitate access by people with disabilities within the Department (employees) and outside (wider community/customers).

# Communication of the Action Plan to the Department and the Community

## (a) To staff within the Department/ Statutory Authorities

All staff of the Department and Statutory Authorities are to be aware of their individual and collective responsibilities arising out of the Departmental/ Authorities' Strategic Actions Statements and the Implementation Statement contained in the Action Plan.

The members of the internal reference group have conducted information sessions for staff within their own division during the development of the Action Plan and regional staff have also been provided with information for comment.

Following completion of the Action Plan, further education and sensitivity training to disability issues will be provided for all staff.

## (b) To the public

The Action Plan will be made publicly available in a range of alternative formats through:

- distribution to all peak disability organisations;
- distribution to other interested organisations;
- announcement of its availability in community newspapers/publications; and
- periodic reporting on progress.

## Limitations to Action

In response to issues raised by the community and identified by departmental survey processes, there are some limitations to the action that the Department and Authorities can take.

Evacuation Centres: by definition, evacuation centres are places of relative safety, hastily established in times of significant crisis (eg. flood, cyclone) to temporarily house victims of such incidents.

Given the precipitate nature of most disasters and the impermanence of emergency accommodation, there may be instances where particular needs of people with disabilities are unable to be completely met. While the emergency personnel are encouraged to maximise accommodation for people's needs, victims with particular needs are urged to maximise self-care as much as possible to optimise the intervention of emergency personnel on their behalf. The Departmental publication *Preparing for Disasters: Information for People with Special Needs* contains important and useful information on this issue.

State Emergency Service Facilities: The premises occupied by SES units are developed under the auspices of local government rather than State authorities and as such are outside the scope of this document. Local Authorities may address disability issues through their own Action Plans.

Employment Issues: A range of jobs within the Emergency Services Portfolio necessarily require applicants/incumbents to meet certain criteria relating to fitness and capability and in some cases mandatory medical tests must be passed as a precondition to any ongoing condition of employment. Such limitations on employment exist because the job duties are such that they could not reasonably be carried out safely and responsibly by personnel who did not meet the criteria. Section 15(4) of the DDA permits such action by the Department under this Action Plan.

## Implementation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan designates responsibility for the undertaking of actions to senior managers within the Department and the Statutory Authorities. Following ratification of the Action Plan by the Executive Management Team, the managers identified in the Action Plan must ensure that the stated actions and outcomes are achieved



within the specified or appropriate timelines and to the standard indicated by the performance indicators. This will be most effectively achieved where a team approach is taken within each program to address the relevant issues.

Oversight of the effective implementation of the Action Plan lies with the Director-General. Implementation of the Plan should therefore be considered to be a normal part of the organisation's corporate planning responsibilities.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

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Monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan will occur through the quarterly reporting system and the Annual Report which identify the Department/Authorities' progress in attaining their corporate goals for the year and should be taken into account along with other social justice goals in performance appraisals, business and management plans. An important part of the monitoring will be the recording of instances where customers are disadvantaged through the non-implementation of measures recommended in this Action Plan.

## Action Plan Framework

**DELIVERABLE 1: ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SERVICES ARE DELIVERED BY STAFF WHO ARE AWARE OF AND UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

**STRATEGY 1.1: Develop a DES Corporate Disability Policy and DDA compliance program.**

**Performance Indicator: Policy in place and implementation mechanism in place.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Need for policy direction.	Develop Policy Statement for the Division/Authorities.	Completed.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy and Senior Managers.
2. Need to report on progress.	Quarterly reports on performance and progress summarising tasks: - commenced - completed - outstanding - priorities, and - time scales.	Quarterly.	Senior Managers.
3. Ongoing relevance of the Action Plan.	DAP to be reviewed on a triennial basis, adjusting goals and strategies as required to maximise compliance.	Triennial review commencing 2004.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy, in consultation with the Statutory Authorities and Divisions.

**STRATEGY 1.2: Develop a disability awareness program for all staff.**

**Performance Indicator: Policy in place and implementation mechanism in place.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Delivery of appropriate program to educate staff at all levels about disability needs and encourage identification of barriers and their: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- obligations under the DDA; and</li> <li>- the Disability Policy Statement.</li> </ul>	1. Develop a disability issues, DDA, and equitable access awareness component for the Department Induction Program.	September 2001 onwards.	Director, Human Resources.
	2. Develop a tailored 1/2 day (maximum) training program on DDA and Disability Action Plan and equitable access issues. Program to be developed with a relevant access organisation and involve people with disabilities in its delivery.	November 2001.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy, and Director, Human Resources.
	3. Schedule 1/2 day equitable access training program on regular basis, to include all staff – use newsletters, internal publications.	Annually from November 2002.	Director, Human Resources.
	4. Corporate communications staff to develop a communication strategy to promote the Action Plan and the Department’s proactive stance on achieving best practice.	August 2001.	Director, Corporate Initiatives and Communications.

**STRATEGY 1.3: Ensure ongoing community consultation and consideration of developments external to DES.**

**Performance Indicator: Information on disability issues available and disseminated throughout organisation.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Consultation process specifically directed at people with disabilities re: Plan implementation.	1. Advise senior managers of groups involved in the Action Plan’s development for future contact and consultation.	August 2001.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy.
	2. Prepare a register of access experts for involvement in staff training.	September 2001.	As above.
	3. Develop a library of best practice approaches and solutions.	September 2001 onwards.	As above, plus Librarian.
	4. Undertake periodic research projects to monitor how needs of people with disabilities are being met regarding accessing Emergency Services.	November 2001 onwards.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy.

**STRATEGY 1.4: Maintain the emergency services' commitment to elimination of discrimination in workplace in accordance with EEO policy.****Performance Indicator: HR policies and practices in place to address disability needs.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Employment policies and practices must be non-discriminatory.	1. Review current DES EEO policy. Include separate policy statement within Corporate EEO statement specifically for disability discrimination where necessary. It is planned to develop a new, simplified EEO Plan for the core DES which will include reference to staff with a disability. The Disability Action Plan will also be cross referenced in the revised EEO Plan.	October 2001.	Director, Strategic Management and Policy (SMPU), and Director, Human Resources.
	2. Ensure all interview selection panels ascertain whether applicants have special needs and, where appropriate, provide for these needs prior to interview.	Ongoing from September 2001.	Senior Managers undertaking interviews.
	3. Ensure all recruitment information is available in a variety of formats.	Ongoing from September 2001.	As above, plus Librarian.
	4. Ascertain Department training and development policy with respect to access and equity and review same.	October 2001.	Director, SMPU, and Director, Human Resources.
	5. Identify and systematically remove barriers which may prevent employees with disabilities from accessing training.	Ongoing from August 2001.	Training Managers.
	6. Identify barriers to employment at DES for people with disabilities.	October – November 2001.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, Executive Directors.
	7. Ensure selection criteria do not impact inappropriately on potential employees with a disability.	Ongoing from September 2001.	Senior Managers approving Position Description where appropriate
	8. Develop a policy on reasonable adjustment for people with disabilities.	Completed.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, EDs
	9. Establish a time scale for progressive improvements in accessibility features of DES offices.	Significant progress. Outstanding 1999–2000 issues subject to budget considerations.	Executive Management Team.

**STRATEGY 1.4: continued ....**

Performance Indicator: HR policies and practices in place to address disability needs.			
ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
cont ... 1. Employment policies and practices must be non-discriminatory.	10. Investigate and develop strategies to support DES staff who acquire their disability during their employment.	September 2001 onwards.	Program heads.
	11. Review personnel policies to ensure consistency with EEO and provisions of DDA.	Ongoing.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA.
	12. Monitor staff redundancies and redeployments to ensure people with disabilities not overly represented.	Ongoing.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, Executive Directors.

**STRATEGY 1.5: Incorporate DDA requests into existing emergency services' policies and programs.**

Performance Indicator: DAP registered with HREOC and content considered in corporate and strategic planning.			
ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Policies and programs must reflect social justice considerations including disability issues and needs.	1. Review policies and guidelines to incorporate access outcomes.	Ongoing.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, Executive Directors, as appropriate
	2. Coordination of reporting against Action Plan implementation (QPS and Annual Report)	Quarterly, annually.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, Executive Directors.
	3. Development and lodgement of DAP with HREOC.	Within 3 months of publishing.	As above.
	4. Distribution of DAP throughout Department.	Within 3 months of sign-off.	As above.
	5. Corporate, Strategic and Operational Plans to reflect social justice considerations.	Ongoing.	Commissioner QAS, Chief Commissioner QFRA, QAS Executive Directors, Regional Executive Directors.

**DELIVERABLE 2: EXISTING SERVICES ARE ADAPTED TO ENSURE THEY MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.****STRATEGY 2.1: Develop processes to provide opportunities to comment on access to services.****Performance Indicator: Client Service Standards developed and operational feedback mechanisms in place and functioning.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Opportunities must be provided for people with disabilities, their families or carers, relevant organisations and staff within this organisation to comment on the access to services they have received.	1. Ensure establishment of client service standards incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regular customer feedback processes;</li> <li>- customer feedback surveys;</li> <li>- formal review and evaluations;</li> <li>- complaints mechanisms (and well publicised);</li> <li>- opportunities for staff feedback;</li> <li>- public consultation processes;</li> <li>- contact with local disability groups (where appropriate) and/or Departmental Disability Working Group; and</li> <li>- contact with representative within the service.</li> </ul>	Completed.	Commissioners, Regional Executive Directors, Executive Directors, as appropriate.
	2. Seek community comment on and amend access policies and guidelines as required.	Ongoing.	As above.
	3. Ensure all new services are assessed for potential accessibility by people with disabilities (Disability Impact Statement).	August 2001 onwards.	As above.
	4. Include people with disabilities in testing of new products/services (focus groups, market testing).	August 2001 onwards.	As above.
	5. Investigate any difficulties in accessing Emergency Services in consultation with community (see Deliverable 4).	November 2001 onwards.	As above.

**STRATEGY 2.1: continued ...**

**Performance Indicator: Client Service Standards developed and operational feedback mechanisms in place and functioning.**

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
<p>2. Opportunities must be provided to comment on:</p> <p>(a) access to buildings and facilities;</p> <p>(b) access to information that is about the whole or part of this service;</p> <p>(c) how well staff have provided this service;</p> <p>(d) access to public participation processes (eg. grievance, decision making, consultation and Quality Assurance (QA) processes);</p> <p>(e) other aspects of the service that need to be modified to ensure that people with disabilities can use and benefit from this service.</p>	<p>1. Action relevant to your office arising from feedback on items (a) to (d) should be listed here.</p>	<p>November 2001 onwards.</p>	<p>Commissioners, Regional Executive Directors, Executive Directors.</p>
	<p>2. Matters arising from feedback on item (e) should be listed here.</p>	<p>November 2001 onwards.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>3. Changes required in policies, procedures, guidelines or service arrangements as a result of feedback.</p>	<p>Changes to be reported as part of the quarterly reporting process.</p>	<p>Quarterly.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
<p>4. Impact on contract for service arrangements.</p>	<p>Include a clause in service contracts requiring the needs of people with disabilities to be met.</p>	<p>October 2001.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

### DELIVERABLE 3: OPPORTUNITIES ARE PROVIDED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS, GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES.

#### STRATEGY 3.1: Develop systems to make processes and/or events involving the public to be more accessible.

##### Performance Indicator: Opportunities available for people with disabilities to participate in public consultation mechanisms.

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Consultation processes.	(a) Set up mechanisms to ensure peak disability groups are involved in relevant consultation processes. (b) Develop written or alternative format information to facilitate communication processes.	Within 6 months of sign-off.	Commissioners, Regional Executive Directors, Executive Directors as appropriate.
2. Grievance handling.	(a) Ensure grievance mechanisms are in place, communicated to peak bodies, the community and accessible by people with disabilities. (b) as for 1 (b).	Within 6 months of sign-off.	As above.
3. Lack of participation in decision-making processes.	(a) Develop mechanisms to foster public (including people with disabilities) participation in local decision-making processes. (b) Advertise means of participation in decision-making processes in alternative forms.	September 2001 onwards.	As above.
4. Participation in development and execution of QA processes.	(a) Encourage community participation (including people with disabilities) in development and execution of local QA processes.  Actions under Deliverable 5 below also apply.	September 2001 onwards.	As above.



**DELIVERABLE 4: ACCESS TO SERVICES IS IMPROVED.**

**STRATEGY 4.1: Improve accessibility of emergency services.**

Performance Indicator: All services have facilities that enable communication by people with disabilities.			
ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. All services must be able to be accessed by people with disabilities.	1. Telephone typewriting (TTY) facilities introduced and TTY relay services to be linked to freecall information number.	Timeframes to be confirmed following sign-off.	Call Centre Managers, Commissioners, Regional Executive Directors, Executive Directors, as appropriate.
	2. Ensure continuation of equitable access to DES customer services.	Ongoing.	As above.
	3. Ensure appropriate staff have TTY training.	Ongoing.	As above.

**DELIVERABLE 5: INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES IS PROVIDED IN FORMATS WHICH MEET THE COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.**

**STRATEGY 5.1: Improve accessibility to information on emergency services and protective behaviours for people with a disability.**

Performance Indicator: Information developed in different formats to be available on request.			
ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. People with disabilities not currently depicted in brochures.	Examine all public information documents for potential for illustrations depicting people with disabilities. Continually examine all public information to ensure that all people with disabilities can access information in a format relevant to their needs.	Ongoing.	Chief Commissioner QFRA, Commissioner QAS, Executive Directors, Communications Managers.
2. Glossy brochures difficult to read.	Investigate use of non-reflective paper.	Next print of documentation.	As above.
3. Public information only available in standard print format.	Make provision for alternative formats to be available.	Ongoing.	As above.

## DELIVERABLE 5: INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES IS PROVIDED IN FORMATS WHICH MEET THE COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

### STRATEGY 5.1: continued ...

Performance Indicator: Information developed in different formats to be available on request.			
ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
4. Agencies unaware of developments in emergency services.	Liaise with peak bodies and/or develop (usually local) mechanisms to provide new information to agencies on a regular basis.	Ongoing.	Chief Commissioner QFRA, Commissioner QAS, Executive Directors, as appropriate, Communications Managers.
5. Staff unaware of alternative options for information provision.	Educate staff re options available and their use.	Ongoing.	As above.
6. Inadequate provision of appropriate signage, advertising media.	Examine current signage for appropriateness and modify/create new inclusive signage.	Ongoing through Facility Management Committee.	As above.
7. Difficulty of access by hearing-impaired community.	Investigate validity of Telephone typewriting (TTY) facilities installation where required. Caption all departmental, public information films, videos, television ads.	Ongoing.	Chief Commissioner QFRA, Commissioner QAS, Executive Directors, as appropriate.
8. Communication message not fully inclusive.	Consult with agencies re creative means of communication.	Ongoing.	As above plus Communications Managers.
9. Posted material eg. Accounts difficult to read.	Investigate print or other options.	Ongoing.	As above.
10. No contact point to request information in alternative formats.	1. Develop arrangements to record requests for information required in other formats.	August 2001.	As above.
	2. Information relating to availability of publications in alternative formats be included in all publications.	August 2001.	As above.
	3. Develop guidelines.	August 2001 onwards.	Director, SMPU.
	4. Requests for alternative formats to be processed per Department guidelines.	Following guidelines completion.	Director, SMPU.

## DELIVERABLE 6: APPROACHES TO BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ARE IMPROVED TO FACILITATE ACCESS BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

### STRATEGY 6.1: Improve accessibility to emergency services' buildings and facilities.

#### Performance Indicator: Departmental facilities fully accessible to people with disabilities.

ISSUE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE MANAGER
1. Conduct ongoing assessment of Emergency Services' facilities to ensure they comply with requirements of DDA.	1. Develop a Corporate Access Policy defining 'reasonable adjustment'.	Completed.	SSBU-FAS.
	2. Monitor facilities audit process to include disability considerations.	Ongoing.	As above.
	3. From audit, develop action areas including identification of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- priorities for action</li> <li>- timeframes and responsible person</li> <li>- estimated financial implications.</li> </ul>	Completed.	Chief Commissioner QFRA, Commissioner QAS, Executive Directors, Director, Finance and Asset Services.
	4. Communicate physical access policies and practices to relevant staff.	In staff education. November 2001 onwards.	As above.
	5. Establish process for reviewing complaints/suggestions re: physical access issues and communicate to staff and customers.	August 2001.	As above.
	6. Determine framework or criteria for determining priorities of tasks to be actioned.	Completed.	As above.
	7. Ensure all emergency services' buildings meet Department's equitable access policies and guidelines and DDA requirements.	Ongoing.	As above.

Note: The above Action Statements are deliberately broad to reflect directions to be taken. The specifics of physical access (door widths, floor surfaces etc.) are to be provided in disk form for checking in individual locations. These requirements will subsequently be added to the Department's triennial audit requirements.

# DEPARTMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. TITLE: Disability Policy Statement

### 2. PURPOSE:

The aim of this Disability Policy Statement is to inform managers and their staff of the requirements, responsibilities and processes as required by the *Disability Discrimination Act (C'wlth) 1992* (DDA) to ensure that the Department does not discriminate in the delivery of products, services and facilities against people who have or may have, a disability.

### 3. POLICY:

The Department of Emergency Services recognises that discrimination against people with a disability is unlawful and that efforts must be made to eliminate any discrimination – direct or indirect – from the delivery of programs or services for which the agency is responsible.

Management and staff at all levels will take an active role in:

- facilitating the identification of potential or actual discriminatory practices in their workplace;
- determining strategies to reduce the effect of discrimination, bearing in mind the diversity of people with a disability covered by the DDA and the types of discrimination which the DDA makes unlawful;
- assisting with the development of a Departmental Action Plan which will identify the strategies to be followed to eliminate discriminatory practices and which will be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC); and
- acting in accordance with the requirements of the Action Plan.

### 4. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES:

- *Disability Discrimination Act (C'wlth) 1992*
- *Queensland Disability Services Act 1991*
- *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992*
- *Powers of Attorney Act 1998*
- *Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement 1992*
- *Disability Discrimination Action Plans:  
A Guide for State and Territory Government Departments and Agencies*

### 5. EFFECTIVE DATE: 18 September 2000

## 6. APPLICATION:

This policy applies to:

- all temporary, permanent and contract employees employed under the *Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority Act 1990*; *Public Service Act 1996*.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

All senior managers, program managers and staff from the Department, including the Director-General, are responsible for implementing this policy. This responsibility extends to advising and informing volunteers of State Emergency Services, Volunteer Marine Rescue and Response Advice for Chemical Emergencies (RACE) of the possible consequences if they, their Units, their information systems, communication methods, or premises provide barriers to access by people with disabilities.

## 8. REVIEW DATE:

The Department's Strategic Management and Policy Unit is responsible for the coordination of the review of this policy on an annual basis.

APPROVED



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MICHAEL KINNANE  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES  
18 September 2000

# Principles and Definitions

## Conventions, Declarations, Acts and Statement of Principles

The rights of people with disabilities have gained prominence in relatively recent years. Progressively, legislation has been directed towards ensuring government and community commitment to meeting need in this area.

Legislative provision includes:

### International Human Rights Instruments

*Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons, 1971* provides that mentally disabled persons have rights to:

- proper medical care and therapy;
- protection from exploitation, abuse and degrading treatment;
- a decent standard of living;
- education, training and work;
- due process of law; and
- review of procedures which deny them these rights.

*Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975* provides that disabled persons have rights to:

- respect and dignity;
- assistance to enable them to become as self-reliant as possible;
- education, training and work;
- family and social life; and
- protection from discriminatory treatment.

### Federal Acts

*The Disability Discrimination Act (C'wlth) 1992* (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because they have a disability in the areas of work, education, access to public premises, goods and services, accommodation, disposition of land, clubs and associations, sport and administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.

### State Acts

*The Queensland Disability Services Act 1992* (QDSA) affirms that people with a disability have the same rights as other members of society. It sets objectives for disability service development, encourages innovative programs and services and establishes a funding mechanism – the Disability Program – to enhance the provision of services which assist people with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential as members of society.

*The Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (QADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of a disability and other characteristics in the areas of work; education; provision of goods and services; superannuation and insurance; accommodation; disposition of land; club membership and affairs; requests for information of a discriminatory nature in application forms; administration of laws and programs and local government.

*The Equal Opportunity in Public Employment Act 1992* (EOPE) requires all Queensland public sector agencies to establish an EEO management plan to ensure that appropriate action is taken by the agency to promote equal employment opportunity for, and to eliminate unlawful discrimination against, members of specified target groups including people with disabilities.

*The Powers of Attorney Act 1998* will substantially change the present laws in relation to power of attorney by giving people and their families greater control over their lifestyles and health. This represents phase one of the reform of the law in relation to substituted decision making for people with a decision making disability.

Phase two of the reforms will involve the creation of an accessible, affordable and simplified method for the appointment of a person or persons to make substitute decisions in cases where the person with a decision making disability has not made his/her own arrangements or where it is otherwise necessary to do so.

## Statement of Principles

The Queensland Government has developed principles which provide a broad statement of the Government's direction for the development and provision of services for people with a disability.

The principles include:

1. People with disabilities have the same basic rights as other members of society and should be supported to exercise their rights.
2. Services, support and information provided to adults and children with disabilities, their families and carers should, as far as possible:
  - be provided in a similar way to those provided to any other member of the community;
  - be accessible;
  - be responsive to the needs of the individual;
  - be provided in a flexible, coordinated, efficient, effective and accountable manner; and,
  - be appropriate for the individual's age, gender, cultural background and disability.
3. Adults and children with disabilities, their families and carers should be encouraged to participate in decisions, including policies, programs and services, that affect their lives.

## Definition of Disability

One of the purposes of the Action Plan is to promote equality of opportunity for everyone by protecting them from unfair discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived disability or in certain areas of activity, including work, education and accommodation.

For the purposes of this Action Plan, "disability" is defined in accordance with the definition provided by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. It includes a disability that is:

- physical;
- intellectual/psychiatric;
- sensory;
- neurological;
- a learning impairment;
- physically disfiguring;
- arising from disease-causing organisms.

The definition includes a disability that:

- presently exists;
- previously existed but no longer exists (eg. a person who has had a back injury, a heart attack or an episode of mental illness);
- may exist in the future (eg. a person who has a genetic predisposition to disease such as Huntington’s Disease or heart disease or a person who is HIV positive); or
- is imputed to a person (eg. assuming that a person living with an infectious disease has the disease).

To further the spirit of the Action Plan, it is beneficial to consider the meaning of the term “discrimination” and to consider the implications for the future implementation of the Plan.

“Discrimination” is more widely considered within the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and is defined as “[acting to] discriminate whether by direct discrimination or indirect discrimination”.

According to S.10.(1) of this Act, “direct discrimination” on the basis of an attribute occurs:

“... if a person treats, or proposes to treat, a person with an attribute less favourably than another person without the attribute is, or would be treated in circumstances that are the same or not materially different”.

Similarly, this Act defines “indirect discrimination” as behaviour or action on the basis of an attribute:

“...if a person imposes or proposes to impose, a term...”

- (a) with which a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply; and
- (b) with which a higher proportion of people without the attribute comply or are able to comply; and
- (c) that is not reasonable”.

The *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* further clarifies what “reasonable” may mean and defines “term” (above) as “a condition, requirement or practice, whether or not written”.

Section 7.(1) of the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* prohibits discrimination on the basis of the following attributes:

- marital status;
- pregnancy;
- parental status;
- breastfeeding;
- age;
- race;
- impairment;
- religion;
- political belief or activity;
- trade union activity;
- lawful sexual activity; and
- association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes.

**This Action Plan also holds these prohibitions to be relevant by implication and supports any active moves to address such discriminatory practices.**



## Participant Reference Groups

### External Reference Group of Disability Agencies:

Queensland Disability Housing Coalition  
1b/38 Old Cleveland Road  
STONES CORNER QLD 4120  
Telephone: 3397 5044  
TTY: 3397 5271  
Facsimile: 3397 5227  
Email: qdhc@eis.net.au

Physical Disability Council of Qld  
68 Campbell Road  
SHELDON QLD 4157  
Telephone: 3206 4618  
Facsimile: 3206 4618

Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association  
of Qld Inc.  
O'Connell St  
KANGAROO POINT QLD 4169  
PO Box 5651  
WEST END QLD 4101  
Telephone: 3391 2044  
Facsimile: 3391 2088  
Email: pqaq@pqaq.com.au  
Website: www.pqaq.com.au

Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland  
PO Box 386  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006  
Telephone: 3358 8011  
Facsimile: 3254 1291  
Website: www.cplqld.org.au

Ethnic Community Disability Network  
Unit 1, Avoca Street  
YERONGA QLD 4104  
Telephone: 3848 3793

Epilepsy Qld Inc. – Brisbane  
Level 2, Gabba Towers  
411 Vulture Street  
WOOLLOONGABBA QLD 4102  
PO Box 1457  
COORPAROO BC 4151  
Telephone: 3435 5000  
Facsimile: 3435 5025  
Email: epilepsy@gil.com.au  
Website: www.eqj.org.au

Royal Blind Foundation of Qld Inc.  
PO Box 455  
STONES CORNER QLD 4120  
Telephone: 3397 1234  
Facsimile: 3391 0477  
Email: salexander@rbf.org.au

Brain Injury Association of Qld Inc.  
2-36 Finchley Street  
PO Box 1519  
MILTON QLD 4064  
Telephone: 3367 1049  
Facsimile: 3367 1053  
Email: biaq@biaq.com.au  
Website: www.biaq.com.au

Queensland Deaf Society Inc.  
34 Davidson Street  
NEWMARKET QLD 4051  
Telephone: 3356 8255  
Facsimile: 3356 1331  
Email: qds@qdsinc.com.au  
Website: www.qlddeafsociety.com.au

Better Hearing Australia (Qld)  
21 Vulture Street  
WEST END QLD 4101  
Telephone: 3844 5065  
Facsimile: 3846 5260  
Email: bhabris@gil.com.au

Queensland Council of Carers  
15 Abbott Street  
PO Box 51  
CAMP HILL QLD 4152  
Telephone: 3843 1401  
Facsimile: 3843 1403

Australian Pensioners & Superannuants  
League  
174-176 Boundary Street  
PO Box 5141  
WEST END QLD 4101  
Telephone: 3844 5878  
Facsimile: 3846 4614  
Email: [apsl@apsl.com.au](mailto:apsl@apsl.com.au)  
Website: [www.apsl.com.au](http://www.apsl.com.au)

Mental Health Association (Qld) Inc.  
Friendship House, 20 Balfour Street  
NEW FARM QLD 4005  
Telephone: 3358 4988  
Facsimile: 3254 1027  
Email: [association@mentalhealth.org.au](mailto:association@mentalhealth.org.au)  
Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.au](http://www.mentalhealth.org.au)

ACROD  
Shop 18 Highpoint Plaza  
PO Box 364  
ASHGROVE QLD 4060  
Telephone: 3366 4366  
Facsimile: 3366 4736  
Email: [acrodqld@acrod.org.au](mailto:acrodqld@acrod.org.au)  
Website: [www.acrod.org.au](http://www.acrod.org.au)

QRAPID  
967 Stanley St  
EAST BRISBANE QLD 4169  
PO Box 1515  
COORPAROO QLD 4151  
Telephone: 3891 5466  
Facsimile: 3891 5706  
Email: [bookings@qrapid.org.au](mailto:bookings@qrapid.org.au)

Sporting Wheelies & Disabled Sport &  
Recreation Association  
60 Edmondstone Road  
BOWEN HILLS QLD 4006  
Telephone: 3253 3333  
Facsimile: 3253 3322  
Email: [mail@sportingwheelies.org.au](mailto:mail@sportingwheelies.org.au)  
Website: [www.sportingwheelies.org.au](http://www.sportingwheelies.org.au)

Queensland Association of the Deaf  
PO Box 6251  
FAIRFIELD GARDENS QLD 4103  
Telephone: 3405 8333  
Facsimile: 3405 8402

Technical Aid for the Disabled  
10A Waterloo Street  
NEWSTEAD QLD 4006  
PO Box 2334  
FORTITUDE VALLEY BUSINESS  
CENTRE QLD 4006  
Telephone: 3216 1733  
Facsimile: 3216 1744  
Email: [tadq@technicalaidqld.org.au](mailto:tadq@technicalaidqld.org.au)  
Website: [www.technicalaidqld.org.au](http://www.technicalaidqld.org.au)

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Queensland  
286 Gladstone Road  
DUTTON PARK QLD 4102  
Locked Bag 370  
COORPAROO QLD 4151  
Telephone: 3846 3300  
Facsimile: 3840 0813  
Email: [mssociety@ms-qld.aust.com](mailto:mssociety@ms-qld.aust.com)  
Website: [www.msaustralia.org](http://www.msaustralia.org)

Endeavour Foundation  
238 Jordan Terrace  
BOWEN HILLS QLD 4006  
PO Box 2141  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006  
Telephone: 3874 1026  
Facsimile: 3874 1010  
Email: [head.office@endeavour.com.au](mailto:head.office@endeavour.com.au)  
Website: [www.endeavour.com.au](http://www.endeavour.com.au)

Arthritis Foundation of Queensland  
134 St Pauls Terrace  
PO Box 807  
SPRING HILL QLD 4004  
Telephone: 3831 4255  
Facsimile: 3831 4205  
Email: [info@arthritis.org.au](mailto:info@arthritis.org.au)  
Website: [www.arthritis.org.au](http://www.arthritis.org.au)

Community Disability Alliance Inc.  
(Now closed)

### **Internal Reference Group Members:**

Chris Wouterszcz (current)  
Andrew Lewin (past)

Ron Attwood (current)  
David Cromb (current)

Heather Kadel (current)  
Juanita Warren (past)

Kate Leaver (past)  
Julie Hawkes (current)

Fiona McKersie (current)  
Bryan Evans (current)  
Pam Davis (current)

Jack Keegan (current)  
Peter Erwood (past)  
Karen Cosgrove (past)  
Fiona Stockwell (past)

Susie Bennett-Yeo (past)

Ulla Zeller (past)  
David Reed (current)

## Workshop Attendees

### Workshop - Australian Institute of Architects Building, SOUTH BRISBANE

Name	Association
Ian Hawkins	Queensland Disability Housing Coalition
John Mayo	Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of Qld
Brendan Horne	Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
John Wilkinson	Ethnic Community Disability Network
Carol Sugden	Epilepsy Qld Inc. - Brisbane
Jenny Finch	Royal Blind Society (now Royal Blind Foundation of Queensland Inc.)
John Dickenson	Brain Injury Association of Qld Inc.
David Sinnamon	Queensland Deaf Society
Doug Peterson and Dick Snip	Better Hearing Australia (Qld)
Wayne Videroni	Queensland Council of Carers
Yvonne Zardani	Australian Pensioners & Superannuants League
Stas Wiatrowski	Qld Association for Mental Health Inc.
Sue Collins	ACROD
Michelle Lingard	QRAPID
Carmel Williams	Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Sport and Recreation Association
Eileen McGee	Community Disability Alliance
Members of the Internal Reference Group	

## Workshop - PARAPLEGIC AND QUADRIPLLEGIC ASSOCIATION, KANGAROO POINT

Name	Association
Jillian Lee	Qld Foundation for Blind People Inc. (now Royal Blind Foundation of Queensland Inc.)
Yvonne Zardani and Ivy Evans	Australian Pensioners and Superannuants League
John Wilkinson	NEDA/ECON QLD
Ian Hawkins	Physical Disability Council of Qld
Carmel Williams	Sporting Wheelies & Disabled Sport & Recreation Association
John Mayo	Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association
Christine Le Bon	Cerebal Palsy League of Queensland
Joleen Olsson	Queensland Council of Carers
Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service and Members of the Internal Reference Group	

## Workshop - KEDRON PARK COMPLEX

Name	Association
Yvonne Zardani and Ivy Evans	Australian Pensioners and Superannuants League
John Wilkinson	NEDA/ECON QLD
Ian Hawkins	Physical Disability Council of Qld
Carmel Williams	Sporting Wheelies & Disabled Sport & Recreation Association
John Mayo	Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association
Christine Le Bon	Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland
Joleen Olsson	Qld Council of Carers
Nicholas Kassulke and Julie Lyons	Qld Association of the Deaf
Janet Richardson, Barbara Whatley, Jenny Webster-Hancock, Brian Thierkauf, Gerard Ward, Chris Wouterscz and Sharon Beck	QFRA
Sharon Maher	Carer
Lesley Galloway and Katie Leaver	Disaster Policy and Research Unit
Marco Ramirez	Queensland Disability Housing Coalition
Executive Director, Counter Disaster and Rescue Services Division and Members of the Internal Reference Group	





**Queensland**  
Government

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**Emergency Services**