

ACT Corrective Services Disability Action and Inclusion Plan - Progress Report to 31 December 2022

In December 2020, ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) launched the ACTCS Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) to demonstrate ACTCS' commitment to provide an inclusive and equitable service across operations. The actions in the DAIP aim to address barriers experienced by people with disability, including staff members, detainees, offenders in the community, visitors, and other community members. In 2021 an Implementation Plan was developed to outline actions for achieving the commitments of the DAIP.

A Steering Committee made up of staff from ACTCS, JACS Legislation, Policy and Programs (LPP), Office for Disability, the Human Rights Commission, and individual advocates has been established to guide implementation of the DAIP and provide connection to expertise and resources beyond ACTCS. Representatives who are also on the Disability Justice Strategy Reference Group ensure that the implementation of the DAIP is aligned with the broader Disability Justice Strategy.

The progress on the DAIP to date is summarised in the table below. Implementation has been challenged over 2022 with staffing movements, operational constraints and a significant change program that intersects with the objectives of the DAIP. However, implementation is continuing well with all commitments except 2 which is yet to be commenced. One of those two activities relates to the reintegration centre project that is currently on hold. The other relates to reasonable adjustments to support inclusion that will be more effectively guided on completion of the Disability Offender Framework in conjunction with the implementation of Phase 2 of the Integrated Offender Management Framework.

Tranche 1 commitments are 30% complete with the majority of open activities due for completion in the coming months. Tranche 2 commitments are 100% complete and Tranche 3 commitments have commenced.

Key achievements in this last 12 months have included:

- Establishment of a diverse Disability Reference Group
- Conducting a comprehensive consultation process to inform the draft Disability Framework
- Developing and filming 4x videos to support access to information, including one outlining the visits process at AMC, induction information for new detainees in the Court Transport Unit (for both male and female detainees) and key information for offenders subject to community supervision.
- Trial of new visitor experience survey and feedback mechanisms
- Provision of Easy English training to staff and
- Reviewed policy and procedure development to incorporate a plain English approach to new documents.

The highlight of the year, however, was being recognised as a finalist in the 2022 ACT Chief Minister's Inclusion Awards for Excellence and Innovation. ACTCS is a challenging work environment and increasingly, staff across the whole agency are adopting more inclusive attitudes and practices and recognising their role in supporting inclusion in our service to the community.

Looking ahead, 2023 is the final year of this inaugural DAIP program with exciting deliverables expected shortly, including the launch of the Disability Offender Framework and the four new videos. Work on the next DAIP is expected to commence in the latter half of 2023.

Tranche 1 DAIP Commitments			
Commitment	Progress to date	Status	Next steps
1.1: Develop and deliver staff disability confidence and response training to ACTCS staff in alignment with ACTCS training frameworks.	Conducted a training survey to understand current levels of staff confidence in working with people with disability. Conducted a gap analysis of existing training opportunities. Reviewed the disability awareness JACS training package. Commenced development of training modules more contextualised to ACTCS to complement the awareness training. Initially due: December 2022	In Progress: Additional work is underway to develop corrections specific scenarios to make training more relevant to ACTCS staff. Revised due date: 31 May 2023	Complete development of the ACTCS specific training modules. Determine the audience (staffing groups) and schedule for when the training will be delivered.
1.2: Establish a consultative Disability Reference Group (including people with disability in the membership) with internal and external stakeholders to inform future service improvement.	Explored whether any existing networks are suitable for immediate consultation. Under the guidance of the Steering Committee, recruited and appointed appropriate members to form the Disability Reference Group. Due: December 2022	Complete	N/A
1.3: Investigate the interest and viability in establishing a peer network for staff and/or offenders with disability.	Promoted the Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate staff disability peer network to all ACTCS staff. Detainee interest in a peer network confirmed. Identified existing detainee peer mentor program meets this need and needs to continue to be promoted. Due: December 2021	Complete	N/A

Commitment	Progress to date	Status	Next steps
2.1: Audit visitor print materials and stakeholder information (ACTCS website) and develop content to ensure critical information is accessible, inclusive and alternative formats available.	Reviewed visitor information and the visits experience and obtained feedback. A suite of videos has been filmed and are in the edit review process: a video for the visiting process at the Alexander Maconochie Centre, a video to provide critical information for offenders being supervised in the community, and a short induction video for offenders taken into custody at the Court Transport Unit. Initially due: December 2022	In Progress: Revised due date for the videos: March 2023 Revised due date for modifying formats of other information, such as Detainee Handbook: TBD depending on staff vacancies and operational constraints	Conduct the final review of the videos. Launch the videos. Develop new materials and modify formats of information for offenders and detainees.
2.2: Establish sustainable feedback mechanism relating to accessible communication and information in the ACT Corrective Services environment.	Developed an annual visitor survey to obtain feedback on satisfaction and communication. Conducted a trial of the survey. Initially due: December 2022	In Progress: Development and implementation of the final survey has been delayed due to staff vacancies Revised due date: TBD	Revise the survey and confirm timetable for release annually. Review the ACTCS website for an accessible way to provide feedback.
3.1: Engage the Disability Reference Group to ensure issues relating to people with disability are considered in the operationalisation of the Reintegration Centre.	The Reintegration Centre project is currently paused. In the interim, investment to reinstate the Transitional Release Program and Transitional Release Centre is underway.	This commitment is related to the infrastructure elements of the Reintegration Centre and is therefore on hold.	To be reactivated upon recommencement of the Reintegration Centre Project.
4.1: Develop and implement the Disability Offender Framework in consultation with relevant stakeholders.	Consultation has been conducted with a wide range of stakeholders. A consultation summary was released in November 2022. In December 2022, ACTCS provided the draft Disability Framework to all stakeholders consulted for feedback. Initially Due: June 2022	In Progress: Consultation complete and draft Framework going through approval processes. Revised due date: March 2023	Finalise and release the Framework.

Commitment	Progress to date	Status	Next steps
4.2: Investigate opportunities to improve data capture on individuals with disability interacting with ACTCS (e.g., onboarding survey, disability screening/assessment tools), noting the need for consent and transparency of data usage.	Liaison with business areas has commenced on how data on disability is currently captured, discussing appropriate stages to identify disability, support needs and possible reasonable adjustments. Initial discussions regarding future data needs, including reporting requirements has commenced. Identified linkages between this project, implementation of IOM and the ACT Disability Strategy. Drafted procedure for recording offenders' legally appointed decision makers in the electronic records management system. Initially Due: March 2022	In Progress: This project has been delayed due to identified need to align with strategic work occurring in the implementation of the IOM Framework and the development of the ACT Disability Strategy. Revised due date: TBD depending on progress of independent work	Define scope of work and align with IOM processes and the ACT Disability Strategy
5.1: Establish Disability Liaison Officers in the <i>custodial</i> environment.	The Disability Liaison Officer has been employed. Due: December 2020	Complete	N/A

Tranche 2 DAIP Commitments			
Commitment	Progress to date	Status	Next steps
1.4: Review current ACTCS recruitment and employment strategies to identify and consider barriers for people with disability to become more inclusive to attract and retain staff with disability.	The ACTCS induction process has been revised to include more information about resources and sources of support for disability, including a presentation from the ACTCS Wellbeing Team. The ACTCS website has been updated to include a careers page with information about our diverse and inclusive workforce.	Complete	N/A

	A review of the ACTCS Custodial Recruitment Strategy has been completed. The JACS 'Our Abilities' <i>Employment Strategy for People with Disability December 2022 - June 2024</i> was launched to align with International Day of Disability in December 2022. ACTCS has committed to actions under the <i>Our Abilities Strategy</i> to consider and reduce barriers for people with disability and improve recruitment and retention of staff with disability. Due: December 2023		
4.3: Review policies and procedures through a disability lens to ensure appropriate consideration, intervention and adjustments have been considered.	Identified specialist advice. A revised process to develop policy and procedure with inclusion actively considered has been approved and guidance documentation developed to implement this. The Policy Team have also undertaken Easy English training to support the use of plain language in policy documents. Due: June 2022	Complete	N/A
5.1: Establish Disability Liaison Officers in the <i>community</i> environment.	The Disability Liaison Officer has been employed. Due: October 2021	Complete	N/A
5.2: Investigate options (including navigating NDIS services) to connect offenders with disability support services in custodial and community environments.	Investigated options and established connections between custodial staff and disability services and agencies. Employed a Disability and Complex Care Coordinator.	Complete	N/A

	Developed an approved scope of work/model of care post Integrated Offender Management Framework development. Due: December 2022		
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Tranche 3 DAIP Commitments			
Commitment	Progress to date	Status	Next steps
3.2: Conduct a dignified access audit (considers the user experience) of the physical environment in ACTCS facilities (encompassing office space, visitor areas and prison facilities).	Initial exploration of available services to conduct a dignified access audit completed. Appointed the project lead. Due: December 2023	In Progress: Scoping work with market specialists has commenced.	Develop the scope for the audit. Confirm funding. Engage a supplier to conduct an audit of selected physical locations.
5.3: Promote accessibility and participation in service delivery for participants with disability through reasonable adjustments.	To be informed by and planned following the release of the Disability Framework. Due: TBC	Not started: future task	TBC.