People with disability

A GUIDE TO ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

A guide to engagement

Around one in five Tasmanians live with disability.[1] People with disability are active participants in every sphere of Tasmanian life, but find that often their access to services, facilities and community activities is impeded because there has not been sufficient consideration of their needs. Similarly, people with disability sometimes find it difficult to participate in consultation and policy development processes.

By taking a few things into account when planning for community engagement, it is possible to ensure that the views of people with disability are heard.

> *Having the Discussion Paper in Easy English was really helpful for talking with SpeakOut members about what they thought the Tasmanian Government should be doing for people with intellectual disability.*
>
> Member of the Premier's Disability Advisory Council

> *Being on the Justice and DPIPWE working groups enabled me to get to know the work of those agencies and to provide some really helpful advice on what those agencies could be doing to improve things for people with disability.*
>
> Member of the Premier's Disability Advisory Council

When the Tasmanian Government refers to people with disability, it refers to people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. This definition of disability is based on Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Given the prevalence of disability among the Tasmanian population, the needs of people with disability should be considered as part of any community engagement process. There are also instances where consultation is required specifically with people with disability. The views of people with disability are particularly important, as they may have diverse experiences of policies and services and distinct needs.

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[1] Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2009, Cat No 4430.0 ABS.

Some areas of particular significance to people with disability include:

- health and community services, including disability services;
- compulsory and post-compulsory education services;
- passenger transport services;
- employment services;
- urban design and planning for ease of access;
- accessibility of public buildings and assets; and
- social inclusion and community engagement opportunities.

INCLUSIVE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

People with disability face a range of barriers to participation in public events. There are three main areas of concern:

- *Communication:* Information needs to be presented in a variety of formats to provide for the needs of people with vision or hearing impairment and people with intellectual disability.

- *Transport:* People with disability may have difficulty travelling to events due to a lack of appropriate or affordable passenger transport options.

- *Physical Accessibility:* People may be unable to access venues where there is not appropriate wheelchair access, space to operate a wheelchair or walking frame, or accessible toilets.

No single engagement method can be expected to be effective in gathering the views of all people with disability. Using more than one technique will assist in overcoming some of the barriers described above and enable a broader group of people to participate. For example, web-based engagement overcomes the issue of transport disadvantage and face-to-face consultation may assist in engaging people who experience barriers to accessing web and text-based materials.

The A to Z of engagement techniques developed by the Department of Health and Human Services provides an excellent overview of activities for community engagement. When using any of these techniques, there is a range of factors to consider in ensuring that the activity is accessible to people with disability. See the Considerations section below for further detail.

Building relationships

People with disability sometimes feel that, once consulted, there is little follow up of the issues they have raised and that while they may be included in the 'identifying issues' stage of policy development, they are less often included at the stage of identifying solutions and implementation.

Agencies are encouraged to provide opportunities for people with disability who have participated in forums, surveys or other 'issues identification' activities, to have ongoing involvement in the policy development and implementation process.

This could be through:

- ☐ a working group/advisory group to provide advice in relation to policy development and implementation;
- ☐ a register of people willing to provide comment on materials as they are developed; and/or
- ☐ regular updates in relation to the progress of the project.

An ongoing relationship enables people to better understand the work of an agency and how they can contribute. You may choose to invite people to be members of working/advisory groups or ask them to provide their contact details if they would like to take part in future activities. This can assist agencies to develop ongoing relationships with consumers who understand their work and who are better prepared to provide informed comment on their activities.

CONSIDERATIONS

People with disability face challenges to engagement and it is important to take a range of issues into consideration. For instance, do not assume that just because two people have the same impairment they will have the same experience of disability, or the same views and opinions on the issues that affect them. People's lives and personalities are not defined by their impairments. In addition, a person with a disability may not have the knowledge and experience to talk about the issues and solutions that might affect people with different types of disability to their own. They may also not feel comfortable being asked to talk on behalf of all people with a disability.

When referring to people with disability, always refer to the person first. Referring to the disability first suggests that the person is defined by their impairment, rather than this being

just one aspect of their life. For example, it is a person who has autism, a person with a brain injury, a person who is blind, a person who has vision impairment, a person who uses a wheelchair, a person with a mental illness, people with disability, people without disability.

Facilities should be referred to as accessible rather than disabled, eg accessible toilet, accessible parking.

Accessibility

Ensure venues have appropriate wheelchair access, space to operate a wheelchair or walking frame, and accessible toilets. Buildings and outdoor locations should:

- ☐ be centrally located and close to public transport options and accessible parking facilities;
- ☐ be accessible to people with limited mobility or those who use wheelchairs;
- ☐ have adequate room for participants to move around without high risk of accidents or injuries;
- ☐ be laid out so that any information to be presented will be clearly visible and audible to all participants; and
- ☐ install adequate audio-visual facilities and hearing loops to assist people with hearing aids. Where hearing loops are not installed, portable hearing loops can be hired from Tasdeaf.

The Accessible Events Guide is an excellent resource to assist with accessibility issues.

Advertising and promoting community engagement opportunities

- ☐ Your promotional material should clearly identify that the event is accessible and highlight any communication aides that will be used (such as the availability of Auslan interpreters). In the absence of clear statements about accessibility, people with disability may assume that they are not welcome to attend and that the event will not cater to their needs.
- ☐ Promote your engagement events in a wide variety of formats and media. The ways in which people with disability access information are just as diverse as those of the general public, so the wider the distribution of that information the more potential attendees you will reach.
- ☐ Provide as much notice as possible as the person with a disability may need to arrange transport and support workers for before, during and after the event.

Communication

- [ ] Information needs to be presented in a variety of formats to provide for the needs of people with vision or hearing impairment and people with intellectual disability.

- [ ] When speaking to a visually impaired person you should introduce yourself properly and address them by name so they know you are talking to them. Verbalise concepts and actions as much as possible and do not rely on body language or gestures.

- [ ] Use visual methods of communication where possible to assist in communicating with a person with a hearing impairment. Ensure that the person can see your face when you are talking and speak clearly. Talking very loudly or very slowly will rarely improve communication.

- [ ] In one-to-one communication with a person who uses a mobility aide, such as a wheelchair, it is polite to sit while addressing them to maintain eye contact at the correct level.

- [ ] If a person with disability is accompanied by another person, such as a carer, speak to the person with disability rather than the carer. The opinions of carers can be sought but should not be considered ahead of the person with disability.

- [ ] When speaking to people with intellectual disability, try to avoid technical and complex language. Explain any industry jargon or technical terms that need to be used. Keep your messages concise and direct, and make use of body language and visual cues.

- [ ] Use of Auslan interpreters, or captioning, should be considered for oral presentations. Book an Auslan Interpreter through <u>Sign Language Communications Vic</u> who manage bookings on behalf of Tasdeaf.

- [ ] If you are using an Auslan interpreter, speak directly to your audience and not to the interpreter. Your communication is with your audience – the interpreter is simply a communication aide.

- [ ] Where videos or images are used as part of a presentation, audio description may be used to describe the events to people with vision impairment.

Event planning and scheduling

- Plan your event carefully from the outset. Be clear about the purpose, target group, and type of engagement you are working towards.

- When considering venue size and catering requirements, note that people with disability may need to bring carers, support people, interpreters or guide dogs.

- Schedule events during ordinary working hours (eg 10am – 4pm Monday to Friday) to help ensure that participants have access to necessary transport and care options. It is often difficult for people who use personal care services to access events that commence early in the morning or outside of standard working hours.

- Some people with disability may find it difficult to have their say as part of a public forum. You may need to consider breaking the forum into smaller groups for discussion.

Written information

- Written information should be in Plain English or Easy English. Where possible, text should be minimum 12-point font. Sans serif fonts (fonts without strokes) such as Gill Sans, Arial, Univers and Helvetica are easiest to read.

- Easy English includes limited text and the use of images and formatting to aid clear communication, particularly for people with intellectual disability. It is also useful for any person with low literacy. An example of Easy English is included at the end of this toolkit.

- If your event will include the presentation of overhead slides, ensure that they are large and printed in high contrast colours. Provide handouts to participants beforehand if appropriate.

- When using images of people with disability, these should include people in everyday situations and not be focused on care situations.

Web-based interaction

Any web-based community engagement activity and electronic documents should be compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 WCAG has been developed in collaboration with individuals and organisations around the world to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities.[2] You should ensure that:

- [ ] web pages use high colour contrast (a colour contrast checker is available online via Vision Australia);
- [ ] audio and video have subtitles, captions or written transcripts available;
- [ ] all electronic documents are available in an HTML version (eg Word), as most PDF documents are inaccessible to people using screen readers; and
- [ ] audio versions of documents are made available to people with vision impairment.

You can also refer to Auslan for effective ways of making information accessible to people who are deaf (see Tasdeaf website for some examples).

Telephone responses

- [ ] Where people are invited to participate or respond via telephone, a telephone typewriter (TTY) or National Relay Service option should be included for people who are deaf or have a speech impediment. A TTY can be used to type a message via telephone to another TTY user. TTY users can call non-TTY users by using the National Relay Service.

Transport

- [ ] People with disability may have difficulty travelling to events due to a lack of appropriate or affordable passenger transport options.
- [ ] It may be necessary to organise transport options, or even temporary accommodation, for people with disability living in remote or rural areas.
- [ ] It may also be appropriate to offer reimbursement of travel costs to people with disability who attend events.

Evaluation

As part of your evaluation of the event, ask people whether the facilities, presentation style and information provided met their needs.

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[2] Web Accessibility Initiative http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php

WHERE DO I START?

A range of non-government and government organisations can assist with your engagement with people with disability. They may be able to provide advice and support in relation to the needs of people with disability and may also be able to act as a conduit to people that you wish to engage.

Links to advocacy bodies, government and community services, and disability peak bodies can be found at DPAC Communities, Sport and Recreation - People with disability useful links.

Local Government

A number of Tasmanian Councils have access advisory committees that offer advice to Councils on providing accessible infrastructure and services for people with disability.

- Break O Day Council
- Clarence City Council
- Derwent Valley Council
- Glenorchy City Council
- Hobart City Council
- Huon Valley Council
- Kingborough Council
- Launceston City Council

Tasmanian Government Disability Advisory Groups

There are three Tasmanian Government advisory groups relating to disability issues: the Premier's Disability Advisory Council (PDAC); the Minister's Disability Advisory Council (MDAC); and the Sport and Recreation Committee (SRC).

PDAC's role is to provide advice to the Tasmanian Government in relation to achieving better outcomes for people with disability and to monitor the implementation of the *Disability Framework for Action 2013-2017*. PDAC is administered by the Communities, Sport and Recreation, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The MDAC is a subcommittee of PDAC. It provides advice to the Minister for Human Services in relation to specialist disability services. MDAC is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The SRC provides strategic advice on directions, policies and solutions to issues related to the participation of people with disability in sport, recreation and physical activity and assists in monitoring the implementation of the *Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Framework for People with Disability*. The SRC is administered by Communities, Sport and Recreation, in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

RELEVANT POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMS

In addition to the goals and guidelines set out in the Disability Framework for Action, the Tasmanian Government's engagement with people with disability is directed by the following legislation:

- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tasmania)
- *Disability Services Act 2011* (Tasmania)

Tasmanian Government agencies

A number of Tasmanian Government agencies are responsible for providing services and programs for people with disability.

[Disability and Community Services, Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Mental Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services](#)

[Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Department of Justice](#)

[WorkCover, Department of Justice](#)

[Guardianship and Administration Board, Department of Justice](#)

[Mental Health Tribunal, Department of Justice](#)

[Students with Disabilities, Department of Education](#)

[Passenger Transport, Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources](#)

[Arts Tasmania, Department of Economic Development Tourism and the Arts](#)

[Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Department of Premier and Cabinet](#)

All Tasmanian Government departments have a Disability Action Plan Working Group. Please contact the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Principal Liaison Officer for Disability (contact details below) for a list of convenors of these groups.

Australian Government Programs and Services for People with Disability

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

[Department of Social Services](#)

[Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development](#)

[National Disability Insurance Agency](#)

Engagement Toolkits

Victorian Department of Human Services [Inclusive Consultation and Communication with People with a Disability](#) and [Communicate and Consult with People with a Disability](#)

Queensland Government Engaging Queenslanders: a guide to engaging people with a disability

Office for Disability Issues New Zealand [Engagement Resources](#)

Accessible events guide and checklists

Meeting and Events Australia [Accessible events guide](#)

Accessible communications

Disability Services Commission, Western Australia [Accessible Communications Resources](#) and [How to make services, events and public consultations accessible](#)

Web and electronic document accessibility

W3C [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0.](#)

[Vision Australia](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Advocacy Tasmania Inc (ATI)	*ATI is an independent, non-government organisation that has provided advocacy services across Tasmania since 1990.* Web: www.advocacytasmania.org.au Email: advocacy@advocacytasmania.org.au Phone: (03) 6224 2240
Association for Children with Disability (Tas) Inc	*The Association for Children with Disability (Tas) Inc. is a non-profit organisation that provides information, advocacy and support for Tasmanian families of children with disability.* Web: www.acdtas.com.au Email: admin@acdtas.com.au Phone: (03) 6231 2466
Autism Tasmania	*Autism Tasmania's role is to provide education, support and practical help to people on the autism spectrum through its statewide Autism Support Service.* Web: www.autismtas.org.au Email: autism@autismtas.org.au Phone: (03) 6278 9985
Brain Injury Association of Tasmania	*The Brain Injury Association of Tasmania (BIAT) is the peak body for people living with or affected by brain injury in Tasmania.* Web: www.biat.org.au Email: eo@biat.org.au Phone: (03) 6278 7299
Carers Tasmania	*Carers Tasmania is the statewide voice for family carers, representing and providing support to carers in Tasmania.* Web: www.carerstas.org Phone: (03) 6231 5507
Cerebral Palsy Association Tasmania	*Cerebral Palsy Tasmania is a statewide charitable organisation that offers support and assistance to people affected by cerebral palsy* Web: www.cptas.org.au Email: info@cptas.org.au Phone: (03) 6228 4488
Flourish – Mental Health Action in our Hands Inc	*Flourish works with mental health consumers to ensure that their rights, responsibilities and opinions are respected by policy makers, service providers and the Tasmanian Community.* Web: www.flourishtas.org.au Phone: (03) 6223 1952

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Mental Health Council of Tasmania	*The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is the peak body representing the interests of the community mental health sector in Tasmania including consumer, carer and service provider organisations.* Web: www.mhct.org Email: admin@mhct.org Phone: (03) 6224 9222
MS Society of Tasmania Inc	*The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society of Tasmania is a not for profit organisation committed to assisting Tasmanians living with MS.* Web: www.mstas.org.au Email: aboutus@mstas.org.au Phone: (03) 6220 1111 or 1800 676 721
National Disability Services Tasmania	*National Disability Services is the Australian peak body for non-government disability services.* Web: www.nds.org.au Phone: (03) 6223 6086
ParaQuad Tasmania	*The ParaQuad Association assists and encourage paraplegics and quadriplegics in their endeavours to once more become an integral part of their community.* Web: www.paraquadtas.org.au Email: info@paraquadtas.org.au Phone: (03) 6272 8816
Sign Language Communications Vic (for Auslan Interpreter bookings)	Web: http://vais.vicdeaf.com.au/ Email: slc_vic@slcommunications.com.au Phone: 1300 123 752
Speakout Association of Tasmania	*Speak Out Association of Tasmania Inc is an advocacy organisation for people with a disability* Email: admin@speakoutadvocacy.org Phone: (03) 6231 2344
Tasdeaf –Tasmanian Deaf Society Inc	*TasDeaf is a community service organisation that provides services and education for Deaf and hard of hearing Tasmanians and their families* Web: www.tasdeaf.org.au Email: info@tasdeaf.org.au Phone: (03) 6231 6501

ORGANISATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury Service Inc	*Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury Services Inc. aims to reduce/remove social isolation by promoting the availability of, and assisting people with acquired brain injury to access a diverse range of community options.* Web: www.tabis.org.au Email: reception@tabis.org.au Phone: (03)6326 2022
Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc	*Tasmanians with Disabilities Inc. is a consumer-driven, politically active umbrella organization of individuals and their associated organizations that advocates for the advancement and full participation in the Tasmanian community of people with disabilities* Web: www.twd.org.au Phone: (03) 6278 8023
Women with Disabilities Australia	*Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the peak organisation for women with all types of disabilities in Australia.* Web: www.wwda.org.au Phone: (03) 6244 8288

For further information or advice on engaging with people with disability, please contact the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Principal Liaison Officer for Disability by emailing disability@dpac.tas.gov.au or calling on (03) 6232 7151.
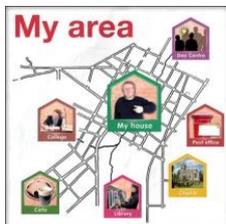
Extract from the Easy English version of the Review of the Discussion Paper for the *Disability Framework for Action 2010-2015*

What is the Disability Framework for Action 2005 – 2010?

The Tasmanian Government knew there were many barriers that stopped people with disability from taking part in their community.

Community is where you live.

It is not just your home.

It is outside your home as well.

Like your workplace, school and shopping centre.

The government wanted to try to take away the barriers that stopped people from being part of their community.

Over three years they talked to Tasmanians living with disability, their families and carers. They also talked to advocates, service providers and government agencies.

Government agencies are services run by the government, like Housing Tasmania, Service Tasmania or the Education Department.

Then they wrote the Framework.

The Framework is like a plan.

The Framework says what government can do to make it easier and fairer for people with disability to use government services and programs.