



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health**

# ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

2016-2019



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to elders past, present and future.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Department would like to thank the following groups for their assistance in developing this Plan:

- ▶ Health's Disability and Carers Network (DCN) and Committee
- ▶ Accessibility Action Plan Working Group
- ▶ Disability and Carer Champions
- ▶ Australian Network on Disability (AND)

The Department is a Gold member of and an active supporter of AND and has been working with them on accessibility projects since 2007.

# INTRODUCTION

We aim to be an inclusive organisation that values fairness, equity and diversity consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

As outlined in the *People Strategy 2016-20*, we acknowledge and respect the importance of the diversity of our workforce, its representation of the community we serve, and the strength it brings to the outcomes we deliver.

The *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19* sets out how we will work together to build and strengthen our departmental culture, and is another step towards our goal to make Health an employer of choice for people with disability and those who care for people with disability.

Disability awareness and confidence needs to be increased throughout the department if we are to ensure that we are an attractive workplace for people with disability and that bias against people with disability, conscious or not, is addressed at all levels.

The *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19* objectives have been developed to align with the four key action areas in the *As One: Making it Happen, APS Disability Employment Strategy 2016-19*. These key action areas are:

- ▶ Increase the **representation** of employees with disability in senior role
- ▶ Invest in developing the **capability** of employees with disability
- ▶ Expand the range of employment **opportunities** for people with disability
- ▶ Foster **inclusive** cultures in the workplace

We will regularly measure and monitor the delivery of our actions under these objectives, evaluate trends and identify areas for improvement.

As we build on the initiatives and momentum of our first year of implementing this plan, we will continue our efforts and look forward to seeing the outcomes and benefits to our organisation and the community we serve.

The *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19* is endorsed by our Health Executive team who is committed to supporting its implementation

## WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN INCLUSION

We volunteered to be champions for our Disability and Carers workforce for a range of reasons. This includes our own experience with disability and caring responsibilities – either personally, or with family members, an interest in advocating for others and belief that we can do better for those with disability and/or carers responsibilities.

In our roles as Disability and Carers Champions, we invite you to make this plan your own. We encourage you to respond to our call to action to be involved. Being involved with this plan is an exciting opportunity to grow and develop your disability confidence and awareness.

We all have an important role to play making sure that the Department of Health is a great place to work for everyone.

Diversity is our strength,

Adj Prof John Skerritt, Fiona Buffinton and Daniel McCabe  
Disability and Carers Champions

*“We acknowledge and respect the importance of the diversity of our workforce, its representation of the community we serve, and the strength it brings to the outcomes we deliver.” – People Strategy 2016-20*

### Be involved



- ▶ Mentor people with disability and carers of people with disability
- ▶ Participate in Changing Mindsets 5+5 Sessions



- ▶ Complete APS As One Disability Awareness and APS As One Building Disability Confidence eLearn
- ▶ Promote and utilise workplace adjustment passports
- ▶ Participate in activities such as National Carers Week, International Day of People with Disability and Mental Health Week



- ▶ Use RecruitAbility scheme when recruiting



- ▶ Join the Disability & Carers Network
- ▶ Have your say in the APS State of Service Survey
- ▶ Record your disability status and carer/responsibility the Equity and Diversity data in SAP ESS

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Our *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19* has entered into its second year of implementation. Through whole of department effort, we have performed well in 2016-17, successfully delivering many initiatives and advancing on others. This means that the department is now well positioned for moving forward with laying strong foundations for long-term change.

### Highlights



#### Leadership

The department has conducted its first “5+5” sessions to raise awareness of disability and carers issues. Small groups of five staff members with disability and/or carer responsibilities met with a group of five SES staff to talk about their experiences working for the department. In almost all cases, the things we need to do to make things better are simple, inexpensive, within our grasp and align with our *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19*.



#### Capability

APS As One Disability Awareness and APS As One Building Disability Confidence eLearning modules were launched to all staff. These modules are designed to equip all employees, especially managers to be more disability aware and confident. Accidental Counsellor training was made available to DCN committee members and Champions, providing strategies and knowledge to help others, while maintaining self-care.



#### Opportunities

As at 30 June 2017, 4.7% of Health staff identified as a person with disability, this is 1.1% higher than the APS average of 3.6%. The department remains an active participant in the APSC RecruitAbility Scheme.



#### Inclusivity

DCN developed their 2017-18 work plan aligning their actions to our *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-17*. The network has made progress against this plan including launching a new online community for staff, joining the IT user group committee and hosting awareness events for dates of significance.

In addition, we participated in Australian Network on Disability (AND) Access Inclusion Index. This will allow us to comprehensively self-assess our organisation’s maturity in supporting staff with a disability as we progress towards greater disability confidence.

## Looking ahead

While we acknowledge progress has been made, we still have further to go. In 2018, we will focus on becoming even more efficient by implementing an internal *Accessibility Action Plan 2016-19* reporting tool. The reporting tool will provide current, transparent overall performance reports to inform effective decision making.

Our continued commitment to action is outlined under the following four objectives.

### LEADERSHIP



#### **Increase the representation of employees with disability in senior and network roles.**

At the heart of change is leadership at all levels. Our leaders are stewards of our values – they communicate priorities and encourage and reward us to perform at our best. People with disability should be well represented at all levels including senior management within the department. We will:

- ▶ offer targeted development initiatives for high-performing middle managers with disability
- ▶ provide senior mentors across the APS for high potential employees with disability.

**Action 1** Implement experiential activities for managers which involve a positive interaction with people with disability.

**Action 2** Promote mentoring opportunities between SES employees and employees with disability.

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## CAPABILITY



### **Invest in developing the capability of employees with disability.**

Employees with disability should be equipped to progress their careers at the same rate as others in the workplace by having equal opportunity to demonstrate their suitability for promotion. We will:

- ▶ implement workplace adjustment quickly, including job design and flexible working arrangements, to maximise productivity
- ▶ offer training to improve disability awareness, and integrate disability awareness principles into existing management development and orientation programmes
- ▶ provide support for managers and colleagues of people with disability.

**Action 3** Health has effective procurement processes and promotes new accessible technology to ensure appropriate workplace adjustments are available to employees with disability and those who acquire disability while at work.

**Action 4** Embed the workplace adjustment passports in Health to ensure that any adjustments documented so that if the line manager or job role changes in the future, the information is readily available.

**Action 5** Enable people with disability and carers of people with disability to ensure they are well supported throughout workplace adjustments/s, including on-boarding recruitment and selection processes, job design, work design, workplace restructure and flexible working arrangements.

**Action 6** Increase the capability of managers and all HR practitioners to effectively support employees and enable them to identify and act appropriately.

**Action 7** Training to assist with employee wellbeing and mental health in the workplace is available for all employees and promoted by senior employees.

**Action 8** Improve career development opportunities for employees with disability and carers of those with disability including access to accessible training courses, action opportunities and promotions.

## OPPORTUNITIES



### **Expand the range of employment opportunities for people with disability.**

To improve representation, Health will review and expand the opportunities we offer to people with disability. Health will adopt a mix of contemporary recruitment approaches to increase the representation of people with disability in our workforce. We will:

- ▶ expand pathways into APS employment, including through the use of internships
- ▶ partner with disability employment service providers, universities and disability peak bodies to promote awareness of the range of jobs among job seekers with disability.

**Action 9** Health's internet and intranet sites promote to potential and existing employees with disability and carers of people with disability, tangible employment opportunities, backed by appropriate policies and practices.

**Action 10** Prospective employees have positive experiences with recruitment process in Health, through mainstream processes and/or targeted initiatives.

**Action 11** Health's recruitment processes are accessible and aligned with best practice.

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## INCLUSIVITY



### Foster inclusive cultures in the workplace

Health will foster a workplace that facilitates genuine inclusion of people with disability. Everyone has a role to play.

- ▶ highlight the value of Disability and Carers Champions as visible advocates for employees with disability – and champions of change within agencies.

**Action 12** Increase representation of employees with disability in the Rewards and Recognition policy.

**Action 13** To understand the demographics of our employees and enable Health to create a more inclusive and flexible working environment, actively encourage employees to update their equity and diversity data in Health's HR systems (SAP) including their disability status and care/responsibilities.

**Action 14** Promote a strong and effective Disability and Carers Network.

**Action 15** Increase retention of employees with disability and carers of people with disability.

**Action 16** Better understand our workforce to enable us to improve Health's workplace policy and procedures.

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### Definition of disability

*"a person has a disability if they report that they have a limitation, restriction or impairment which has lasted, or is likely to last for at least six months and restricts everyday activities".*

- [ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Finding, 2015.](#)

