

ACCESSIBLE ISLAND



Tasmania's Disability Framework for Action 2018-2021

Summary Report: Premier's Disability Advisory
Council Final Report on Agency Implementation 2021

July 2023





Acknowledgement

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional owners, and continuing custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania) and recognises the Tasmanian Aboriginal people's deep and continuous connection to the Land, Sea and Sky.

We acknowledge and pay our deepest respects to Aboriginal Elders and people past and present as the holders and teachers of cultural and family knowledge. We honour the important role they play in Aboriginal families and their Community.



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We acknowledge disability advocates who have, and continue to, pave the way for equity today.



Introduction

About Accessible Island

Accessible Island: Tasmania's Disability Framework for Action 2018-2021 (Accessible Island) is Tasmania's third Disability Framework for Action. Accessible Island is a whole-of-government approach that aims to remove barriers and enable people with disability to enjoy the same rights and opportunities as all other Tasmanians.

Accessible Island links to the former *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (NDS) which outlined a national policy framework for improving the lives of Australians with disability, their families, and carers. Accessible Island 2018-19 was Tasmania's implementation plan for the NDS.

All Tasmanian Government agencies have a Disability Action Plan that sets out how they will implement the commitments outlined in Accessible Island and are required to report annually to the Premier's Disability Advisory Council (PDAC) on their progress. This report focuses on the activities of Tasmanian Government agencies from 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2021. Due to the final report on the Plan being delayed, a number of agencies included reports on initiatives for 2022.

About the Premier's Disability Advisory Council

PDAC is chaired by the Premier and includes the Minister for Disability Services as a permanent member. PDAC has up to 11 community members, including the Community Chair and Deputy Community Chair, who conduct out-of-session meetings.

PDAC's report is based on self-reporting by agencies. Once reports are received, PDAC review them and provide feedback to:

- highlight substantial progress and/or significant outcomes that have been achieved;
- showcase initiatives that demonstrate good practice;
- note areas where stronger commitment and further action is required;
- assess change since the previous year's report; and
- make recommendations to inform agency and whole-of-government priorities.

The following agencies reported on the implementation of Accessible Island:

- Communities Tasmania (Communities)
- Department of Education (Education)
- Department of Health (Health)
- Department of Justice (Justice)
- Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC)
- Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM)
- Department of State Growth (State Growth)
- TasTAFE
- Department of Treasury and Finance (Treasury).

Message from the Community Chair



As the Chair of PDAC I would like to thank fellow members for their time given to review and comment on a long list of actions from Departmental reports in the 2018-21 Accessible Island.

I also note the State Government's willingness to allow PDAC members the opportunity to make comment, and meet with Premiers, Disability Ministers, and Department Heads.

The list of action items in the 2018-21 Accessible Island is huge, with the nine PDAC members volunteering their time to read reports and then contribute feedback on areas that they have topic knowledge through work, community, or through lived experience.

Acknowledging that COVID-19 interrupted and delayed progress and outcomes, many PDAC members remain frustrated with a lack of progress on unresolved issues.

It is important that the list of actions in the next Accessible Island are achievable, with a focus on a smaller number, that provide positive outcomes for PDAC PDAC as well as Government.

Aligning the next Accessible Island with the National Standards for Disability Services is key, with Agencies now reporting to the Australian Disability Strategy Targeted Action Plans.

PDAC thanks the Secretariat team who have supported members, and we look forward to assisting in the creation and offering Agency feedback on the next Accessible Island.

Thank you.

Chris Symonds, PDAC Community Chair





Overview

The 2010–20 NDS identified six outcome areas:

- inclusive and accessible communities;
- rights protection, justice and legislation;
- economic security;
- personal and community support;
- learning and skills; and
- health and wellbeing.

The 102 actions included in Accessible Island aligned to the NDS outcome areas.

Key comments

In the PDAC Reports 2018-19 and 2019-20, PDAC noted its concern about the time taken to progress several flagship actions. While agency reporting has improved, progress on some key actions was noted as a concern.

PDAC considers that procurement of accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICT), accessible and inclusive workplaces, and increasing the levels of employment for people with disability should be key focuses of the next iteration of Accessible Island. PDAC also notes the importance of including Accessible Adult Change Facilities (AACF), also known as Changing Places, in any major public sector build.

PDAC notes that base-level data, monitoring, and evaluation is essential to ensuring progress is achieved. PDAC welcomes the opportunity to continue working together with Tasmanian Government agencies towards an inclusive society that supports the participation of people with disability.

Key findings

In the 2020-21 reporting period, a total of 23 actions (22.5 per cent) were reported as completed, an increase of six per cent from the 17 completed actions in 2020.

Nearly three quarters of the actions (73.5 per cent) will continue beyond the life of Accessible Island, particularly where they relate to service and program delivery.

Several actions that were previously marked as lapsed were pleasingly reported on in 2021 as progressing. A further two actions were noted by agencies as no longer viable.

Key achievements 2020-21



Inclusive and accessible communities

- As of 2021, universal design is now incorporated into all capital works projects, in accordance with the Infrastructure Services Health Facility Design Principles, to ensure facilities are accessible (Health, Action 1.1).
- From 2021, an Asset Management Information system is being implemented to provide a single asset register to assist with monitoring compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) (DDA) and the Building Code of Australia (Health, Action 1.1).
- In 2020, an Access Appraisal Report was undertaken for the Launceston General Hospital and an Access Action Plan was developed in 2021 outlining modifications to be undertaken (Health, Action 1.1).
- The Hobart premises of the Service Tasmania service centre was upgraded to take into account access requirements (DPAC, Action 1.2).

Case study Southern Remand Centre

Construction of the new Southern Remand Centre has now finished. The facility includes two cells with disability access, which are more spacious to allow room for wheelchairs and include other features like hand-rails. Landscape areas have also been designed to ensure compliant access paths and ramps to all areas. Other features include the dayroom water fountain with dual height access, an access toilet located in the clinic and recreation building, and all doorways and circulation areas meeting accessibility standards (Justice, Action 1.4).

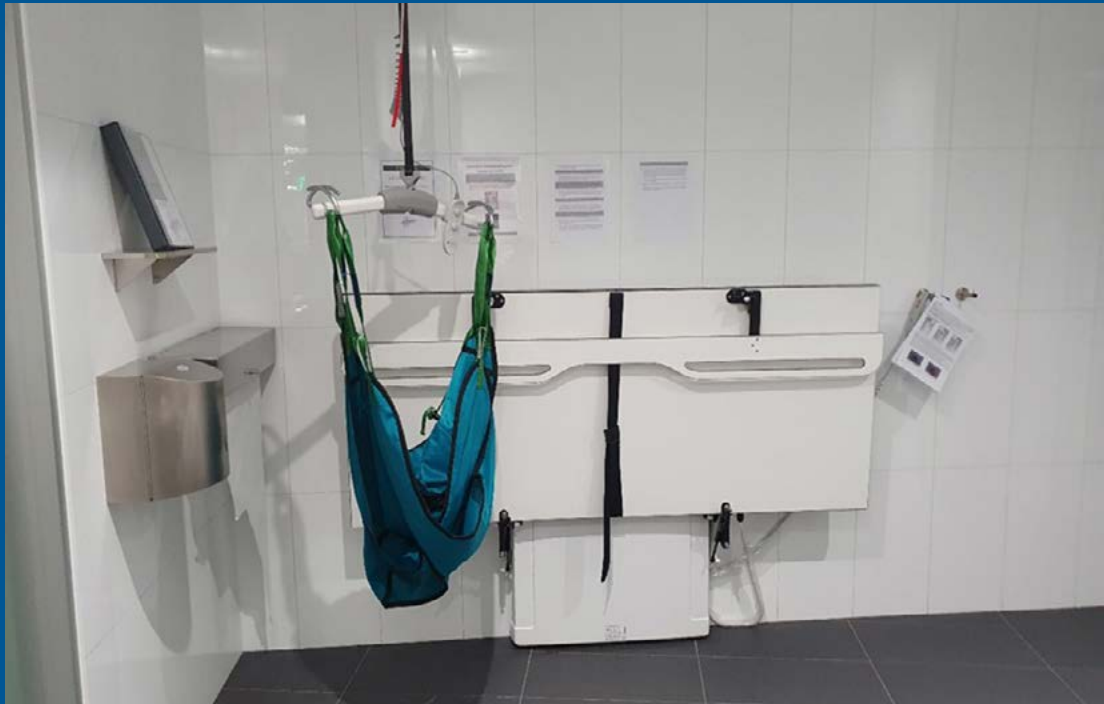


- During the reporting period, accessibility of services and supports was improved at Cockle Creek, Julius River, Stormlea Road carpark, King Island, Highfield House, Stanley (Nut), Ben Lomond Lower carpark and toilet, Maria Island, Mount Nelson Signal Station, Sarah Island, Remarkable Caves, Shot Tower Historic Site, Salamanca Arts Centre, Huon Campground toilet, Condominium Creek toilet, Milkshake Hills Forest circuit, Dip Falls carpark and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens (NRE, Action 1.3).
- Work was undertaken at the Tasmania Prison Service to comply with the National Construction Code Australia requirements and current Australian Disability Access Standards (AS 1428.1) where possible. Where full compliance was not possible for correctional reasons, a Performance Solution was sought (Justice, Action 1.4).
- Work was undertaken at the Southern Remand Centre, Ron Barwick Prison, Hobart Magistrates Court and the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT) to enhance accessibility (Justice, Action 1.4).
- Events Tasmania incorporated accessibility into funding program guidelines and required event holders to address accessibility in their application, update and acquittal reporting (State Growth, Action 1.6).
- 60 public housing properties have been redeveloped under the *Affordable Housing Action Plan* to meet the needs of people with disability and an ageing population (Communities Tasmania, Action 1.10).
- In 2021, Metro Tasmania became compliant with the DDA. All scheduled bus services are now delivered by accessible buses and replacement vehicles must also be compliant (State Growth, Action 1.12).
- Skills Tasmania delivered a range of successful projects under the Training and Work Pathways Program, including the University of Tasmania Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector Disability Awareness Program, the Avid Life Long Learning – Skills Potential Program, and the National Disability Services – Diversifying Disability Employment program (State Growth, Action 1.19).
- In 2021-22, an additional \$8 million in funding was committed to continue to implement the *Model for Supporting Students Impacted by Trauma* (Education, Action 1.21).
- In 2021, a pilot of an online WCAG 2AAA compliant HTML service that allows for the streamlined production of accessible content on screen readers and consistent template for mobile devices was completed and a guide to the creation of accessible documents was designed (DPAC, Action 1.34).

Case study

Mona Foma

MONA engaged an access consultant to develop and implement a variety of accessibility initiatives for Mona Foma, including installing a Userway widget on the website, allowing website users to activate a screen reader, and changing the type size and contrast, providing detailed access information for each venue, creating an Access Assist role (a designated front-of-house staff member focused on providing assistance to people with disabilities), using Auslan interpreters for live music and performance art, creating a dedicated access viewing platform, and providing dedicated quiet rooms to provide sensory respite for people as required (State Growth, Action 1.6).



Case study

TASCAT

On 5 November 2021, TASCAT moved into its new premises at 38 Barrack Street, Hobart. The new facilities include a dog toileting area for guide dogs, an AACF and handheld shower, and disability parking. It also contains modern audio-visual technology to allow for conferencing and hearing loop facilities in all hearing rooms.

These facilities complement the work TASCAT is continuing to do to encourage participation in hearings of people with disability who are the subject of an application in the Guardianship Stream (Stream). The Stream has also expanded their registry staff, changed listing processes, and ensured all emergency requests for Guardianship or Administration Orders are conducted by an in-person hearing (Justice, Action 1.4).



Image by Sandy Sissel via Second Echo Ensemble

Case study

Second Echo Ensemble

Arts Tasmania has supported a range of organisations to create work involving people with disability as creative leaders, participants and audience members.

This included support for all abilities performance group Second Echo Ensemble (SEE). At the heart of SEE is an ensemble of diverse artists living with a range of disabilities, with a focus on inclusivity and open access through events that consider the needs of diverse Tasmanian communities. Support from Arts Tasmania has empowered SEE to develop and sustain creative and leadership opportunities for ensemble members, to take greater artistic risks, and to continue to challenge audiences to engage with diverse and innovative ideas and stories from people living with disability (State Growth, Action 1.22).

Rights protection, justice and legislation

- Community Corrections (COMCOR) delivered a number of initiatives for offenders with disability, together with its partners, including short courses for offenders with Libraries Tasmania, a TasTAFE referral pathway for offenders released from custody, a job-readiness program for community-based offenders with MAX employment, and individualised case management support for offenders through Prisoner Rapid Rehousing and Beyond the Wire (Justice, Action 2.3).
- The Tasmania Prison Service introduced a High Needs Support Counsellor for people with disability and developed internal processes for triaging and support (Justice, Action 2.3).
- On 1 March 2021, the Supreme Court commenced a three-year Witness Intermediary Scheme (WIS) pilot, introducing the use of intermediaries to help children and adults with communications needs (other than linguistic diversity) better participate in the criminal justice system (Justice, Action 2.3).
- The new Tasmania Prison Service's Director's Standing Order on Prisoners with Disability came into effect on 31 August 2020, replacing the previous Order from 2007. The revised Order provides greater guidance for staff regarding responsibilities, identification of disability, placement of prisoners with disability, management practices including case management, disciplinary processes and supports, and access to support systems including the NDIS (Justice, Action 2.9).
- In February 2022, DPFEM published a compulsory e-learning package for employees titled 'Disability Confidence in the Workplace'. The training uses examples and scenarios relating to the emergency management environment (DPFEM, Action 2.12).
- The Sergeants Qualifying Course for Tasmanian Police now includes a training session on 'Building Inclusive Teams'. The training aims to develop knowledge and skills in the managerial context, foster an understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion within the organisation, and explain the important role managers play in promoting, supporting, and fostering these areas (DPFEM, Action 2.12).
- DPFEM distributed a consolidated Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Guidelines for consultation which was finalised in May 2022 (DPFEM, Action 2.13).
- In 2021, DPFEM published a Disability Resources webpage which includes a register of specialist disability support providers, including out-of-hours services to assist front line personnel in real time, and provides links to services and resources and additional information for educating members (DPFEM, Action 2.14).

Snapshot of COMCOR's successful partnerships

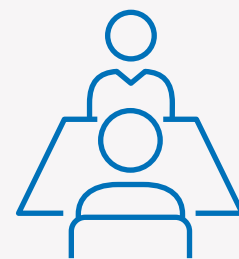


COMCOR continued to partner with MAX Employment, a Disability Employment Service Provider, on the **CHOICE program** which is now in its fourth year of delivery. The targeted program supports community-based offenders with increased access to employment, health, and social support services to increase job readiness and engagement (Justice, Action 2.3).

COMCOR continued to partner with **Libraries Tasmania** to deliver short courses for offenders, including those with disability. Courses involved everyday maths, introduction to computing, and work skill development (Justice, Action 2.3).



COMCOR works with **Beyond the Wire** to offer individualised case management support for offenders, including those with disability, transitioning into the community. Prior to release and throughout the initial two years of engagement, the offender is supported by a case manager through Beyond the Wire who works to link them into services and supports in the local community (Justice, Action 2.3).



In September 2021, COMCOR set up a referral pathway with **TasTAFE** to assist offenders, including those with disability, released from custody. Offenders receive TasTAFE delivered courses free of charge for the initial 12 months following release (Justice, Action 2.3).

Economic security

- Agencies provided the following updates with respect to implementing the Tasmanian State Service Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Framework 2017-2020 and developing specific plans in each agency (Action 3.1):
 - Communities launched the *Belonging in the Workplace Implementation Plan*.
 - Education released a Staff Wellbeing and Inclusion Plan in 2022 to assist with the delivery of the Staff Wellbeing Framework.
 - DPAC developed the Accessibility Action Plan in 2021.
 - DPFEM planned to implement the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Guidelines in 2022 and the DPFEM Framework in 2023.
 - State Growth released a three-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and Annual Action Plan in February 2022. As at November 2022, 90 per cent of the actions in the Annual Plan were completed or on track.
 - TasTAFE established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee in 2021.
- 6 people secured employment in Justice through the Disability Employment Program, which requires suitable roles to be sent to disability employment service providers prior to advertising on the Tasmanian Government Jobs website (Justice, Action 3.2).
- 10 people secured employment at DPAC in the COVID-19 Call Centre through the Disability Employment Register (DPAC, Action 3.2).
- Justice and State Growth entered into partnerships with JobAccess to improve employer confidence in recruiting and supporting people with disability in 2020 and 2021, respectively (Justice and State Growth, Action 3.2).
- In 2021, State Growth released Best Fit Recruitment which promotes flexibility in selecting the best person for the job, focusing on the requirements for the job, without creating barriers (State Growth, Action 3.3).
- Treasury launched an inclusive language strategy to educate staff on the importance of using inclusive language in communications (Treasury, Action 3.3).
- Treasury delivered an inclusion forum to staff which included hearing from a person with lived experience of disability about the impact of social, community and workplace exclusion, and about how employers can support people with disability and diverse needs in the workplace (Treasury, Action 3.3).
- Since 2022, Education has improved the ability of its human resources systems to collect self-identified diversity data through the new Workforce Capability Capturing System, MyCareer@Doe (Education, Action 3.4).
- In March 2021, Education updated its Working from Home Policy and Procedure to support employees, including those with disabilities, to work flexibly. 193 staff now have flexible working arrangements in place (Education, Action 3.4).

- Treasury has educated nearly 100 per cent of employees and managers on reducing implicit bias. New managers and supervisors are required to participate in a workshop to manage unconscious bias in the recruitment process, and new staff are required to undertake online training on unconscious bias (Treasury, Action 3.4).
- Since 2020, the Disability Confident Workforce eLearning training package, developed by the Australian Network on Disability, has been rolled out to staff in Communities, Education, Health, Justice, DPFEM, TasTAFE and Treasury (Action 3.5).
- In 2021-22, State Growth worked with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association to promote the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania's Accessible Tourism module which is free for accredited businesses (State Growth, Action 3.7).



Case study

Parks and Wildlife

Tom is a visitor reception officer based at Mt Field. Tom requires the use of a wheelchair to access his workplace and routinely provides visitors with information about the remote walking tracks in the surrounding mountains of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas. To enable Tom to experience these wild areas, his manager, Ms Hayley Rayner asked for Tom to be flown into the region on an operational maintenance flight.

With support from a colleague, a suitable flight was identified while the construction team was going into Bechervaise Plateau for toilet pod installation. The flight from Scotts Peak to Bechervaise Plateau and back allowed Tom to study the landscape of the Western and Eastern Arthur Ranges. Tom was grateful for the opportunity and is now better placed to respond to visitor enquiries about these areas in future (NRE, Action 3.3).

Personal and community support

- The Tasmanian Government and Aboriginal people were involved in the development of the national Disability Sector Strengthening Plan which came into effect in 2022 (Communities, Action 4.5).
- The Tasmanian Government released *Supporting Tasmanian Carers: Tasmanian Carer Action Plan 2021-24* in June 2021 (Communities, Action 4.8).

Learning and skills

- A pilot program was scheduled for 2022 to place students with disability with disability confident employers (Education, Action 5.1).
- A trial is underway of the national Missing School project that sees the provision of remote access robots to students who are not able to be on school sites due to health reasons (Education, Action 5.2).
- In September 2021, the Skills Potential Program finished which provided people with disability with an opportunity to engage in vocational training in a flexible and supported learning environment (State Growth, Action 5.9).
- Between 2021-22, the Training and Work Pathways Program, *Diversifying Disability Employment*, educated workplaces on how to attract, recruit and retain people with disability. The project also mapped the desired training opportunities, employment, and career pathways for people with disability across Tasmania to inform the future direction for disability employment in the state (State Growth, Action 5.11).

Case study

Michael Taylor – 2021 Tasmanian Equity Apprentice of the Year

Michael has an eye condition called retinitis pigmentosa which is damage to the nerves between his eyes and brain. This resulted in a severe visual impairment which makes day to day living a challenge. Becoming a heavy vehicle mechanic was something Michael had wanted to do since he was 10 years old. Despite having severe visual impairment, Michael successfully completed his Certificate III in Heavy Vehicle Mechanical Technology in March 2021. Michael credits the disability support team at TasTAFE and the wonderful team at FRM Materials Handling for helping him achieve his dream. He now has a qualification, job security and a future in the heavy vehicle industry (State Growth, Action 5.11).



Case study

Frances Daisy Walsh – 2021 Tasmanian Equity Trainee of the Year

Frances has Down syndrome, had open heart surgery when she was 12 years old, and suffers from Crohn's Disease. While a student, it was evident that Frances loved cooking. She was given the opportunity to work at Café Hamlet and was then offered a school-based traineeship with Work & Training at RACV Hotel which she completed in December 2020 at TasTAFE. Frances says the opportunity to complete the qualification would not have been possible without the amazing support, care and guidance from TasTAFE, Work & Training and the RACV. Keen to continue her training, Frances has now begun studying her Certificate II in Hospitality (State Growth, Action 5.11).



Health and wellbeing

- Communities provided advice and support to New Horizons to assist with the creation of the Tasmanian Inclusive Sports Alliance, a gateway for people with disability and their carers to find out about and access sport and recreation opportunities (Communities, Action 6.1).
- During the reporting period, 34 Communities employees and 101 Health employees completed Mental Health First Aid training (Communities and Health, Action 6.4).
- In October 2021, NRE commenced recruitment, induction, and training of new Workplace Contact Officers, with a total of 24 Contact Officers appointed (NRE, Action 6.4).
- During 2021, NRE provided up to 180 managers and supervisors with WHS Duty of Care face-to-face training (NRE, Action 6.4).
- In August 2020, the Premier's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council, Premier, Deputy Premier and Minister for Health updated and re-signed the Tasmania Statement which commits to working across government and with communities to support health and wellbeing (Health, Action 6.9).



Next steps

Work has commenced to inform the implementation of the next whole-of-government framework to guide Tasmanian Government agencies work for all Tasmanians with disability.

The next iteration of Accessible Island will be developed in the context of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*, the current review of the Tasmanian *Disability Services Act 2011*, and establishment of Tasmania's first Disability Commissioner.

It is anticipated that the next iteration of Accessible Island will be released following consultation with PDAC and the Minister's Disability Consultative Group.



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