

Access and Inclusion

Hints and Tips for Contractors to work towards our six desired outcomes

Access and inclusion

- Making contracted services accessible doesn't need to be expensive or complex.
- Contractors must be aware of our six desired Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) outcomes and
- Undertake activities that are consistent with these outcomes, where appropriate.



Our six desired outcomes

1. **Services and events** are accessible to the whole community.
2. Access to **buildings and facilities** owned by the Water Corporation is improved, with the aim of providing universal access.
3. **Information** is accessible to all of our customers.
4. A high standard of **service** is provided to all of our customers.
5. **Complaints** from any person are fully investigated and the outcome is conveyed in an accessible format.
6. All people have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in **public consultations**.

Outcome 1 - Our services and events

- People sometimes report difficulty in gaining access to a range of mainstream services and events provided by organisations due to physical barriers or lack of accessible information.
- This can apply to people:
 - with disability
 - living in regional areas
 - from other cultures
 - with English as a second language
- By evaluating and adapting services we can greatly enhance opportunities for all people to participate fully in the everyday life of their local community.

Examples

- Provide flexible services to give people with disability the same outcome from that service as other members of the community.
- The venue has a unisex accessible toilet.
- Provide clear and easy-to-read invitations and flyers for events which include contact details and provide alternative formats such as large print, audiotape, computer disc or Braille.
- Hold events in an accessible venue e.g. ACROD parking available and an access ramp to the venue.
- Invitations to events ask invitees if they have any specific requirements e.g. audio loop, Auslan (sign language) interpreter or non English interpreter.

Outcome 2 - Our buildings and facilities

- Improving access to our buildings and facilities can benefit:
 - Customers with disability (permanent and temporary).
 - Employees/contractors with special requirements.
 - Seniors.
 - Parents with young children in prams.
- The importance of providing access to buildings and facilities is reflected in a variety of legislation, standards and codes.
- We all have a role in improving access to our facilities. This, in turn, can help us achieve Zero Harm.

Examples

- Provide clear access free of boxes, displays and other obstructions.
- Avoid abrupt vertical changes of level (kerbs, steps, ruts, gutters) to ensure a continuous accessible path of travel.
- Place colour contrast strip on steps.
- Provide surface finishes that are slip-resistant, evenly laid and free of hazards to minimise risk of injury.
- Provide signage with clear lettering and good colour contrast.
- Ensure there is adequate public parking to meet the needs of people with disabilities in terms of quantity and location.

Outcome 3 - Our information

- Receiving information is an important aspect of our daily lives. People with a disability, English as a second language, from other cultures or low literacy levels report frustration at the difficulties they experience.
- Providing easy to read understand information which people can comprehend quickly and effectively can:
 - Reduce unnecessary contacts.
 - Increase customer satisfaction.
 - Enhance our corporate reputation.
 - Ultimately save time and money.

Examples


- Provide information in plain language and ensure accessible design and layout.
- Incorporate captioning in DVD and TV advertisements.
- Provide flyers with good colour contrast and easy-to-read font size.
- For people who have impaired hearing, providing audio loops at public meetings enables people who use hearing aids to participate.
- For people who are deaf, Auslan sign language interpreters can be arranged.

Examples continued

- For people who have impaired vision or are blind, it is important to make information available (on request) in alternative formats such as large print, audio, computer disk and Braille.

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Outcome 4 - Our standard of service

- Our community is diverse. A 'one size fits all' approach to customer service will not help us achieve excellent customer service.
- Everyone has a right to receive the same level and quality of service as others members of the community.
- People may avoid interaction with others if they find communicating is difficult to avoid embarrassment.
- Sometimes a lack of understanding and awareness around disabilities can lead to talking to an adult person with a disability as if they were a child, or speaking to the carer of a person with a disability as if the person with a disability were not there.

Outcome 4 - Our standard of service continued

- A lack of understanding and awareness can also result in staff tending to shout at people who have a hearing impairment or who are deaf.
- To face the person and speak clearly and slowly in a normal voice or, if the person prefers, write instead would be more helpful.
- We recognise that our customers have varying needs and acknowledge that different needs require different solutions to ensure that we provide a high level of service to all members of the community.
- For more information visit the Access and Inclusion on WaterNet or the Communicating section.

Outcome 5 - Complaints

- It is vital that customers have the opportunity to raise concerns or make complaints about any aspect of our business they are unhappy with.
- This information helps us improve our services, to understand our customers needs and ensures that we deliver services that add value.
- Information about how to make a complaint may be in a format that is inaccessible or the process may create a barrier (requiring the complaint to be in writing).
- When a person makes a complaint, our response must be in a format that meets their needs.
- It is important that our complaints and feedback processes are accessible to all members of the community.

Examples of strategies

- Accept complaints in a variety of formats such as by telephone, email, written or in person.
- Respond to the complaint in a format appropriate to the individuals needs.
- Allow proxies to make complaints on behalf of another person if necessary.
- View complaints as opportunities for improvement.

Outcome 6 - Public consultations and community engagement

- We encourage people to provide input into the decision-making processes that affects them. The input should be actively sought and deliver beneficial outcomes.
- Some customers may not be able to participate in public consultation/community engagement due to a variety of factors:
 - People with disability may not be able to attend if the venue chosen is not accessible e.g. lack of ramp for a person who uses a wheelchair.
 - People with impaired vision or who are blind may be unaware of the meeting as they may have difficulty reading newspaper announcements and prefer to listen to information radio instead.
 - People who have impaired hearing may attend the meeting but without an 'audio loop' they might not hear what is being said.

Outcome 6 - Public consultations and community engagement

- There are many ways that we can ensure that our community engagement process is accessible and inclusive. We can:
 - Advertise using plain language and in a variety of formats.
 - Ensure that public meetings are in accessible venues and advertise this information.
 - Provide a range of ways in which people can provide input e.g. Auslan interpreter or translation interpreter.
 - Identify the target audience and any special requirements e.g. whether the announcement should be translated in to other languages.
 - Include RSVP details for people with specific needs.
 - Conduct a review of the consultation engagement process and request feedback.