

**Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)
2007-2011**

Central TAFE

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille.

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Acknowledgements

Central TAFE acknowledges the contribution made by staff, key stakeholders, particularly people with disabilities, and groups within the wider community, to the development and preparation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2007-2011.

Foreword

Central TAFE, one of Australia's largest TAFE colleges, prides itself on providing excellent, innovative vocational education and training.

With a diverse population, made up of more than 25,000 students and nearly 2,000 staff, Central TAFE is committed to maximising opportunities for all students and providing a positive work environment for staff.

In the upcoming years, our College priorities are to continue to develop creative teaching and learning strategies, pathways and partnerships in industry and the community alongside building and investing in College capacity and infrastructure.

These goals both support and assist in the development of a meaningful Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

A wide-ranging and intensive consultation process has been employed across the College in the development of this Plan including consultation with staff, students, important constituents and the broader community.

The six outcomes in the plan, along with the related framework and strategies will guide actions undertaken by the College to improve access to its services, buildings and information.

In putting together this Plan, we have sought to address the challenges of equitable access to education and employment opportunities within vocational education for people with disabilities.

The policies and principles of equality and participation for people with disabilities are inherent in all Central TAFE's procedures and activities. This Plan identifies areas on which future developments at the College should focus.

Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is dynamic, and we welcome your feedback at any time.

Neil Fernandes
Managing Director, Central TAFE

Background

Overview of Central TAFE

Central TAFE is one of the largest training organisations in Perth and, indeed, Australia.

The College Vision: *is for Central TAFE to be recognized as an innovative, creative, and sought after deliverer of vocational education and training solutions locally, nationally and internationally.*

Established in 1900 as the Perth Technical School, it has over a century's worth of experience in providing training to succeeding generations of students. Central TAFE now has more than 25,000 students, including a cohort of around 1,000 international students, enrolled at seven centrally located campuses in Perth, East Perth, Fremantle, Subiaco, Nedlands, Mt Lawley and Leederville.

With over 1500 students with a disability enrolled in specialist and mainstream programs, the College has developed a strong capability in delivering training and services to this client group. The College has developed a level of expertise and experience in managing projects with the school sector and community groups with a particular focus on programs for people with special needs.

Functions, Facilities and Services Provided by Central TAFE

The College has three main areas of specialisation:

- Art, Design and Media;
- Health, Community Services, Tourism and Languages;
- Engineering, Technology, and Business.

There are approximately 400 nationally accredited award courses offered, ranging from Certificate 1 level through to Advanced Diploma level.

In addition to the core function of providing quality training and education, other services provided for students include:

- Career Counselling and Employability Skills training;
- Work Placement;
- Counselling services;
- International Student Support and Counselling service;
- Gymnasium;
- Library and Information services; and;
- Indigenous support

Central TAFE Strategic Goals

The *Central TAFE College Plan, 2006-2010*, clearly defines the goals of the organisation in coming years. Each goal aims to lead the College toward being 'among the best TAFE Colleges in Australia'. The Plan outlines the need to continue to develop in the following areas:

- *Students* - including greater responsiveness to student needs and aspirations, providing targeted student services and support, and involving students in decision-making.
- *Industry, Community and Government* - including focusing on selected industries to encourage their commitment to employment based training, strengthening our commitment to Indigenous students, and improving our contribution to the community through building relationships and pathways.
- *Creative teaching and learning strategies* - including re-invigorating training delivery to meet changing market and student needs, and using alternative teaching formats, new technology, and encouraging professional development.
- *Pathways and partnerships* - including building networks, and facilitating transitions between TAFE, schools, university and the employment market.
- *College capability* (that is, people and infrastructure) - build on academic strengths, including professional development, and staff awareness training. And, configure our capital infrastructure program to best respond to needs of industry and the wider community.

Benefits to Central TAFE from Developing and Implementing the DAIP

Central TAFE, its staff and students, will benefit from the development and implementation of the DAIP in a number of ways, including:

- Better understanding of, and responsiveness to, the needs and aspirations of current and future students;
- Having a clear set of strategies designed to assist in the prevention of discrimination, intentional or otherwise, towards people with disabilities;
- Encouraging full participation of staff and students at Central TAFE;
- Catering for an increasingly broad and diverse staff and student community;
- Enabling physical access for people with disabilities by ensuring facilities and buildings are accessible and well maintained;
- Ensuring that Central TAFE meets Federal and State disabilities legislation.

Legislative Context

It is a requirement of the *Western Australia Disability Services Act 1993*, that public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Additional legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes:

- *WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984*,
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Progress Since 1995

Central TAFE is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disabilities through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities.

To achieve this aim, Central TAFE developed a Disability Services Plan (DSP) in 1995 to address the barriers for people with disabilities who need to access the College's services and facilities. In the DSP, the access and participation of people with disabilities was measured against five Outcome Areas. These related to access to:

- 1) Services and Events
- 2) Buildings and Facilities
- 3) Information
- 4) Quality of Service from Staff
- 5) Consultation, Grievance, and Decision-making processes.

The DSP included information about Central TAFE's core functions and services. It also provided a description of the consultation process, as well as objectives and strategies developed to improve access. The DSP outlined a method of ongoing review and evaluation, including completion dates, and a methodology by which the DSP was to be communicated and circulated.

The DSP addressed both its statutory requirements under the *WA Disability Services Act 1993*, and its obligations under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Central TAFE DSP has undergone several internal reviews since 1995.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, Central TAFE has implemented a number of initiatives and made significant progress towards improved access where relevant. The progress achieved since 1995 has been outlined in **Appendix I**.

Access and Inclusion Policy Statement for People with Disabilities

Central TAFE is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to the full range of its services and facilities.

In addition to the legislation addressing disability in the wider community, the following codes, standards, and plans have been developed to inform and support equal access and participation for those with a disability within Central TAFE.

- College Plan 2006-2010 (and the Academic Vision)
- Strategic Plan 2006-2010
- Public Sector Standards
- Code of Conduct and WA Public Sector Code of Ethics
- Australian Qualifications Training Framework (AQTF)

Central TAFE views an accessible and inclusive community as one in which all functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

Central TAFE is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of the DAIP. These are:

1. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organized by, Central TAFE.
2. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of Central TAFE.
3. People with disabilities can access information from Central TAFE 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 Central TAFE as other people receive.
5. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Central TAFE.
6. People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation carried out by Central TAFE.

As part of this process we will:

- Consult with people with disabilities and, where required, disability organisations, to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed.

- Ensure that services provided by the College's agents and contractors are in accordance with the six identified DAIP Outcomes. This includes the provision of accessible events, facilities, services, activities, information and complaints processes for people with disabilities.
- Work in partnership with community groups and other public authorities to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities through improved access to College information, services and facilities.

Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Responsibility for the Planning Process

Central TAFE has established a Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE). This committee has representation from across the College, and wider community. See **Appendix II** for the Committee Terms of Reference, and areas represented on the Committee. The Steering Committee will oversee the development, implementation, review and evaluation of the Plan.

Community Consultation Process

To facilitate the development of the new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan a comprehensive process of review and consultation was undertaken, including;

- 1) Examination of the initial DSP and subsequent reviews to ascertain what has been achieved, and to identify areas in need of improvement (see **Appendix I**).
- 2) Examination of relevant Central TAFE documents and strategies, including all current policies.
- 3) Investigation of contemporary trends and best practice in access and inclusion (particularly within educational environments) at the local, national and international levels.
- 4) Seeking feedback and input from College staff.
- 5) A formal process inviting community input.
- 6) Input and feedback from current students with a disability.

The Disability Services Act Regulations set out the minimum consultation requirements for public authorities in relation to DAIPs. State Government authorities must call for submissions by notice in a Statewide newspaper or on any website maintained by or on behalf of the State Government authority.

Central TAFE approached the consultation process as follows:

- **Focus Sessions** - In December 2006, five separate focus group sessions for students were held to gather information. The groups represented a variety of disabilities and conditions. In addition, a further four focus group sessions were organised. The first group consisted of members from peak disability groups and associations. The second group consisted of key staff members. The third, consisted of members from the Disability Employment Network organisations (DENS). And, the fourth group included representation from Catholic schools, independent schools, and government schools. The focus groups were asked to submit comment on a series of questions regarding access and participation in Central TAFE programs, and access to services and facilities.
- A second study was conducted in the community and focused on the benefit of developing industry links.
- **Call for Comment** - In March 2007, the general community was informed that Central TAFE was developing its DAIP through a 'Call for Comment' advertisement lodged in a Statewide newspaper, as required.
- The College community, including visitors, students and staff were notified of the development of the Central TAFE DAIP via the College website and intranet pages, these also carried the 'Call for Comment' notice.
- **Questionnaire/Survey** - Current students registered with Disability Services, were asked to complete a questionnaire/survey of current services and facilities at Central TAFE.
- **Wider Community Contribution** - Staff, students and the wider community were invited, by a variety of means, to submit comment on services and facilities to the Disability Services Office.
- All initiatives and recommendations will be highlighted and addressed in the College Implementation Plan.

In short, steps were taken to invite key stakeholders, and the wider community, to provide input into the development of Central TAFE's DAIP.

Findings of the Consultation

The review of the Disability Services Plan (DSP) and subsequent consultation process, confirmed that while most of the stated objectives had been met, there was a need to effect improvement. Principally, a need was identified to develop a more up-to-date approach on access and inclusion issues that reflected current best practice, and which reflect recent legislative and regulatory changes.

The consultation process identified some remaining barriers to access and inclusion that would need to be addressed by the DAIP Implementation Plan.

Areas for Improvement

While the consultation process confirmed significant achievements had been made, it also identified areas that needed to be addressed. These included:

- The need for disability awareness training for College staff. This includes first-point-of-contact staff, academic, non-academic, administration, and other staff groups.
- The need for greater awareness of access and inclusion practices that informs College information, advice and support services. In general, a need was identified for more inclusive teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
- The need to address physical access barriers still apparent in some of the older buildings at various campuses.
- The need for information and study materials to be available in a greater variety of alternative formats (such as Braille, audio cassette, electronic, typed).
- The need for more assistive technology.
- The need to address some physical access difficulties existing in computer labs and cafeteria, for example.
- The need for improving transition processes from school to TAFE, and then from TAFE to employment and to universities that support access and inclusion for students with a disability.
- The need for development of strong linkages to industry and the wider community, that support access and inclusion practices.
- The need for the development of a workable and resourced 'learning resource centre' based in the College library, that includes access and inclusion information.

These areas for improvement have informed the development of strategies in the DAIP.

Responsibility for Implementing the DAIP

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

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Plan and its strategies are carried out, rests with the Managing Director of Central TAFE. Within this context, the implementation of the DAIP will be overseen by the Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE).

While implementation of the DAIP remains the responsibility of all areas of Central TAFE, some tasks will become the responsibility of specific areas, or individual personnel. The Implementation Plan will set out who is responsible for each action, and any specific timelines involved.

Communicating the DAIP to Staff, Students, and People with Disabilities

A draft copy of the DAIP will be circulated to all key stakeholders, in particular, those who contributed to the process. This includes staff,

students, people with disabilities and their families and carers, relevant disability organisations, and community groups. Each will be invited to provide feedback on the DAIP.

At the conclusion of this process, the DAIP will be submitted for endorsement by the College Executive, then ratified by the Disability Services Commission. Copies of the completed DAIP will be made available on the College website. In addition, copies will be provided on request, in a variety of formats including hard copy, electronic format, large print, audio cassette, CD, and Braille and the DAIP's availability will be promoted through a state-wide newspaper.

A copy of the current DAIP will be made available to all College staff. In addition, DAIP familiarisation workshops will be held, as required.

As the DAIP is amended, staff, key stakeholders, and the community will be notified of the availability of updated copies via the methods outlined above.

Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

The *Disability Services Act* sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to the DAIPs. Central TAFE's DAIP will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the *Act*. The DAIP Implementation Plan may, however, be amended on a more regular basis to reflect progress, and to accommodate any access and inclusion issues that may arise.

Should amendment of the DAIP be required, a copy of the amended Plan will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Review and Monitoring

- The Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE) will continue to meet on a monthly basis to oversee any access and inclusion issues, and to review progress on the implementation of strategies identified in the DAIP.
- The review of Central TAFE's current DAIP will be included in its 2012 DAIP, which will be submitted to the Disability Services Commission in 2012.
- The report will outline all progress made, and achievements secured, under Central TAFE's 2007-2012 DAIP.
- An annual progress report will be produced by the Disability Services Co-ordinator and submitted to the Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE) and, thereafter, to the College Executive for formal endorsement.

Evaluation

- The College Executive will annually revise reports pertaining to the disability access and inclusion implementation process.
- A consultation process will be carried out annually (prior to 31 July), to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the DAIP strategies being implemented.
- Employing similar strategies used in the initial consultation process, such as the survey questionnaire and call for submissions, all interested parties will be invited to comment on the strategies implemented, and to make suggestions for improvement.
- The annual consultation process will be advertised on the College website, the intranet, internet, and via email and printed media, such as the student newsletter and notice boards.
- Central TAFE staff will be invited to provide feedback on how well, or otherwise, the Plan is working, and to make suggestions for improvement.
- In seeking feedback, reviewers will also endeavour to identify any additional barriers not highlighted in the initial consultation process.
- The Implementation Plan will be amended based upon relevant feedback received.
- Once endorsed by Central TAFE College Executive, copies of the amended Implementation Plan will be made available to all key stakeholders, in the variety of formats mentioned earlier.

Reporting on the DAIP

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

Central TAFE will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report, and the prescribed progress report template, to the Disability Services Commission no later than 31 July each year.

The report will outline:

- Central TAFE's progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP;
- The progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes; and,
- The strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

It must be stressed, however, that because of conflicting reporting schedules, the one page report to the Disability Services Commission due in July 2008, will include statistics and information from the period January

2008 to July 2008. The subsequent report, due to be lodged in July 2009, will detail the period from January 2008 to December 2008, with the understanding that Central TAFE's reporting pattern is based on the previous calendar year.

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 Central TAFE will undertake from 2007 to 2012 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, Central TAFE.

Strategy
Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an opportunity to comment on access and services.
Ensure that events and social activities are accessible to people with disabilities.
Ensure that Central TAFE staff, their agents and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act</i> .
Monitor Central TAFE's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to ensure it supports equitable access to services by people with disabilities across all areas.
Incorporate as appropriate, the objectives of the DAIP into all Central TAFE plans, budgeting processes, and other relevant documentation.

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

Strategy
Ensure that buildings and facilities are physically accessible to people with disabilities.
Ensure that future premises leased or built by Central TAFE are accessible to people with disabilities.
Ensure that premises and other infrastructure related to transport are accessible to people with disabilities.
Ensure that ACROD parking meets the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.

Outcome 3: People with disabilities can access information from Central TAFE as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy
Improve community awareness relating to the availability of Central TAFE information being available in a variety of formats.
Inform and educate staff on accessible information needs and how to obtain information in other formats.
Continue to ensure the use of interpreters or other support personnel to facilitate communication for those with hearing impairments.
Ensure that Central TAFE's website meets general requirements and best practice models.
Provide documentation regarding services, facilities and customer feedback in an appropriate format, and using clear and concise language.

Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from staff at Central TAFE as other people receive.

Strategy
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills across roles and responsibilities to provide best possible service to people with disabilities.
Ensure that contractors and agents are aware of their obligations and responsibilities to people with disabilities or medical conditions.
Review appropriate and relevant resources, and information, and facilitate the introduction of new technologies and resources.
Review accessible teaching, support and assessment strategies in the classroom and beyond.

Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Central TAFE.

Strategy
Ensure that current grievance mechanisms and customer feedback forms are readily accessible for people with disabilities.
Improve staff knowledge in order to facilitate the receipt of complaints by people with disabilities.

Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation carried out by Central TAFE.

Strategy
Commit to ongoing monitoring and review of the DAIP to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.
Improve access for people with disabilities to the established consultative processes of Central TAFE.
Seek a broad range of views from the community on disability and access issues.

APPENDIX I

Achievements Since the Disabilities Services Plan 1995

In its Annual Report 2006, Central TAFE outlined the following progress, and achievements, in relation to the Disability Access and Inclusion Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Access to Services and Events

Central TAFE continues to review, modify and adapt existing services, equipment and facilities to appropriately respond to, and improve, access for people with disabilities. In particular, Central TAFE has:

- Established a Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE) to guide and inform decisions related to student equity groups and provide continual review of the Disability Services Plan.
- Continued to provide equal access and inclusion principles to services, and events organized.
- Continued to research and procure necessary assistive technology and equipment to meet student needs.

Outcome 2: Access to Buildings and Facilities

Central TAFE continues to review the issues regarding access and egress for people with disabilities, identified through consultation and access audits. It has endeavoured to incorporate them, as appropriate, into submissions for ongoing capital works improvement programs.

In addition, the College maintained ongoing communication with students regarding physical access to buildings along with access to teaching, learning and assessment strategies to cater for the different learning needs of students with disabilities. Specifically, Central TAFE has:

- Carried out a number of capital works and modifications to its buildings and facilities following universal access audits and consultation processes.
- Continued to research, tailor and facilitate innovative training programs to suit specific student's study and assessment needs.
- Continued to research, review and implement new teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

Outcome 3: Access to Information

The College provided information to customers in clear, concise language, which was made available, upon request, in alternative formats.

Central TAFE continued to educate and inform staff and raise public awareness as to the type and availability of alternative formats, flexible delivery modes and alternative assessment arrangements for students with disabilities.

Alternative formats included large print, audio cassette, digital information, Braille and compact disks. Specifically, Central TAFE has:

- Continued to ensure the availability of interpreters and other support staff.
- Identified the ongoing requirement for mandatory awareness training and professional development.
- Identified the World Wide Web standards for websites, and is currently involved in the application of these standards.
- Continues to review and research appropriate and necessary equipment and resources to promote accessibility and participation (for example Audio Loops, personal receivers).

Outcome 4: Same level of Service from Staff

Central TAFE acknowledges that staff awareness education and training are ongoing activities. Specifically, Central TAFE has:

- Provided for continuous review of accessible and inclusive teaching, learning and assessment strategies in all industry areas.
- Provided professional development and training in Deafness Awareness for staff and support workers.
- Planned for future disability awareness training and professional development across all College areas.

Outcome 5: Making Complaints

Central TAFE has a Customer Complaints process in place. Customers are invited to make comments in writing or by accessing the Customer Complaint form. In addition, Central TAFE provides a dedicated Complaints Officer who will receive a verbal or written complaint. All complaints are treated confidentially and equitably. Specifically, Central TAFE has:

- Identified the need to streamline administrative processes for students with disabilities.
- Ensured that all Customer Complaint forms and information are available in alternative formats.

Outcome 6: Participating in Public Consultation

Central TAFE recognises the valuable contribution that people with disabilities, their carers, families and advocates, make to the development of College practices and policies. The College continued to provide information in clear, concise language to enable participation by all in decision-making, public consultations and grievances. Specifically, Central TAFE has:

- Identified the importance of establishing a Steering Committee, with input from the students with disabilities cohort.
- Continues to develop linkages and create pathways into the community in order to seek a broad range of views and invite consultation.

APPENDIX II

Steering Committee for Student Support, Access and Equity (SSAE) - GENERAL TERMS OF REFERENCE -

1. Objective

The overall purpose of the steering group is as follows:

- With a view to responding more effectively to students' needs, identify and develop actions and strategies and monitor the effectiveness of these strategies.
- To facilitate consultation and inform and take ownership of reporting particularly the Disability Access and Inclusion plan
- Research models of practice locally, nationally and internationally. Findings discussed to determine viability and recommendations provided to College Executive that support continuous business improvement.
- Provide a forum for communication within the group.
- To establish a formal avenue for communication with College Executive to facilitate and drive endorsement of best practice.

2. Scope

The Steering group will consist of internal representatives. Stakeholder consultation will occur as needed and external representation will be sought by invitation. Composition of the steering committee has been agreed to, based on the need to facilitate a cross-disciplinary perspective (that is, academic and support) on supporting students with a disability. The group will be responsible for managing outcomes of set objectives as listed above.

3. Membership

The *General Manager College Development* shall be the Chairperson for this group and is responsible for the effective and efficient management of the Steering Committee.

The *Disability Services Co-ordinator* shall be the executive officer for this group and is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating and organising related business matters, including meetings, minutes and resulting communiqués
- the co-ordination of outcomes of Council meetings with other sections of the College

Members:

Membership reflects a cross-section of the organisation. The following areas have representation on the Committee:

College Development

Executive Director Health, Community Services and Languages

Facilities Management

Student Wellbeing Centre

Occupational Health and Safety Representative
Student Counselling Services
Foundation Studies
Student Support Administration
Student Communications
Arts Learning Portfolio Manager
LPM Engineering
Disability Support Co-ordinator
MMEC
Business and Management (academic)

Membership will be amended as deemed necessary. External representation will be by invitation.

- **Meetings**

The group will meet once a month until the end of 2006. Extra-ordinary meetings shall be called at the discretion of the Chairperson.