

WACHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2024-2027

DESIGN TO FOLLOW

Design and layout of inclusion plan to follow after feedback has been finalised

DRAFT - FOR CONSULTATION

Alternative formats

The information in this document is available in alternative formats on individual request. Please contact WACHSSafetyQualityandPerformance@health.wa.gov.au

Acknowledgement of Country

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders both past and present.

The first step in living alongside and working with the Aboriginal community is built upon establishing respectful relationships. Crucial to these respectful relationships is acknowledging the history of Aboriginal people and recognising the importance of connection to family, culture, and country.

Acknowledgements

WACHS wishes to acknowledge everyone within WACHS and the community, particularly those with lived experience of disability, who have contributed to the development of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Electronic copies of this plan are available on the WACHS website at [link].

Feedback

Any feedback or comments relating to this document can be sent to WACHS.SafetyQualityandPerformance@health.wa.gov.au

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Introduction

WA Country Health Service (WACHS) are committed to ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers can access the full range of services, facilities, and information available across rural and remote communities in Western Australia; and have equitable opportunity in recruitment processes and career progression.

To achieve this, we have developed a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2024-2027 to guide our efforts over the next three years. By aligning our DAIP with 'A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020- 2030' we have created a solid foundation to achieve the outcome areas in a more meaningful and person-centred way.

The WACHS DAIP 2024-2027 aligns to the WACHS values of Community, Compassion, Quality, Integrity, Equity, and Curiosity, as well as the following key priorities:

- A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030
- Public Sector Commissions' Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy 2020–2025
- WA Health Policy Framework for Substantive Equality
- WACHS Strategic Plan 2019-2024
- WACHS Multicultural Pan 2021-2024
- Sustainable Health Review – Strategy 4 'People-centred, equitable, seamless access'

The social model of disability

This plan uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities definition of disability, which describes people with disability as people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory differences that, when interacting with inaccessible communities and environments, prevent full and equal community participation. This is often called the social model of disability. The social model of disability is an important way of perceiving inequality because it views disability as stemming from communities, services and spaces that are not accessible or inclusive.

Figure 1 The Social model of Disability



In the social model of disability, it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability.

Types of disability include:

Sensory

Affecting a person's sense, including those affecting vision and/or hearing

Neurological

Affecting a person's ability to control their movements for example, cerebral palsy

Physical

Affecting mobility and/or a person's ability to use their upper or lower body

Intellectual

Affecting a person's judgement, ability to learn and communicate

Cognitive

Affecting a person's thought processes, personality and memory resulting, for example, from an injury to the brain

Psychiatric

Affecting a person's emotions, thought processes and behaviour, for example, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

People may have more than one disability, and people with disability may experience additional disadvantage in relation to intersectional factors, including but not limited to race, culture, gender, sexuality, gender identity, remote living location and age.

People with disability in rural and remote Western Australia – a snapshot

[Infographics]

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Western Australian Country Health Service: Rural and remote context

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) provides hospital and community-based care to a population of 531,510 people across an area of more than 2.5 million square kilometres. Almost 11 per cent of these people (57,716) identify as Aboriginal.

Our services include:

- Six large regional health campuses located at country regional centres; and
- 15 district health campuses that act as hubs for sub-regional health district services.

These health campuses support:

- 46 small hospitals
- 43 health centres and nursing posts
- 24 community-based mental health services
- Four dedicated inpatient mental health services
- 178 facilities where population health teams are based; and
- Residential aged care facilities.

[Map]

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DAIP 2024-2027 Outcomes and Strategies

OUTCOME 1: SERVICES AND EVENTS

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any event organised by, WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Effectively communicate the range of WACHS information, services and supports available to people with disability	Operations
Systems, including checklists, are in place to ensure that events organised or promoted by WACHS are considerate of, and accessible to, people with disability	Operations
All staff, agents, and contractors who provide services to WACHS are aware of and conduct their business in accordance with the WACHS DAIP 2024-2027 and other relevant legislation	People Capability and Culture

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 2: Inclusive communities – places and attitudes are welcoming

OUTCOME 2: BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
New buildings and refurbishments will consider access to amenities and staff areas for employees with disability	Environment and Infrastructure
Prior to making any changes or refurbishments to accommodation, WACHS will consider the needs of people with disability when purchasing equipment (such as furniture)	Environment and Infrastructure
Work Health and Safety (WHS) will ensure that all fire wardens are trained in the evacuation procedures for people who have requested or may require support	People Capability and Culture

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Ensure that regular access audits of all buildings and facilities are conducted	People Capability and Culture
<p>When planning for people who have intellectual, cognitive, and psychiatric disabilities, design and service provision considerations will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • need for clear signage • need for clear pathways through a building • provision of information with clear instructions • service provision through personal assistance • well-planned, uncluttered environments. 	Environment and Infrastructure

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 2: Inclusive communities – places and attitudes are welcoming

OUTCOME 3: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICTAION

People with disability receive information from WACHS in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Information is provided in ways that are meaningful and useful to people with disability, recognising that not everyone can access written, audible, or online information	Operations
Websites and publications meet accessibility standards and information is available in alternative formats upon request for people with disability, and where necessary, their carers	Operations
Accessible information requirements are considered when designing and delivering external communication campaigns to ensure people with disability are included	Operations

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Checklists for alternative communication formats for people with disability are available to staff when developing new resources, policies, and templates i.e. the Digital Accessibility Guide	Operations

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 4: Rights and equity – everyone is treated fairly

OUTCOME 4: QUALITY OF SERVICE

People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of WACHS as other people receive from the staff of WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Ensure that disability awareness training is available for all staff and includes information in the Induction and Orientation programs and Learning and Development events	People Capability and Culture
Stories and achievements of people with disability are highlighted in internal and external communications, including annual and other reports, to showcase the diverse skills and achievements of people with disability	Operations
People with disability are supported to use WACHS systems and services	Operations

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 3: Living well – people are happy and healthy, with the support they need

OUTCOME 5: FEEDBACK

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Complaint systems are easy to find, easy to access and easy to use for people with disability	Clinical Excellence
Increase awareness of complaint and feedback mechanisms for people with disability and their carers	Operations
Complaints and feedback on access and inclusion are regularly reviewed to identify and address any systemic issues or opportunities for improvement	Clinical Excellence

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 4: Rights and equity – everyone is treated fairly

OUTCOME 6: CONSULTATION

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Engage people with disability and their carers in WACHS consultative processes	Clinical Excellence
Actively encourage involvement of people with disability and carers in WACHS committees and advisory groups	Operations

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 1: Participate and contribute – everyone is involved

OUTCOME 7: EMPLOYMENT

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with WACHS.

Strategy	Executive Accountability
Review recruitment practices to ensure they are inclusive and accessible for people with disability	People Capability and Culture
Improve support provided to WACHS staff with disability	Operations
Identify and implement actions to attract more candidates with disability to WACHS	People Capability and Culture
Monitor workforce statistics regarding employment and retention of people with disability within WACHS to inform further action	People Capability and Culture

A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030

Pillar 1: Participate and contribute – everyone is involved

Promoting the Plan

The WACHS DAIP 2024-2027 will be made available on the WACHS website and intranet. Printed copies will be available, as well as alternative formats on request. A communications plan will be developed to inform staff, consumers, carers and contractors about our DAIP strategies, progress, and achievements. Disability access and inclusion at WACHS will be particularly acknowledged and celebrated each year on International Day of People with Disability (3 December).

Implementation and monitoring

A DAIP implementation plan with timelines and responsibilities will detail how WACHS regions will implement the strategies outlined above. The implementation plan will also include WACHS-wide initiatives undertaken by selected program areas including Safety Quality and Performance, Learning and Development, and Infrastructure and Environment. The implementation of strategies in each region is the responsibility of the respective Executive Director.

Contracted service providers are required to declare in their service agreements that they are enacting their own Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Progress against the WACHS DAIP 2024-2027 will be monitored by the WACHS Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee to assess whether the strategies and actions are appropriate, achievable, and effective and will assist with amending the actions to achieve the desired outcome of the DAIP.

Should the WACHS DAIP be amended, a copy of the amended document will be lodged with the Department of Communities. WACHS will review and update implementation plans bi-annually and the WACHS DAIP will be reviewed after three years.

Reporting

WACHS will submit an annual report to the Office of Disability Services each financial year on the prescribed Progress Report template by 30 June each year. The Progress Report will outline:

- progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP
- progress of its agents or contractors towards meeting the outcomes of its DAIP
- strategies used to inform its agents or contractors of its DAIP through associated procurement and contract documentation.

This report will also be tabled at WACHS Service Executive Group and WACHS Audit Risk and Integrity Executive Committee. Key achievements will also be highlighted in the WACHS Annual Report.

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