

# THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2013–18

# FOREWORD FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



The University's first Disability Action Plan was lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1999. This is the University's third Disability Action Plan and over the last 13 years the University has achieved key milestones in its journey to improve and increase access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

We are, of course, committed to meeting our legislative obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005. But, more importantly, if we are to be a university in which the brightest researchers and the most promising students can thrive and realise their full potential, we must ensure that we provide a learning and working environment which is inclusive and accessible to all our students, staff and visitors.

As a University and a community we still have more to achieve in access and inclusion. I welcome the University's Disability Action Plan 2013–18 and urge the whole University community to commit to working towards the achievement of its objectives.

**Dr Michael Spence**  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal

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The images used in this document represent a diverse range of staff and students with and without disabilities from across the University's faculties and administrative units.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University formally thanks all those who committed their time to provide feedback during the review process of the University's Disability Action Plan 2006–10 and the development of the Disability Action Plan 2013–18. The University acknowledges the work of members of the Disability Action Plan Development Group, who worked together from 2011 to guide the process of the development of the Disability Action Plan 2013–18. The University also recognises the work of Margaret and Michael Fox from Access Australia in supporting the development of this plan. In particular the University also thanks all those students and staff who participated in the disability action plan workshops, student and staff surveys and those who commented during the drafting process.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the University's Third Disability Action plan, and it aims to further the human rights and inherent dignity of all students, staff and visitors to the University. It is a mark of our recognition that people with disabilities have the same human rights and inherent dignity as everyone else. We are committed to working proactively together to ensure people with disabilities have the opportunity to realise their full potential and capabilities at this university.

This plan seeks to enable students and staff with disabilities to lead full and enriched lives at the University and fully participate in all aspects of the life, education, research and administration.

It reflects our focus on becoming a world-class leader in the social and economic participation of people with disabilities in the life of the University. The Disability Action Plan also ensures the University meets its legislative and strategic requirements. More importantly, it provides the University with a plan of action for delivering an accessible best practice teaching, learning and working environment to our students, staff and visitors.

While the plan outlines specific heads of departments and units as responsible for specific strategies, every staff member across the University is responsible for enabling access and inclusion.

Key principles that underpin this plan include the following.

- People with disabilities have the right to be treated with dignity and respect as individuals, and to realise their individual capabilities.
- People with disabilities have the right to have access to the full range of educational and employment opportunities to maximise their learning and career development.
- People with disabilities are consulted to determine the level and type of adjustment for their individual needs.
- People with disabilities have rights to privacy, confidentiality and individual choices about disclosure.
- People with disabilities have the right to work and study in environments free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, consistent with the relevant legislation outlined in this plan.

The University strives for a proactive capacity-building stance on the provision of services and opportunities for people with disabilities. Therefore, effective approaches that are strengths-based, rather than those that seek merely to minimise deficits, are embraced by the University.

To guide the University to uphold its principles and responsibilities as a leading education provider, the Disability Action Plan has six key objectives:

1. The University incorporates the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities in all policies and planning.
2. The University of Sydney is a tertiary education provider of choice for all students.
3. The University is an employer of choice for people with disabilities.
4. The University's communication and digital environment is accessible to people with disabilities.
5. The University provides an accessible built environment to everyone.
6. The University provides leadership to the community in developing an inclusive Australian society.

*For an understanding of the key terms used in this plan please refer to appendix 1.*

## ASPIRATION

Within the timeframe of this Disability Action Plan 2013–18 the University will demonstrate pragmatic and academic leadership to ensure inclusive participation for people with disabilities to work and learn at the University.

The Disability Action Plan allows the University of Sydney to take a responsible and coordinated approach to ensure access and inclusion for all students, staff and visitors within all environments of the University.

The University will continue to attract and retain the most talented students and staff and enable the participation and contribution of people with disabilities in our community.

Our staff and students will be prepared to effectively engage with all members of a diverse Australian and global society.

As a leading education provider to the community, we are responsible for the provision of inclusive and accessible education as set out by a range of legislation, including the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. However, our investment in this Disability Action Plan is not only based on meeting legislative requirements – we are bound and committed to providing a best practice accessible teaching, learning and working environment to our students, staff and visitors.

We acknowledge and welcome the challenge of providing a world-class environment where all talented people can work and study at the University of Sydney and realise their full potential, irrespective of any disability.

This approach will enhance our tradition as a leading education provider and as a leader within society.

We look to a future where people with disabilities are a part of the fabric of our organisation and we aim to move away from the complaints-based reporting process currently enshrined in legislation as regards access and equity issues to a forward-looking one that is more advisory and consultative.

Equitable access to education and employment is an important contributor to the overall wellbeing of our community, and enhancing that wellbeing has a positive impact on all of us. In recent years within Australia, disability has become a high-profile discussion point. It has been the centre of key political debate, particularly with the emergence of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. People with disabilities, their carers, family and friends are campaigning for improvements to basic rights, such as services and facilities that support people with disabilities and access to education.

It is well documented that disadvantage is experienced by people with disabilities in all aspects of life including lack of access to and participation in education and employment opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

As a university, it is both our legislative and moral duty to ensure we work proactively to fulfil the purpose of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”.<sup>2</sup>

This Disability Action Plan seeks to eliminate discrimination and provides a blueprint for the University to achieve the following goals.

### CULTURE

As an organisation we will become confident in understanding the nature and scope of disability. ‘Disability’ will be demystified and a part of our everyday business. The University’s culture will become progressive and forward thinking in the area of disability. We will affect change in all areas of access and participation at the University through embracing a proactive capacity-building approach and ensuring that people with disabilities and their representative organisations are consulted and involved in this process.

Staff and students will be prepared to effectively engage with all members of a diverse Australian and global society.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The University will be recognised as a leader in providing inclusive, accessible and innovative learning environments so that talented students with disabilities will be attracted to study at the University of Sydney. Access to participation to study at this University will improve for people with disabilities. The protection and promotion of the rights of students with disabilities will support our goals to increase the proportion of students with disabilities at the University. The engagement of students with disabilities will increase and opportunities for achieving their full potential will improve.

1. Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney (2011). Left behind: Monitoring the social inclusion of young Australians with self-reported long term health conditions, impairments or disabilities 2001–2009 (2011). Available from [sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/publications](http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/publications)

2. United Nations (2008). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available from [www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150)

## TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

The University will provide support to its teaching staff to enable them to deliver inclusive, accessible and innovative teaching methods. We will attract teaching and research staff from all backgrounds to work here and support them to deliver world-class inclusive teaching practices.

## EMPLOYMENT

The University will provide a considerate, flexible and inclusive working environment for all staff. Staff supporting staff with disabilities will be knowledgeable and well resourced to support the participation and career development of staff with disabilities at the University. The protection and promotion of the rights of staff with disabilities will support our goals to increase the proportion of staff with disabilities.

## COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

The University will address access issues in its communication, digital and physical environments, to improve access and participation in the life of the University for all students, staff and visitors.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

People with disabilities make up a significant proportion of our community. Disability is a part of the human experience. According to the *World Report on Disability* “almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life, and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning.”<sup>3</sup>

According to the World Health Organization:

- “Over a billion people, or about 15% of the world’s population, have some form of disability.
- Between 110 million and 190 million people have significant difficulties in functioning.
- Rates of disability are increasing due to population ageing and increases in chronic health conditions, among other causes.
- Persons with disabilities on average as a group experience worse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities, such as less education, worse health outcomes, less employment, and higher poverty rates.”<sup>4</sup>

According to the *Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009*, in Australia 18.5 percent or more than four million people reported as having a disability.<sup>5</sup>

In Australia:

- 15 percent of Australians of working age (15-64 years of age) have a disability<sup>6</sup>
- 54 percent of people with a disability are in a job or looking for one, and 83 percent of people with no disability are in a job or looking for one<sup>7</sup>
- young Australians with a disability (15-29 years of age) are significantly less likely than their non-disabled peers to complete Year 12 or equivalent<sup>8</sup>
- the majority of disabilities (approximately 88 percent) are not visible<sup>9</sup>
- one in five Australians will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives.<sup>10</sup>

In 2011 two percent of staff at the University identified as having a disability and 0.2 percent of staff required a work-related adjustment to support them in the workplace.

In 2012 46,944 students enrolled at the University. During enrolment in the same year 1831 students identified through the enrolment process as having a disability. In 2012 a total of 1645 students were registered with disability services.

It is likely that the number of staff and students with disabilities at the University is under-represented in our statistics. This may be due to the varied nature of disability, people’s openness to discuss disability and the implications around disclosure, and in addition some people may not require assistance to study or work.

It is also acknowledged that the current mechanisms for capturing data on staff and students with disabilities are limited, for example staff disability statistics are primarily obtained at the commencement of employment. It is intended through this Disability Action Plan to improve the capture of data.

Evidently people with disabilities make up a significant proportion of the population, and the University is committed to engaging with them.

The Disability Action Plan seeks to improve access to all areas and participation in the life of the University and attract and retain talented and skilled people with disabilities to work and study here.

3. World Health Organization (2011). World report on disability. Page 3. Geneva, Switzerland. Available from [www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html)

4. World Health Organization (2012). Fact sheet No. 352. Geneva, Switzerland. Available from [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/index.html)

5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009). Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009. Available from [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02009?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02009?OpenDocument)

6. Australian Network on Disability (2013). Disability Statistics. Available from [www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html)

7. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009). Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009. Available from [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02009?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02009?OpenDocument)

8. Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney (2011). LEFT BEHIND: Monitoring the social inclusion of young Australians with self-reported long term health conditions, impairments or disabilities 2001–2009. Available from [sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/publications.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/health-sciences/cdrp/publications.shtml)

9. National Disability Coordination Officer Program (2013). What is a disability? Available from [www.ndcoinspire21.com/?page\\_id=36](http://www.ndcoinspire21.com/?page_id=36)

10. Australian Network on Disability (2013). Disability Statistics. Available from [www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/disability-statistics.html)

Students Chris Dyke and Sarah Butler participate in the pilot for the University's Inclusive Education Program.



## DEFINITIONS DISABILITY

The University uses the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)* definition of disability. This definition represents a balanced approach to disability that is neither a purely medical nor social model but combines both. It acknowledges that people with disabilities may be impacted by their impairment, but also by their environment.

According to the World Health Organization, the ICF defines disability as "an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals with a health condition (eg cerebral palsy, down syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (eg negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports)."<sup>11</sup>

When disability is defined as an interaction as opposed to an attribute of the person, progress can be made in improving social participation because attitudinal and environmental barriers are removed.

Similarly, the definition of 'disability' is described by the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* as an "evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".<sup>12</sup>

Defining disability in the above way recognises that anyone can experience a decline in health and thereby experience some degree of disability. It recognises disability as part of the human experience, not something which is isolated to a minority group. It shifts the focus to functioning and how this might be affected by a range of contextual factors, including a person's environment.

The understanding of disability has changed significantly over the past several decades. However, the most important change in the understanding of disability is recognising that the lives of people with disabilities are usually far more limited by existing social, cultural, and economic constraints than by specific physical, sensory, psychological or intellectual impairments.<sup>13</sup>

Further, disability is a dynamic concept and considered to be any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. It could be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, and visible or invisible.

"The breadth of impairments and medical conditions covered by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992) include:

- Physical – affects a person's mobility or dexterity
- Intellectual – affects a person's abilities to learn
- Mental illness – affects a person's thinking processes
- Sensory – affects a person's ability to hear or see
- Neurological – affects the person's brain and central nervous system,
- Learning disability
- Physical disfigurement or
- Immunological – the presence of organisms causing disease in the body".<sup>14</sup>

11. World Health Organization (2012). Fact sheet No. 352. Geneva, Switzerland. Available from [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs352/en/index.html)

12. United Nations (2008). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available from [www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150](http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150)

13. Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability: From theory to practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

14. Australian Network on Disability (2013). Fact sheets. Available from [www.and.org.au/pages/what-is-a-disability.html](http://www.and.org.au/pages/what-is-a-disability.html)

# LEGISLATIVE AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A Disability Action Plan is designed to eliminate discrimination in an active way to improve access on all levels to the University for students and staff with disabilities. It ensures the University meets its legislative and strategic requirements and identifies areas for improvement in a phased, coordinated and responsible approach. Once complete, the plan will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission pursuant to section 67 of the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

This Disability Action Plan has been developed within the bounds of the following legislation and guidelines:

## CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2006

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations in 2006 and ratified by Australia in 2008. "The purpose of the present convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity." Article 24, Article 27 and Article 30 relate to education; work and employment and participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

respectively. It commits signatories to eliminate discrimination based on disability and to provide access for people with disabilities to education, employment and community life.

Australia is a signatory to both the convention and the optional protocol, which enables Australians to make complaints to the United Nations Disabilities Committee if all domestic remedies have been exhausted. Under section 47 of the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, the Government has declared the CRPD to be an international instrument. According to section 11 (1) (f) of the Act the Commission may conciliate the breach of any human right.

However, the *Disability Rights Now – Civil Society Report to the CRPD (2012)* highlights that "Australia has failed to effectively involve people with disabilities and their organisations at all stages of planning, implementation and monitoring the implementation of the CRPD". The report's recommendations include that Australia must properly engage people with disabilities and their representative organisations to participate in the development, implementation and review of all legislation, policies, practices and allocation of resources.<sup>15</sup>

## DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 (CTH)

The Disability Discrimination Act has the following aims.

- a) "Eliminate discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in all areas of life including education, employment, access to premises, accommodation and in the provision of services, goods and facilities.
- b) Ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community.
- c) Promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community."

The Act prohibits unlawful discrimination against people with disabilities and promotes an inclusive approach whenever possible, rather than the provision of separate or parallel services.

A Disability Action Plan is a proactive approach in complying with the Act. The Act is a complaints-based (as opposed to compliance-based) legislation and developing an action plan assists the University in achieving

15. Disability Rights Now – Civil Society Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2012). Available from [www.disabilityrightsnnow.org.au/node/15](http://www.disabilityrightsnnow.org.au/node/15)

access and inclusion for people with disabilities. It obliges the University to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities in the following areas: employment; education; access to premises; and the provision of goods, services, accommodation and facilities.

#### **DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION (“THE EDUCATION STANDARDS”) 2005 AND REVIEW PAPER 2012**

The Education Standards provide a framework from the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* specifically for education and training providers to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access and participation to education. The main objective of the Education Standards is to provide a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities for education and training providers and people with disabilities.

The standards cover a range of areas including reasonable adjustment; enrolment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; student support services; harassment and victimisation and treatment of a person who has an associate with a disability.

The Education Standards were recently reviewed and a report on the review was published in August 2012. The review revealed that implementation of the standards needs to be more effective and as a result the report

makes 14 recommendations covering the following key themes:

- awareness raising
- improving clarity
- access and participation, discrimination and inclusion
- complaints, accountability, and compliance processes
- contemporary education practice and related issues.

#### **THE NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY 2010–20**

The National Disability Strategy (NDS) sets out a 10-year national plan for improving life for Australians with disability, their families and carers. It represents a commitment by all levels of government, industry and the community to a unified, national approach to policy and program development to improve the lives of people with disabilities, their families and carers. The Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments developed the strategy in partnership under the auspices of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). The strategy was formally endorsed by COAG on 13 February 2011.

The strategy is a 10-year plan that sets out six priority areas for action including: inclusive and accessible communities, economic security and learning and skills. However, an implementation plan for the strategy has not yet been finalised. Meaningful engagement with people with disabilities and their representative organisations has not been maintained for the development of the NDS and for the preparation of the NDS implementation plan.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Other key legislation and guidelines**

- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1988 (NSW)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)*
- *Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)*
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Report on the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2004
- Disability (Access to Premises – buildings) Standards 2010
- World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WC3
- Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (AVCC) Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability, 2006
- Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Guidelines on information access for students with print disabilities, 2004

#### **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

The University is committed to providing accessible education to people with disabilities. This is reflected in initiative 4b of the University’s strategic plan – the 2011–15 *White Paper* – which states: Support universal access by investing in implementation of the Disability Action Plan, including the allocation of disability officers and ongoing training for staff.

<sup>16</sup> Disability Rights Now – Civil Society Report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2012). Available from [www.disabilityrightsnow.org.au/node/15](http://www.disabilityrightsnow.org.au/node/15)

## BACKGROUND ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY



The University of Sydney has a long tradition of welcoming people from all social and cultural backgrounds to enrich its environment. From its beginning in 1850 it has supported inclusion and access, and admitted students based on academic merit rather than on their religion or social class.

As the University started to grow during the second half of the 19th century it evolved to respond to the needs of its students and the wider community and developed a culture of benefaction and philanthropy.

In 1881 the University was among the earliest universities in the world to start admitting women on the same basis as men and many decades before either the University of Oxford or Cambridge.

This Disability Action Plan follows in the tradition of providing access to students based on an individual's ability.

## PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2006

From 2010–12 the University reviewed the current level of access provided at the University for people with disabilities, and the Disability Action Plan Development Group played an integral role in this process. The University has focused on improving access and the following is a snapshot of our progress since our last disability action plan 2006–10.

### Information and Communications Technology

- In 2009 the Information and Communications Technology Division created an accessibility assessment service to evaluate and review websites, web-based applications and online resources against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- The Marketing and Communications Division has integrated accessibility guidelines into its working practices for web content and web development. This includes: ensuring that the University standard web template meets WCAG guidelines; undertaking staff training in accessibility; conducting accessibility reviews of web projects; hiring specialists to review large projects; and working to improve the Disability Services website.
- Live remote captioning has been in place since 2009 for students with profound deafness.
- The increased use of Lectopia in lecture theatres has reduced the requirements for individual note takers.
- The replacement of the Learning Management System (WebCt) with Blackboard Learn in 2010 has addressed long-standing accessibility issues with University learning systems.
- The establishment of the Assistive Technology Room at Fisher Library has improved access for more than 150 students who require this customised software and hardware.
- The establishment of an Assistive Technology Team in the Information and Communications Technology Division provides support to staff and students with disabilities who use this technology.
- The University has loaned additional hardware and software students through Disability Services, and has used it as an adjustment for examinations.

### Human Resources

- The University has established a Disability Consultative Committee and student disability liaison officers.
- The University has improved human resources processes and training of staff through disability awareness training.
- The recently established Laffan Fellowship aims to assist University researchers who have, or have experienced, a significant disability to re-establish or enhance their academic research careers. It provides academic staff with relief from routine teaching and administrative responsibilities, and supports research-only staff with funding to secure technical assistance, for up to two semesters.

### Campus Infrastructure and Services

- In 2008 two building and landscape works were completed to improve access to the eastern half of the Camperdown and Darlington campuses. Plans for the project identified that the centre for undergraduate teaching was Eastern Avenue and that the area required modernising to cope with the expected increase in students. The two projects removed barriers to the most densely populated part of the campus for undergraduate students.
- Refurbishments to improve access to the campus through the construction of the Jane Foss Russell Building and the City Rd pedestrian bridge began in 2003 and were completed in 2008.
- In 2010 Campus Infrastructure and Services (CIS) commenced a survey and audit of 170 buildings and campuses to review the projects completed and identify a future masterplan for access – the Accessible Environment Plan. The priority list from the plan forms the basis for access projects CIS is undertaking between 2013 and 2017.
- Refurbishments to the Physics, Edward Ford and Institute buildings began in 2010–11 and included the installation of new lifts, ramps and accessible toilets. They were completed in 2012.
- Refurbishment of the Fisher Library began in 2008 and included new lifts and an upgrade to comply with the current Access to Premises Standards. Access upgrades were completed in 2012.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN AND CONSULTATION PHASE

A Disability Action Plan Development Group was set up by the Senior Executive Group to guide the development of the action plan.

The Development Group consists of representatives from across the University, including students and staff with disabilities. The Development Group has assisted in the review of progress achieved since the last Disability Action Plan and in setting goals to address access. The University recognises that while progress has been made on eliminating inequity and fostering an environment of inclusion and access, there is still more work to be done.

The University has also been thorough in its approach to consult all members of the University community and to engage all staff and student views. During 2012, all students and staff were invited to attend University-wide disability action plan workshops. In addition, the University conducted a comprehensive staff and student survey to further understand the current level of access and inclusion issues within all areas of the University.

Data and feedback were summarised by the project team and discussed with the Development Group to inform the development of the Disability Action Plan.

### REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This Disability Action Plan is an evolving plan of action and therefore it requires ongoing review, evaluation and monitoring to ensure its implementation. The University will review, evaluate and monitor the plan in the following ways:

1. As outlined in this Disability Action Plan, a number of governance structures will be established to ensure the implementation of the plan, including a sub-committee of the Senior Executive Group; a University Consultative Committee (which reports to a Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee) and local (faculty/business unit) disability/equity committees (which report to faculty and divisional boards and the Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee).
2. Quarterly reports will be provided to the Senior Executive Group on the implementation, progress and outstanding issues for resolution of the action plan.
3. An annual survey of staff and students will be conducted to capture data on disabilities and to monitor and evaluate the success of the Disability Action Plan, including measures of the culture of inclusivity within the University.

Importantly, the University's students, staff and visitors will be consulted as part of the review and evaluation process.

While particular heads of faculties and administrative units are listed as being responsible for particular strategies and outcomes of the action plan, all staff and students are expected to play a part in addressing the access and inclusion of people with disabilities.

### CONTINUAL CONSULTATION WITH STUDENTS, STAFF AND VISITORS

This Disability Action Plan is evolving and, in order to keep it relevant, the University welcomes input or feedback from students, staff and visitors about any matter regarding access and inclusion. Please contact:

#### Disability Services

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E ds.dap@sydney.edu.au

[sydney.edu.au/disability](http://sydney.edu.au/disability)

## DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2013–18

**Objective 1. The University incorporates the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities in all policies and planning.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>1.1 The Disability Action Plan is effectively implemented.</b>	Formal endorsement of the Disability Action Plan 2013–18 by the University.	Senate	May 2013
	Implementation of the Disability Action Plan and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW) and Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) as amended or replaced, and any other relevant laws. Compliance will be reported quarterly in the Senate Safety and Risk Management Committee report.	Director Human Resources	June 2013
	Effective strategic and operational management structures established including: a sub-committee of the Senior Executive Group, with provision for the appointment of an elected student and staff representative; the University Consultative Committee (reports to a Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee); local (faculty/business unit) disability/equity committees (report to faculty and divisional boards and a Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee).	Chair of Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee and Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee and chair of faculty/administrative unit, disability/equity committee (dean of faculty/director of business unit)	April–June 2013
	Review and improvement of transparent reporting and consultative procedures.	Senior Executive Group, Director, Human Resources and Director, Student Support Services	June 2013
	Clear and effective communication strategy developed to progress and promote the work of the Disability Action Plan.	Director, Marketing and Communications	April 2013 and monthly reviews
	The University's strategic and operational plans clearly articulate its commitment to access and inclusion for people with disabilities.	Senate and Senior Executive Group	June 2013
<b>1.2 Monitoring, evaluation and review of the Disability Action Plan is ongoing, effective, has clear implementation timelines and reporting and feedback mechanisms.</b>	Quarterly reports provided to the Senior Executive Group on implementation progress and outstanding issues for resolution.	Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee	May 2013 and monthly reports November 2013 and annually thereafter
	Annual survey of staff and students to monitor and evaluate the success of the Disability Action Plan, including measures of the culture of inclusivity within the University. The surveys are also the capture point for statistical information on staff and students with disabilities.	Senior Executive Group Sub-Committee	March 2014 and annually thereafter
	Development of strategic audit program to review, evaluate, plan and prioritise access to the physical, digital, service and cultural environments of the University.	Senate and Senior Executive Group	September 2013
<b>1.3 Disability Action Plan implementation process is transparent and accessible for students and staff.</b>	Establishment of a 'one stop shop' on each campus as a point of information, advice and referral for all students, including those with disabilities.	Director, Student Support Services, Director, Human Resources and Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit	July 2014

**Objective 2. The University of Sydney is a tertiary education provider of choice for all students.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>2.1 Encourage students with disabilities to choose the University of Sydney as a Tertiary Education and Research Provider.</b>	Action plans developed at all divisional/faculty/unit specific levels, which include all aspects of student, staff and visitor needs. In addition, the process of developing local action plans may also spur the University to develop other strategies, such as a mental health strategy, culturally and linguistically diverse strategy, etc.	Deans, directors and heads of schools.	December 2013
	Collaboration and partnerships established with faculties to develop a continuous quality improvement approach to inclusive and effective teaching, research and assessment practice.	Deans, heads of schools, associate deans learning and teaching, Academic Board and Manager, Disability Services	December 2013 and review bi-annually
	Continue to review and implement systems within faculties for students with disabilities, which increase opportunities for support and consultation.	Deans, heads of schools, associate deans learning and teaching, Academic Board and Manager, Disability Services	October 2013 and reviewed bi-annually
	Review and improve accessibility of the enrolment process for students with disabilities.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	July 2013 and review bi-annually
	Student outreach program established to encourage and attract students with disabilities to study at the University of Sydney.	Manager, Disability Services, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Director, Student Recruitment Unit, Senior Executive Group and Academic Board	November 2013 and annual review
	Research and address barriers to participation for higher degree research students with disabilities.	Senior Executive Group, directors and Academic Board	December 2013 and reviewed bi-annually
	Develop knowledge and data on students with disabilities (including future, undergraduate, postgraduate, higher degree course work/ research students) to enable better planning and delivery of services.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Management), Senior Executive Group, directors and Academic Board	July 2013 and reviewed bi-annually
	Development of support for students with disabilities transitioning from University to employment.	Manager, Disability Services and Manager, Careers Centre	July 2014 and annual review
<b>2.2 Provide an innovative, creative, flexible and open learning environment that maximises access, participation and success for all students.</b>	All teaching staff provided with disability awareness training to ensure they have disability confidence in the teaching and learning environment.	Director, Human Resources, Director Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) through Disability Services	10 percent by October 2013; 50 percent by October 2015; 95 percent by October 2017
	Teaching staff are aware of the resources available to support students with disabilities. Improve access to training of innovative, creative, flexible and open learning tools and other support mechanisms. Establish a point of contact for staff to gain advice and resources.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Director, Human Resources and deans	December 2013 and annual review
	Flexibility and inclusiveness of the individual needs of students with disabilities competently managed by staff.	Academic Board	July 2013 and bi-annual review
<b>2.3 Provide equitable support services that are available to all students who need assistance.</b>	Increase available resources and expand Disability Services at central and local levels to provide services to all students with disabilities.	Senior Executive Group	December 2013 and annual review
	Further the development and resourcing of the role of Student Disability Liaison Officers.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Director, Human Resources, Manager of Disability Services, deans and heads of schools, Learning and Teaching Committee	August 2013 and annual review

**Objective 3. The University is an employer of choice for people with disabilities.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>3.1 Develop a Disability Employment Strategy to encourage potential employees with disabilities to choose the University as an employer.</b>	Implement a recruitment strategy which incorporates people with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources and Director of Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit	April 2013 and quarterly review
	Recruitment and hiring processes reflect a commitment to employing people with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources and Director of Staff and Student Equal Opportunity	April 2013 and quarterly review
	Human Resources teams trained to give relevant disability-related information to applicants about University policies, facilities, or services.	Director, Human Resources	July 2013 and quarterly review
<b>3.2 Provide a supportive working environment that maximises awareness of disability issues among staff, along with access and participation.</b>	Development of a range of tools including training, fact sheets and guidelines and learning resources for staff around supporting staff with disabilities. It will include the implementation of compulsory disability awareness training for all staff.	Director, Human Resources, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	July 2013 and quarterly review
	Promotion of the roles of the Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Human Resources and the Employee Assistance Program to increase the knowledge of services available to staff. All staff provided with the appropriate resources to maintain a supportive working environment.	Director, Human Resources and Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, deans and directors	August 2013 and quarterly review
	Opportunities developed for staff to learn and appreciate the lived experience of disability and the associated complexities.	Director, Human Resources and Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit	December 2013 and annual review
<b>3.3 Provide equitable support services that are available to all staff who need support.</b>	Research and implementation of programs which successfully support staff with disabilities in the workplace. Sufficient information will be developed to effectively identify staff needs and develop and maintain a database.	Director, Human Resources and Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit	July 2013 and annual review
	Development of an Accessible Employee Network to support and encourage the career development of staff with disabilities in the workplace.	Director, Human Resources and Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit	August 2013

**Objective 4. The University's communication and digital environment is accessible to people with disabilities.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>4.1 The University will be a leading provider of accessible information and technology services.</b>	The University will undertake a digital access audit and develop a digital access plan and priority action list.	Chief Information Officer, Director, Marketing and Communications, Director, Library Services, eLearning and webmasters	December 2013
	All University websites, web content and web applications conform to current best practice and standards.*	Chief Information Officer, Director, Marketing and Communications, Director, Library Services, eLearning and webmasters	December 2014 and quarterly review
	Appropriate accessible information and technology training provided for all content providers and technical contributors to web services.	Chief Information Officer, Director, Marketing and Communications, Director, Library Services, eLearning and webmasters	December 2013 and quarterly review
	Web accessibility requirements embedded in web development and procurement processes. Web authoring software that provides compliant output will be selected.	Chief Information Officer, Director, Marketing and Communications, Director, Library Services, eLearning and webmasters	July 2013 and quarterly review
	Increase availability of assistive technology beyond current locations. Students with disabilities will have easy access to assistive technology in teaching, student lab spaces and at home.	Chief Information Officer, Director, Campus Infrastructure Services and deputy vice-chancellors	December 2013 and annual review
<b>4.2 Positive and enabling language is established and embedded within University policy, procedures and documents.</b>	Development and implementation of best practice guidelines for all electronic, printed and other materials and resources. Case studies developed to monitor progress. Promotional material for the University will include photos of people from diverse backgrounds, including people with disabilities. Develop best practice guidelines for taking photos of people with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources, Director, Marketing and Communications and Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee	December 2013
	Development and implementation of best practice guidelines for positive language and appropriate interfaces and inclusion of staff and students with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources, Director, Marketing and Communications and Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee	August 2013

**Objective 5. The University provides an accessible built environment to everyone.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>5.1 Adopt and progressively implement the Accessible Environment Plan.</b>	Provision of accessible paths of travel and equitable services and facilities.	Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee, Director, Campus Infrastructure and Services and faculty/unit managers	2012 to 2020
	Provision of accessible public transport to University campus areas.	Vice-Chancellor, Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee, Director, Campus Infrastructure and Services, Director, Human Resources, local and state government	2015
<b>5.2 Provide accessible paths of travel, parking, teaching and support areas.</b>	Implement construction of all Accessible Environments Plan Priority 1 identified works within 10 years.	Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee, Director, Campus Infrastructure and Services and faculty managers	2013 – 15 percent 2014 – 30 percent 2015 – 45 percent 2016 – 60 percent 2017 – 75 percent 2018 – 90 percent
	Tactile, Braille signage and numbers to all rooms installed.	Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee, Director, Campus Infrastructure and Services and faculty managers.	2013 – 15 percent 2014 – 30 percent 2015 – 45 percent 2016 – 60 percent 2017 – 75 percent 2018 – 90 percent
	All new construction works including refurbishments comply with current best practice standards*.	Disability Action Plan Consultative Committee, Director Campus Infrastructure Services and faculty managers.	100 percent compliance Monitor annually

**Objective 6. The University provides leadership to the community in developing an inclusive Australian society.**

STRATEGY	OUTCOME	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES	TARGET DATE
<b>6.1 The University becomes a leader in disability.</b>	The University actively contributes to government and community initiatives relevant to people with disabilities.	Senate, Senior Executive Group, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Director, Marketing and Communications, deans and heads of schools	April 2013 and annual review
	Increase profiling and promotion of the University's initiatives in research in disability and health. Increase opportunities for partnerships.	Senate, Senior Executive Group, Director, Marketing and Communications, deans and heads of schools	April 2013 and annual review
	Develop a procurement process which ensures the University engages organisations that actively and ambitiously support people with disabilities.	Chief Procurement Officer, directors, deans and heads of schools	December 2013
<b>6.2 Develop a program of events to recognise and celebrate disability.</b>	University events will include and empower people with disabilities to raise awareness and foster an inclusive campus. Accessible event checklist developed and made available online for all staff and students.	Senior Executive Group, Manager, Disability Services, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Director, Marketing and Communications	July 2013
<b>6.3 Develop an accessible faculty award.</b>	The Accessible Faculty Award is established and will provide an incentive for faculties within the University to develop best practice inclusive learning and teaching environments.	Manager, Disability Services, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit, Director, Institute for Teaching and Learning and Director, Marketing and Communications	December 2013 and annual review

**SUMMARY OF TOTAL COSTS**

OBJECTIVE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
Objective 1. The University incorporates the rights and opportunities of people with disabilities in all policies and planning.	\$884,000	\$900,000	\$927,000	\$954,000	\$983,000	\$1.012M
Objective 2. The University of Sydney is a tertiary education provider of choice for all students.	\$277,000	\$243,000	\$287,000	\$294,000	\$343,000	\$336,000
Objective 3. The University is an employer of choice for people with disabilities.	\$134,000	\$138,000	\$142,000	\$146,000	\$150,000	\$155,000
Objective 4. The University's communication and digital environment is accessible people with disabilities.	\$174,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000	\$54,000
Objective 5. The University provides an accessible built environment to everyone.	\$1.268M	\$4.129M	\$4.131M	\$4.133M	\$4.135M	\$4.137M
Objective 6. The University provides leadership to the community in developing an inclusive Australian society.	\$230,000	\$270,000	\$292,000	\$316,000	\$343,000	\$372,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2.966M</b>	<b>\$5.734M</b>	<b>\$5.833M</b>	<b>\$5.897M</b>	<b>\$6.008M</b>	<b>\$6.066M</b>

\*For a detailed explanation of current best practice please refer to the definition of 'best practice' and 'standards' in the key terms listed in the Appendix.



# APPENDIX

## 1. KEY TERMS

### Access

The word 'access' refers to people's ability to participate in the life of the University which includes its learning, teaching, physical, digital and communication environments.

### Objective

The word 'objective' describes the University's ultimate goals and benchmarks to improve access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

### Strategy

The word 'strategy' is used to describe the actions that the University will take in order to achieve the objectives which have been set.

### Outcome

The outcomes described in the Disability Action Plan are measures which the University will use to assess whether the strategies set are effective in achieving the University's objectives.

### Resource

The term 'resource' refers to a number of sources, which will be used to realise the objectives of the plan. The University will primarily use existing resources, and in other cases require additional resources in the form of money, services, materials and staff to deliver the set objective.

### Best practice

The term 'best practice' describes a technique or methodology that has been demonstrated through evidence-based research to produce results superior to those achieved by other means. Best practice is evolving, benchmarked and often qualitative. As best practice is evolving, the term refers to the best practice for the current year in which the particular action within this plan is carried out.

### Standards

The current standards for web accessibility specified by the World Wide Web Consortium are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). It is expected that all University websites, web content and web applications will conform with WCAG 2.0 to Level AA.

The current best practice standards for access to the built environment is the Disability (Access to Premises – buildings) Standards 2010, therefore the University's built environment should comply with those standards.

## 2. LEGISLATION:

### World, federal and state legislation:

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Fair Work Act 2010* (Cth)
- *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- *Disability Services Act 1993* (NSW)
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)

### Standards and guidelines:

- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Report on the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005
- The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002
- Disability (Access to Premises – buildings) Standards 2010
- World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines WC3
- Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability, 2006
- Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Guidelines on information access for students with print disabilities, 2004

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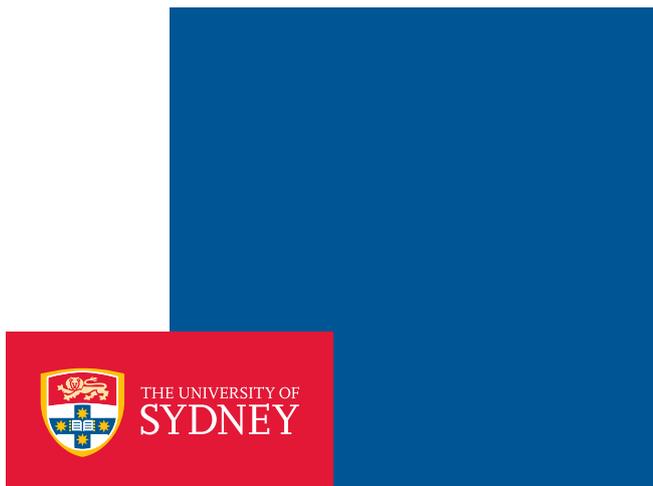
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