



MIDLAND
REDEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

MIDLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2006-2010

This plan is available upon request in the alternative formats of large print and electronic format (disk or e-mailed).

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1. MIDLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Who we are...

The Midland Redevelopment Authority (MRA) is an agency of the Western Australian Government.

Our role is to ensure the development and redevelopment of land in the redevelopment area.

Our commitment is to achieve its purpose in a manner which:

- Provides a demonstration to the wider community of a model urban environment.
- Enjoys high overall community support.
- Provides the best possible financial return to the taxpayer.

What we do...

Major activities include:

1. The development of a Redevelopment Scheme and participation in public forums for community consultation and comment.
2. Maintaining control of planning and development in accordance with the Scheme.
3. Managing the design and construction of the redevelopment works to be delivered on time and on budget.
4. Managing the property, financial and commercial operations of the project in an effective and efficient manner.

Priority issues are:

1. Expanding residential, commercial, retail and recreational opportunities in the Redevelopment Area.
2. Balancing and complement the existing community fabric.
3. Promoting medium density mixed use development and a diversity of housing stock reflecting the existing Authority neighbourhood.
4. Increasing utilisation of public and alternative transport in the Area.
5. Completing major infrastructure works and development of land on time and within budget.

Our principal customers are the:

- Government of Western Australia
- Community of Midland and its surrounds
- Wider community of Western Australia

2. INTRODUCTION

The MRA recognises the unique opportunity to create a modern urban environment that all members of the community can use and benefit. The MRA is committed to creating an accessible community where people with permanent or temporary disabilities and their families can participate in community life with dignity, independence and equity

The MRA provides the vehicle to ensure that all services and facilities established within its area of responsibility comply with relevant legislation and in particular the *Disability Services Act 1993* and the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The MRA is committed to providing the highest level of services to its customers. In recognising particular needs for people with disabilities, the MRA has adopted and implemented the following Disability Access and Inclusion Plan that will ensure that people with disabilities can access services and facilities. The Plan is subject to review and may be amended and extended as priorities and needs change.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) includes:

- information about MRA's facilities and services (both in-house and contracted);
- an MRA policy statement addressing the issue of access for people with disabilities;
- strategies to provide easier access for people with disabilities;
- details of timelines and the people responsible for the proposed strategies;
- methods to review and evaluate the plan;
- information about how the plan will be communicated to employees and people with disabilities;
- identification of barriers such as the physical design of buildings, streetscapes, public environment, the lack of devices to assist communications, the format and distribution of information or the way customers with disabilities are treated that may restrict the rights and opportunities of those with a disability; and
- identification of the needs of the agency's customers to ensure that services are appropriate and do not breach state and national disability laws.

Why is Access Important

A disability may be defined as any physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual, cognitive, or psychiatric condition that can impact on a person's lifestyle and/or everyday functioning.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2003), 20.6% of Australians or more than 1 in 5 people, identify themselves as having some form of disability.

Disabilities can occur at any time in a person's life. For some, the disability begins at birth. For others, it can be the result of a sporting or motor vehicle accident. Other people acquire disabilities later in life through various illnesses or ageing.

Some disabilities can affect a person's ability to communicate, interact with others, learn or get about independently. A disability can impact on a person's employment, education, recreation, accommodation and leisure opportunities.

Disabilities may be short or long term. Some are episodic and many people may have more than one disability.

When we consider that access also benefits family members and friends of people with disabilities, parents with prams, seniors, and people with temporary disabilities resulting from accidents and illness, its provision becomes even more vital.

While the provision of access to all services and facilities that the public use is a mandatory requirement under existing legislation, access to housing is not currently a legislative requirement. Given that 50% of the population over the age of 60 years has a disability it is increasingly important that appropriate housing options are planned.

3. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

Under the *Disability Services Act 1993*, a disability means a disability which –

- a. is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- b. is permanent, or likely to be permanent;
- c. may or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature;
- d. results in –
 - substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility; and
 - a need for continuing support services.

4. ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS

The MRA is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of departmental services and facilities (both in-house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all other people in the community;
- ensuring that people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of their community through the consultative process with local business and industry in respect of new investments;
- consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately;
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP;
- ensuring works undertaken within the Redevelopment Area comply with access legislated requirements to provide a high level of access for all community members; and
- achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP.

The six desired outcomes are:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disabilities receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

5. DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR AGENTS AND CONTRACTORS

The *Disability Services Act 1993* requires agents and contractors of public authorities to conduct their business in a manner consistent with the contracting public authority's DAIP.

Relevant sections of the Act and associated Regulations regarding DAIPs and agents and contractors include:

- *Section 28. Disability access and inclusion plans* - Each public authority must have a disability access and inclusion plan to ensure that in so far as its functions involve dealings with the general public, the performance of those functions furthers the principles in Schedule 1 and meets the objectives in Schedule 2;
- *Section 29B. Public authorities to ensure implementation of a disability access and inclusion plan* - A public authority that has a disability access and inclusion plan must take all practicable measures to ensure that the plan is implemented by the public authority and its officers, employees, agents or contractors; and
- *Regulation 8. Information in reports about disability access and inclusion plans (s. 29)* - For the purposes of section 29(4) of the Act, a report about a disability access and inclusion plan must include information relating to —
 - a) progress made by the relevant public authority and any agents and contractors of the relevant public authority in achieving the desired outcomes specified in Schedule 3; and
 - b) the strategies implemented by the relevant public authority to inform its agents and contractors of its disability access and inclusion plan.

The intent of the Act is to increase awareness so that consideration is given to the needs of people with disabilities when providing a service to the public and to encourage 'agents and contractors' to conduct that service in a manner consistent with the DAIP of the contracting authority. The MRA seeks to encourage 'agents and contractors' to be sensitive to the needs of the community.

DAIP requirements relating to 'agents and contractors':

- apply only to new contracts or contract variations;
- apply to services provided to the public; and
- do not apply to services provided directly to the public authority, like cleaners, rewiring of telephones etc.

Following the work of the Department of Treasury and Finance, in conjunction with the State Solicitor's office, a clause will be developed to be inserted into relevant authority tender and contract documents. This clause seeks for tenderers to identify which DAIP outcomes they can support in providing their service to the public.

Section 29 of the Act requires the MRA to provide a progress report on the DAIP in its Annual Report. The MRA will meet this reporting requirement, which will be aggregated by the Commission into the overarching Statewide report for the Minister for Disability Services.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN

Responsibility for the planning process

The implementation, review and evaluation responsibilities of the DAIP are overseen by the Business Services Directorate of the MRA.

Community consultation process

The MRA's Disability Service Plan (DSP) was originally established in 2001 through an external professional consultant liaising with the MRA's senior staff, key stakeholders and public consultation through the MRA's draft Concept Plan in 2000, from which no submissions were received concerning access issues.

In 2006 the MRA undertook to review its DSP, consult with key stakeholders, and draft a new DAIP to guide further improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- examination of the initial DSP to see what has been achieved and what still needs work;
- examination of other relevant MRA documents and strategies; and
- consultation with key staff and the community.

Following the *Disability Services Act 1993* Regulations minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs, in November 2006 the local community was informed through a media statement on the MRA's website and an advertisement in local papers that the MRA was developing a DAIP to address the barriers that people with disabilities and their families experience in accessing departmental functions, facilities and services.

The community was advised they could provide their input by the website's Online Feedback Form, by phone or by written letter. No people submitted comments through these avenues.

Access barriers

While the review noted a great deal of achievement in improving access it also identified a range of barriers that require redress.

These access barriers include:

- MRA processes may not be as accessible as possible;
- events may not always be held in a manner and location that best facilitates the participation of people with disabilities;

- physical infrastructure may not be meeting the needs of people with disabilities;
- staff may be uninformed or lacking in confidence to provide the same level of service to people with disabilities.

The identification of these barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP. The barriers have been prioritised in order of importance, which assists in setting timeframes to complete strategies to overcome those access barriers.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the MRA.

Some actions in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the MRA while others will apply only to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The Business Services Directorate will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

In early February 2007 the plan was finalised and formally endorsed by the MRA's Senior Executive Group (SEG).

The MRA has advised, through the MRA website and local newspapers, that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required, including hard copy in standard and large print, electronic format, by email and on the MRA's website.

As plans are amended both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. The MRA's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act. The DAIP Implementation Plan may be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress and any access and inclusion issues which may arise. Whenever the DAIP is amended, a copy of the amended plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and monitoring

Business Services will meet with the SEG annually to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.

The review of the MRA's DAIP will be included in the DAIP 2011-2015 which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2011. The report will outline what has been achieved under the MRA's DAIP 2006-2010.

Business Services will prepare a report each year on the implementation of the DAIP. A status report will be provided to the SEG for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

The SEG will endorse any reports on the disability access and inclusion implementation process annually.

Once a year, prior to 31 July, the MRA will provide advice to the community regarding the implementation of the DAIP and seek feedback on the effectiveness of strategies that have been implemented. A notice about the consultation process will be posted on the MRA's website.

In seeking feedback the SEG will also seek to identify any additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.

MRA staff will also be requested to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and to make suggestions for improvement.

The Implementation Plan will be amended based on the feedback received. Copies of the amended Implementation Plan, once endorsed by the MRA, will be available to the community in alternative formats.

7. REPORTING ON THE DAIP

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs.

The MRA will report on the implementation of its DAIP through the prescribed progress report template to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- its progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- the progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and
- the strategies it used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

The MRA will also provide information to the public about the progress made through the DAIP in its Annual Report.

8. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

As a result of the consultation process the following overarching strategies will guide tasks, reflected in the Implementation Plan, that the MRA will undertake from 2006-2010 to improve access to its services, buildings and information.

The six desired outcomes provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

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

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|
| Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disabilities. | 2007 |
| Ensure that MRA staff, agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act 1993</i> . | 2007 |

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

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|
| Ensure refurbished facilities, where possible are modified to comply with access requirements for people with disabilities (recognising that a significant number of assets comprise heritage buildings). | 2008 |
| Ensure adequate ACROD parking to meet the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location. | 2008 |
| Ensure all future premises leased by the MRA are accessible (recognising that a significant number of assets comprise heritage buildings). | 2008 |
| Ensure that all planning processes consider the needs of people with disabilities. | 2007 |

Outcome 3: People with disabilities can access information from the Midland Redevelopment Authority as readily as other people are able to access it.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|-----------------|
| Improve the awareness of customer service staff about information needs of people who are hearing impaired, hard of hearing, deaf, and people with speech impediments. | 2007 |
| Ensure information is written in clear and concise language and is made available to the general public in a variety of formats, upon request. | 2007 |

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

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|
| Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disabilities. | 2007 |
| Improve the awareness of new staff about disability and access issues in line with the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act 1993</i> . | 2007 |

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the Midland Redevelopment Authority.

| Strategy | Timeline |
|---|-----------------|
| Ensure that current grievance mechanisms are accessible for people with disabilities. | 2007 |
| Improve staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability. | 2008 |

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

| Strategy | Timeline |
|--|-----------------|
| Improve community awareness about consultation processes in place. | 2007 |
| Commit to ongoing monitoring of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes. | 2007 |

APPENDIX 1

Progress since 2001 under the Disability Service Plan.

Outcome 1: Existing services are adapted to ensure they meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Builders/developers compliance with access requirements were reviewed simultaneously with other contractual obligations.

Public members were advised of disabled facilities provided at all public events such as access, toilets and parking.

Outcome 2: Improved access to our buildings and facilities

ACROD parking and disabled access to the ground floor of the MRA office was installed.

Disabled access to the Midland Workshop site for the main public areas was installed.

Outcome 3: Information about Midland Redevelopment Authority's services and facilities is provided in formats that enhance the communication needs of people with disabilities.

Information is available to the public in various formats upon request.

Outcome 4: Advice and services are delivered by staff who are aware of and understand the needs of people with disabilities

Current staff members were trained to assist people with disabilities.

Outcome 5: Opportunities are provided for people with disabilities to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

Public consultations are advertised in local newspapers and through the MRA website reinforcing that consultation documentation is available in various formats when required to support people to participate.