



Office for Disability

What is a Disability Action Plan?

A disability action plan (DAP) is a strategic planning document. A DAP is an effective way to improve access to an organisation for a significant part of the population. People with a disability can experience barriers to using programs, services and facilities. Organisations use a DAP to identify steps to improve their programs, services and facilities, and by doing so they reduce discrimination and promote the equality of people with a disability. The aim of implementing a DAP is to make organisations, and hence communities, more accessible and inclusive.

What is covered in a disability action plan?

A DAP can identify actions to remove physical barriers for people with a disability — from changing the font size in printed documents, to the modification of buildings and equipment. A DAP is also designed to address employment, participation and attitudinal barriers.

Section 38 of the Victorian **Disability Act 2006** identifies four outcomes a DAP should address. These are:

- reducing barriers to persons with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities
- reducing barriers to persons with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment
- promoting inclusion and participation of persons with a disability in the community
- achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

An effective DAP

Ideally, a DAP will receive active support from senior management, be regularly reviewed and have budget resources allocated towards it, where required. Effective DAPs are easy to read, have actions and responsibilities that are easily understood, and are distributed throughout the organisation. A good DAP will be an active planning document with a range of staff members involved. Making a DAP the responsibility of one delegated staff member

usually does not work. An effective DAP will clearly outline the actions planned for implementation and the timeline in which this will occur.

Consultation

Consultation is an important part of developing and reviewing a DAP. Consulting internally and externally, and including people with a disability, will help to identify priorities for action.

It is also important to consider the broader organisational structure when developing a DAP. An organisation with a parent body or subsidiaries will want to communicate with them to identify the scope of the DAP and consultation process.

Developing actions

When developing a DAP it is important to set realistic targets and to prioritise actions. Change can be achieved through incremental steps and a focus on continuous improvement. Some actions may be completed in the short term, others will need more planning and resources including a budget allocation. Stepping out actions into short-term, medium-term and long-term timeframes can be beneficial.

The benefits of a DAP

A DAP makes good business sense. It can benefit all people who interact with an organisation, including clients, customers, employees and volunteers. Other members of the public who may have difficulty using the organisation's services, for example elderly citizens, parents with prams and people with short-term injuries or health conditions, will also benefit. A DAP can contribute to higher customer satisfaction rates, reduced number of complaints, a skilled and reliable workforce, and increased staff awareness and cultural competence. Many barriers can be removed at little or no cost.

Many organisations register their DAPs with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). The AHRC website contains information on DAPs and a register of lodged action plans. http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/register.html

Further information

For further information on developing DAPs, visit the Office for Disability website: www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au.

See also: Office for Disability publication: 'aDAPting to Disability, a guide to disability action plans in Victoria'

If you would like to receive this document in an accessible format, contact the Office for Disability:

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