

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**  
**DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN 2010-2011**

**Foreword**

The Department of Education and Training is committed to finding new and improved ways of doing business and ensuring that our services provide the best opportunities for Queenslanders to participate in education and training.

The *Department of Education and Training Disability Service Plan 2010-2011* strengthens our commitment to people with disabilities by ensuring we provide opportunities for all people to access departmental services across the broad range of departmental activities. The *Plan* informs our staff and the general community about the steps we are taking to respond to the needs of people with disabilities and supports the inclusive policies and practices that have been developed over previous years, and that will continue to be developed well into the future.

Through this *Plan* and our actions, the Department of Education and Training recognises the valuable contribution all citizens make to the wellbeing and health of our communities and the ongoing work of Government in meeting the needs of Queenslanders.

Thank you to all who contributed to the development of the *Department of Education and Training Disability Service Plan 2010-2011*. I know that by working together we will be able to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities who come into contact with our Department.

Dr Richard Eden

**Acting Director-General**

## 1.1. Introduction

The Department of Education and Training recognises people with disabilities as defined by the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*. While all people with disabilities have access to the range of services or facilities provided by the Department, it is recognised that some individuals require additional services to support their access to, participation in and engagement with departmental programs and services. For example, in the state schooling sector all students with disabilities have access to the full array of student support services. Students with significant educational needs arising from their disabilities are assessed for educational adjustment requirements and supported accordingly. The training sector relies on students disclosing that they have a disability. Subsequent assessment for additional support needs or environmental adjustments are then undertaken.

The Department aims to effectively integrate the continuum of education and training services to ensure they are responsive to the economic and social needs of the State. The Department is committed to providing high quality services and programs to all Queensland children, students, young people and adults in an environment that is accessible to all.

The Department has developed this *Disability Service Plan 2010-2011* (the Plan) to demonstrate how it is working towards providing appropriate services and facilities for people with disabilities who come into contact with the Department. To ensure that appropriate services are provided to people with disabilities, the department is committed to ensuring that the principles and requirements of relevant legislation underpin activities conducted across the agency. These include the:

- *Disability Services Act 2006*
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (and amendments 2009)*
- *Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005*
- *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*
- *Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000*

The Plan has been designed to provide the foundation for a process of continuous improvement, responding to existing challenges and to changing circumstances and needs. It outlines the initiatives the Department proposes to implement to ensure, as much as possible, people with disabilities have access to the services and facilities that are available to the broader community. This Plan also includes information on how these initiatives will be monitored and measured.

This Plan applies to the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care (OECEC), the state schooling sector, TAFE institutes and other departmental employees and facilities.

The Queensland Studies Authority, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, and Southbank Institute of Technology and other statutory authorities are not captured by the *Disability Services Act 2006* and therefore are not included in the Plan.

The Plan comprises two parts:

Part A provides an overview of the Department and the ongoing commitment to providing services and programs for all people. Part A includes:

- a policy statement that incorporates a commitment to furthering the principles applicable to people with disabilities, their families and carers
- an overview of the Department's core business and functions
- a profile of people with disabilities
- the Disability Service Plan methodology
- a strategy to communicate the Plan to staff and people with disabilities
- ongoing monitoring, reporting, evaluation and updating, including meeting annual reporting requirements, review processes and the identification of performance measures and outputs for the Plan.

Part B provides a detailed Action Plan outlining the strategies, timeframes and performance measures to provide ongoing or increased access to departmental programs and services by people with disabilities. Part B outlines:

- priority initiatives designed to overcome the barriers identified and achieve the stated outcomes for people with disabilities
- a map of the areas responsible for the proposed strategies and timelines for completion of the strategies.

## **1.2. Policy statement**

The Department reflects inclusiveness through its values, ethos and culture. This is done by building school and training communities and workplaces that value, celebrate and respond positively to diversity among students, families, staff and community members. The Department recognises and actively addresses injustice and disadvantage, and responds to the uniqueness of individuals.

Specifically, the Department promotes inclusion of people with disabilities by:

- maximising the educational, vocational and social outcomes of all students through identifying and reducing barriers to learning, especially for those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion

- providing an environment in which students, teachers and staff understand and value diversity
- delivering funding programs and capital works programs that are sensitive to the needs of, and inclusive of, people with disabilities
- responding to the needs of people with disabilities to provide greater access to education and training programs.

### 1.3. Overview of the core business and functions of the Department

The Department, including the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, is committed to preparing every child and young person with the fundamentals for life success and developing Queenslanders' skills to help drive economic prosperity and contribute to Queensland society.

The Department contributes to the Queensland Government's social and fiscal objectives under *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* by:

- working towards all children having access to a quality early childhood education, so that they are ready for school
- delivering public education through the state school system
- accrediting and financially assisting Independent and Catholic schools
- providing regulatory services and state assistance to Queensland universities
- delivering vocational education and training through TAFE institutes.

### 1.4. Data profile

People with disabilities living in Queensland constitute 22.1 per cent of Queensland's total population and this percentage is mirrored in each region's population<sup>1</sup>.

#### 1.4.1. Service users profile

The Department conforms to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The legislation defines disability, in relation to a person, as:

- a) the total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b) the total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Communities (Disability and Community Care Services), 2010  
 Department of Education and Training Disability Service Plan 2010-2011 (Part A)  
 TRIM Number: 10/154235

- g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception or reality, emotions or judgement or that result in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- h) presently exists; or
- i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- k) is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

Education Queensland provides a range of support options to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, have opportunities to access, participate, and gain positive outcomes from state schooling. All students with disabilities are able to be supported through the full array of student support services allocated to schools. In addition, a centralised verification process identifies students with disabilities who have significant educational needs and who are eligible to access targeted resources. Vocational education and training students are provided the opportunity to identify their disability, and seek additional support services to aide their learning process.

#### **1.4.2. Staff profile**

The Department is committed to creating an inclusive work environment, free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and where people are valued for their diverse culture, experiences, knowledge and abilities.

### **1.5. Disability Service Plan methodology**

The *Disability Services Act* (2006) was passed by the Queensland Parliament on 29 March 2006, taking effect on 1 July 2006. The Act provides a strong foundation for promoting the rights of people with disabilities, increasing their wellbeing and encouraging their participation in the life of the community. It includes measures to safeguard the rights and safety of people with disabilities and combines with existing systems to improve the quality of services they receive.

The legislation encourages all Queenslanders to promote inclusive principles within their own communities. People with disabilities have the right to equal access to services available to other members of the Queensland community. The service delivery principles encourage service providers to consider the needs of people with disabilities when they design and deliver services. The Act requires every Queensland Government department to develop a Disability Service Plan to identify issues regarding service delivery to people with disabilities and the ways these issues will be addressed. New plans must be developed and implemented every three years. The first three year cycle ended on 30 June 2010.

This Plan is effective from 1 July 2010 and was developed through consultation with key areas of the department responsible for implementing strategies and reporting as required. The Department, through the *Disability Service Plan Liaison Officer Network*, has worked with other government departments to ensure that the Plan is part of a coordinated whole-of-Government approach to the service delivery of people with disabilities.

The implementation of this Plan will dovetail with the consultation process and future implementation of the 10 Year Plan for Supporting Queenslanders with a Disability.

The Department currently provides a range of support services and/or referral to relevant services to provide greater opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in departmental programs. These are highlighted through the following areas in the Plan:

- client services
- performance measurement and reporting
- physical access and facilities
- communication and access to information
- workforce and strategic human resources.

People with disabilities often experience barriers and issues when accessing government or community services, programs and facilities. The Department is aware these barriers may inhibit participation and reduce the outcomes for people's involvement in education and training. The department has identified a range of current and proposed strategies to enhance service provision, which are outlined in this Plan.

#### **1.6. Communication strategies**

The Plan will be communicated to stakeholders online enabling staff and the general public access to the document.

The Plan will be made available in various accessible formats upon request. Initial requests are to be directed to the Department's Corporate Communication and Marketing Branch. Feedback on the Plan by all stakeholders including people with disabilities is welcome.

#### **1.7. Process for reviewing, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan**

Department of Communities (Disability and Community Care Services) is the lead agency responsible for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Disability Service Plans across the State Government. The Department of Education and Training will be required to provide annual performance measurement information to assist Department of Communities (Disability and Community Care Services) to report on this requirement of the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

The mandated requirement for the evaluation of the Plan is three-yearly, with annual reviews being undertaken to update as required. Performance indicators and measures are included in the Plan and are attached to each implementation strategy in Part B. The Department of Education and Training will be responsible for reviewing and evaluating its Plan, and reporting on the outcomes associated with the Plan. Areas of the Department with implementation responsibility will be required to complete an annual template to report on progress of meeting their requirements. Comment on the implementation of the *Disability Service Plan 2010-2011* will be sought from stakeholders.

### **1.8. Measurement of progress**

The effective and efficient delivery of services to the community is supported through the Department's planning, reporting and accountability framework. This framework facilitates implementation of management standards with appropriate accountability and quality controls.

The Department is required to report in a variety of formats on the services and programs provided, which includes services and programs for people with disabilities. Each year, the Department's Annual Report contains information on key departmental priorities and how we have met these priorities. In order to provide accurate and timely reports, the department has implemented performance measurements, which are included in Part B of this Plan. Setting standards and measuring performance enables improved planning and delivery of services to meet the changing needs of people with disabilities. Ongoing business improvement strategies are outlined in Part B of the Plan.

### **1.9. Review/update of the Plan**

The Plan is effective from 1 July 2010. The Department of Communities (Disability and Community Care Services) is leading the development of the *10 Year Plan for Supporting Queenslanders with a Disability*. It is proposed that the priorities of the 10 Year Plan be delivered through Disability Service Plans. The current Plan will be reviewed and updated to inform the next DET Disability Service Plan which will reflect the priorities of the *10 Year Plan for Supporting Queenslanders with a Disability*. The process for the development of the Department of Education and Training Disability Service Plan 2011–2013 will commence prior to 2011.

# Disability Service Plan 2010-2011

## PART B - Action Plan

The *Disability Services Act 2006* requires every Queensland Government department to develop a Disability Service Plan to identify issues regarding service delivery to people with disabilities and ways these issues will be addressed.

The *Department of Education and Training's Disability Service Plan* consists of two parts, Part A which provides an overview of the Department and the ongoing commitment to providing services, programs and events for all people. Part B consists of an action plan which outlines the Department's commitment to meeting the needs of people with disabilities who come into contact with the Department.

Part B provides details of strategies, timeframes and performance measures to be implemented over the life of this *Plan*, including:

1. Client Services
2. Performance Measurement and Reporting
3. Physical Access and Facilities
4. Communication and Access to Information
5. Workforce and Strategic Human Resources

Part B has been developed in consultation with the key areas of the Department that are responsible for delivering on the key focus areas above. The Action Plan reflects the changing needs of people with disabilities to ensure that the Department is in step with current trends and practices in relation to the delivery of programs and services for all Queenslanders.

## DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN - PART B ACTION PLAN

### Priority Action Area 1: Client Services

**Performance output:** Services are delivered in ways that meet the needs of people with disabilities

Action	Service Area	Performance Measure
1. Finalise Mental Health Prevention Strategies in Schools in accord with the <i>National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006 – 2011</i> .	Student Services	Development of policy <i>SMS-PR-035 Supporting Students' Mental Health and Wellbeing</i> . Prepare <i>Suicide Prevention Guidelines</i> . Provide professional development across the state.
2. Introduce Auslan as the language of instruction for Deaf and hearing impaired students who require sign support in Queensland state schools.	Student Services	By 2012 the Department will have phased out Australian Signed English and adopted Auslan as the language of instruction for deaf/hearing impaired students who require access to schooling via signed communication.
3. Implement recommendations relating to improving post school transitions for students with disabilities in response to the findings of the <i>Quality Outcomes for All</i> research project	Student Services	On line course developed for pilot in Semester 2 2010.
4. Implement strategies to promote an inclusive approach to the development of learning materials and flexible and blended training delivery practices.	Training	Review and monitoring of learning materials conducted to improve inclusion and accessibility.
5. Develop <i>Training Customer Contact Centre Policy Guidelines</i> and work procedures to effectively meet the needs of people with a disability.	Training	Guidelines developed by the end of 2010.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
6. Develop strategies to increase the inclusion and participation of children with disabilities in the kindergarten program in accordance with the <i>Bilateral Agreement for Achieving Universal Access</i> .	Office for Early Childhood Education and Care	Specified officer appointed and a project plan 2010–2011 developed and implemented in consultation with stakeholders.

## DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN - PART B ACTION PLAN

### Priority Action Area 2: Performance, Measurement and Reporting

**Performance output:** The delivery of departmental services is supported through the Department’s planning, reporting and accountability framework

Action	Service Area	Performance Measure
1. Conduct a review of the policy and guidelines for the targeted program for students with a disability in non-state schools.	Office of Non State Education	<i>2010 Review</i> undertaken for approval by the Minister.
2. Analyse the effectiveness of student satisfaction surveys in capturing the views of a diverse range of clients, including those learners with a disability.	Training	Analysis undertaken and recommendations made for future surveys.
3. Review performance monitoring and reporting processes currently in place to identify future areas for action.	Student Services	Identify all performance monitoring and review processes in place for students with a disability and service provision.
4. Report against key performance measures in the <i>DET Annual Report</i>	Corporate Strategy and Performance (with service delivery areas)	The <i>DET Annual Report</i> provides information about progress against key performance measures.

## DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN - PART B ACTION PLAN

### Priority Action Area 3: Physical Access and Facilities

**Performance output:** The Department strives to provide improved access to all departmental facilities for people with disabilities

Action	Service Area	Performance Measure
1. Update guidelines for the <i>Disability Services Support Unit Loans Service</i> for access to specialised resources and equipment.	Student Services	Guidelines updated and made available to relevant stakeholders by end 2010.

## DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN - PART B ACTION PLAN

### Priority Action Area 4: Communication and Access to Information

**Performance Output:** People with disabilities have access to departmental information and are supported in their communication needs when accessing services, programs and events

Action	Service Area	Performance Measure
1. Update available online parent and carer information on state educational services for students with a disability.	Student Services	<i>Education for children with a disability – a guide for parents</i> to be updated by end 2010.
2. Establish minimum standards for the development of training materials to ensure appropriate accessibility for students.	Training	<i>Style Guide</i> principles implemented to ensure departmental materials responds to needs of people with disabilities.
3. Highlight service providers' responsibilities under the relevant disability legislation e.g. <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Disability Standards for Education 2005</i> .	Office for Early Childhood Education and Care	Make available information on relevant disability legislation to services.
4. Produce kindergarten parent information resources where appropriate in other languages and alternate formats.	Office for Early Childhood Education and Care	Kindergarten parent information resources are available in other languages and alternate formats as appropriate.

## DISABILITY SERVICE PLAN - PART B ACTION PLAN

### Priority Action Area 5: Workforce and Strategic Human Resources

**Performance output: Departmental work environments are free from all forms of unlawful discrimination**

Action	Service Area	Performance Measure
1. Implement a strategy over five years designed to encourage the involvement of specialist staff providing services to students with disabilities, in existing capability development programs to enhance their skills and qualifications.	Human Resources	<i>Professional Development Action Plan</i> implemented.
2. Develop, in consultation with Queensland universities, a workforce planning strategy to build the capabilities of the current and future workforce to work with students with disabilities.	Human Resources	Workforce planning strategy developed and implemented.
3. Implement an online professional development course (university (QTU JCU) accredited) targeting existing teaching staff to enhance their skills in inclusive education practice.	Student Services	Online professional development course available to students in 2010. (University accreditation contributes credit towards a degree course – QUT JCU)
4. Develop and implement a five year strategy to enhance the capacity of departmental staff to provide Auslan support to Deaf and hearing impaired students who require sign support.	Student Services	By 2012 all teachers of the deaf and teacher aides – educational interpreters will be skilled in the use of Auslan and will possess a level of proficiency in the language suitable for classroom instruction.
5. Explore developing a list of standard considerations specific to the reasonable adjustments required to support employees with permanent impairments, particularly teachers transferred through the annual <i>Teacher Transfer</i> process.	Human Resources	Agreed considerations developed in conjunction with regional Human Resources teams and implemented consistently state wide.