



ZOOLOGICAL PARKS AUTHORITY

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)  
2012–2017

This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as large print, electronic format (disk or emailed), audio or Braille.

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# 1 BACKGROUND

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## 1.1 The Zoological Parks Authority (Perth Zoo)

Perth Zoo operates under the Zoological Parks Authority Act (2001) to provide a range of services relating to the husbandry and display of a collection of plants and animals for conservation, research, scientific, education, cultural and recreational purposes.

Perth Zoo's vision is *a world where diversity of species and habitats is secure*. Its purpose is to *secure long-term populations of species in natural environments while engaging the community in global conservation action*.

Perth Zoo's key stakeholders include visitors (635,000+ annually), government, volunteers, collaborating institutions, regional authorities, corporate and industry partners, the conservation and animal welfare sectors and the general community.

## 1.2 Functions, Facilities and Services

*Conducting and collaborating in breeding programs and research programs for the preservation of threatened animal species.* Through its operations, strategic partnerships and collaborations, Perth Zoo maintains world-class reproductive biology and research units, multiple breeding programs for native and exotic species under threat, and contributes directly to conservation programs in the wild through financial support and provision of expertise.

*Conducting public education programs.* Perth Zoo offers formal and informal conservation education programs to over 635,000 visitors per year both on-site and in the community. Through a range of events, activities and animal opportunities, the community is encouraged to interact with and learn about our natural world.

*Providing and promoting recreational services and facilities.* Perth Zoo has been an important cultural icon for over a century. It provides recreation and leisure services to the local, interstate and international community. It is a key Western Australian tourism asset.

*Conserving and enhancing the gardens, amenities and natural environment of Perth Zoo.* Perth Zoo is an important botanical estate and its natural heritage value is significant. Perth Zoo presents Western Australia's best collection of native and exotic palm trees as well as examples of living habitats from a range of ecosystems across the world.

Key services and facilities provided by Perth Zoo to the community include:

- animal exhibits
- conservation information - signage, publications and volunteers (Docents)
- lawns and gardens
- visitor amenities – toilets/parents facilities, first-aid room, telephones, drinking fountains, BBQ, picnic facilities
- concert events
- café/food outlets and vending facilities
- venue hire: Function centre and lecture theatre & seminar rooms
- children's Playground (accessible)
- shop and retail services
- educational facilities (formal and informal)
- zebra car (tours).

### 1.3 Planning for better access

An estimated total of 405,500 Western Australians have disabilities (20.6 per cent of the population).

An estimated 246,800 Western Australians are carers for people with disabilities (12.6 per cent of the population). (Disability WA Fact Sheet, <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/aboutdisability/disabilityprofile.html>)

The Disability Services Act 1993 requires that public authorities develop and implement a *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)* that outlines the ways in which the authority will ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to its facilities and services.

Other legislation underpinning access and inclusion includes the WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

### 1.4 Progress since 1995

Perth Zoo is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to those with and without disability. It recognises that its facilities and operations are unique and presents a wider range of accessibility issues than some other Government agencies.

Perth Zoo established a Disability Services group in 1995 and created its first Disability Services Plan (DSP, now changed to Disability Access and Inclusion Plan – DAIP) in 1996. This plan addressed barriers for people with disabilities wanting to access the Zoo's services and facilities. The DAIP addressed the Zoo's statutory requirements under the WA Disability Services Act (1993) and its obligations under the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992). Perth Zoo's DAIP has been reviewed twice since 1996 and a third time to create this DAIP.

Since the adoption of the initial DSP, Perth Zoo has implemented many initiatives and made significant progress towards better access. Some of these are highlighted in *Appendix 1* under the relevant key outcome headings.

## 2 ACCESS & INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

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The Perth Zoo is committed to:

- Ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and carers are able to access the range of Perth Zoo's services and facilities
- Consulting with people with disabilities, their families and carers and (where required) disability organisations to help ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are identified and appropriately addressed
- Ensuring that its staff, agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the DAIP
- Working in partnership with community groups and other public authorities to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities through improved access to its information, services and facilities.

Perth Zoo interprets an accessible and inclusive organisation as one in which all its functions, facilities and services (both in-house and contracted) are open, available and accessible to people with disabilities – providing them with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities enjoyed by all other people in the community.

Furthermore, Perth Zoo is committed to achieving the six desired outcomes of its DAIP. These are:

- 1) People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
- 2) People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
- 3) People with disabilities receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
- 4) People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
- 5) People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
- 6) People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.

**Special note:** Perth Zoo is a Class A reserve and, until recently, was a listed quarantine station subject to the requirements of the Quarantine Act (1908). This legislation overruled the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and affected Perth Zoo's capacity to permit entry of seeing-eye/assistance dogs to the site.

Due to the recent reclassification of Perth Zoo, the procedures and guidelines surrounding assistance/seeing-eye dogs are under review and will be addressed during the 2012-2017 DAIP period. In the meantime, zoo visitors who require assistance dogs should contact the zoo to discuss specific arrangements.

### **3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN**

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#### **3.1 Responsibility for the planning process**

A Disability Services Group, established by Perth Zoo in 1995, is responsible for the development, review and evaluation of the DAIP. This committee currently comprises representatives from the Zoo's Visitor Services, Facilities, Discovery and Learning, Graphics, Interpretation and Human Resources departments as well as two Zoo volunteers with significant professional experience within the Disability services sector.

#### **3.2 Community consultation process**

The Perth Zoo's existing Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is due to expire in 2011. Ahead of that – in 2010/11 – Perth Zoo undertook to review its DAIP, consult with key stakeholders and draft a new DAIP to guide continuing improvements to access and inclusion.

The process included:

- 1) examination of the out-going DAIP and subsequent review reports to see what has been achieved and what still needs work
- 2) examination of other relevant documents and strategies
- 3) investigation of contemporary trends and good practice in access and inclusion
- 4) consultation with key staff and stakeholders
- 5) consultation with the community
- 6) a notice on the website and in The West Australian newspaper.

Perth Zoo invited members of the community with disabilities, their family and carers as well as individuals from the professional disability sector. Participants in this group were gathered through invitation sent to individuals or organisations to be promoted to their members. This group was invited to experience the Zoo's facilities/services (FOC) and then provide their feedback via one or more of the following methods:

- 1) providing verbal feedback on a range of services/facilities based on their own visit/experience
- 2) providing written feedback on a range of services/facilities based on their own visit/experience
- 3) visiting as part of a small group to assess (together) a range of Zoo facilities/services in practice.

The feedback was analysed according to the six DAIP outcomes and avenues of redress examined. These strategies and outcomes will appear in associated Implementation Plans.

### 3.3 Findings of the consultation

The review and consultation found that many of the objectives in the first two DAIPs had been achieved and those items that were still unaddressed or not complete would be carried forward into the current DAIP. The 2012–17 DAIP has been designed to promote greater inclusion for people with disabilities and their families and to ensure Perth Zoo is responsive to issues of access and inclusion.

It has been identified that the unique operations, site and business of Perth Zoo presents some real access challenges that may not be faced by more traditional service providers. Perth Zoo will seek to implement solutions to more commonplace access issues whilst also finding creative and lateral solutions to some of the access issues unique to its operations.

The Disability Services Committee is facilitating a shift in focus towards inclusive experiences and services for People with a Disability, which has wide ranging benefits across all members of the community.

### 3.4 Access barriers

While the review and consultation noted a great deal of achievement in improving access since 1995 (see *Appendix 1*), it also identified a range of barriers that require redress. These access barriers include:

- 1) staff training could be improved in order to ensure all staff (not just frontline) are adequately skilled in provision of service to people with disabilities
- 2) issues of access/inclusion have been 'wheelchair-centric' in the past, key decision making staff to have a broader understanding of what access/inclusion means in disabilities other than those that are mobility-related
- 3) some physical infrastructure may not be meeting the needs of people with disabilities;
- 4) only some of the Perth Zoo's materials are readily available in alternative formats and there is no promotion of the availability of those materials that are available
- 5) people with disabilities may not be aware of consultation opportunities with the Authority.

The identification of these barriers informed the development of strategies in the DAIP.

### 3.5 Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

It is a requirement of the Disability Services Act that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the DAIP is implemented by its officers, employees, agents and contractors.

Implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all areas of the Zoo. Some tasks in the Implementation Plan will apply to all areas of the Zoo while others will apply to a specific area. The Implementation Plan sets out who is responsible for each action. The Zoo's Disability Services Committee will guide the overall implementation of the plan.

One of the key outcomes of this DAIP will be incorporating the annual Implementation Plans into the overall Operational Plan cycle, to ensure whole of Zoo involvement.

### 3.6 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disabilities

In October 2011 Perth Zoo sent copies of the draft DAIP to all those who contributed to the planning process including staff, people with disabilities, their families, carers, disability organisations and relevant community groups for feedback.

Perth Zoo has advised, via its website and network channels that copies of the plan are available to the community upon request and in alternative formats if required [Alternative formats include hard copy in large print, electronic format, audio format on cassette, CD or MP3, by email and on the Zoo's website.]

The plan was promoted to staff via email and published on the Zoo's intranet. It will be promoted to volunteers through the March *Docent News*.

The completed plan will be published on the Perth Zoo website, and a notice will be published in The West Australian newspaper.

As plans are amended both staff and the community will be advised of the availability of updated plans, using the same methods.

### 3.7 Review and evaluation mechanisms

Perth Zoo will review its DAIP at least every five years in accordance with the Disability Services Act. The implementation plan of the DAIP may be amended more regularly to reflect progress and emerging issues. Whenever the DAIP (or implementation plan) is amended, a copy will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Monitoring and reviewing

- 1) The Zoo's Disability Services Committee will meet bimonthly to discuss issues of access and inclusion and to review progress on the implementation of the strategies identified in the DAIP.
- 2) The review of the Zoo's DAIP will be included in the Annual Report each year and a progress report submitted to the Disability Services Commission. The report will outline what has been achieved under the Zoo's DAIP each year.
- 3) The committee will prepare a report on the implementation of the DAIP annually. Additionally, a status report will be provided to (and formally endorsed by) the Executive.

### 3.8 Evaluation

Perth Zoo's Disability Services Committee will evaluate the progress of the Implementation Plans bimonthly.

Representatives from Human Resources and Visitor Services will communicate regularly with respective Directors on the progress of the Implementation plans.

Corporate Executive will endorse the Implementation Plans annually, as part of the budgeting process.

Perth Zoo will continue to seek feedback from the community through periodical consultation on the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented according to the DAIP.

Annual outputs will be published on Perth Zoo's website and feedback will be sought.

In seeking feedback and through ongoing consultation, the committee will also seek to identify additional barriers that were not identified in the initial consultation.

The Disability Services Committee will incorporate any new barriers identified in the feedback process into its Implementation Plan for the coming year.

Copies of the Implementation Plan will be available to the community in alternative formats.

### 3.9 Reporting on the DAIP

Perth Zoo will report on the implementation of its DAIP through its Annual Report and will submit a progress report to the Disability Services Commission by 31 July each year, outlining:

- progress towards the desired outcomes of its DAIP
- progress of its agents and contractors towards meeting the six desired outcomes
- strategies used to inform its agents and contractors of its DAIP.

## 4 STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INCLUSION

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As a result of the review of Perth Zoo's DAIP and the consultation process, the following overarching strategies will guide tasks that Perth Zoo will undertake from 2012–2017 to improve access to its services, buildings and information. These will be reflected in more detail in the Implementation Plan. The six desired outcomes (below) provide a framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

### 4.1 Outcome 1: Access to Services

*People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.*

4.1	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.1.1	Review entry policy and processes to improve options that accommodate the special needs of people with disabilities.	June 2013	DCCD – Commercial Operations
4.1.2	Review transportation challenges to and around the Zoo for people with disabilities.	June 2012	DCE – Visitor Services
4.1.3	Continue to develop a range of affordable options that assist people with disabilities and their families access the services of Perth Zoo.	June 2014	DCCD Commercial Operations
4.1.4	Engage with people with disabilities & their carers to capture access and experiential issues with Zoo products and services and develop alternative programs that facilitate inclusivity.	June 2013	DCE – Discovery & Learning
4.1.5	Continue to develop and investigate partnership opportunities for collaborative projects and funding sources.	June 2012	Corporate Executive
4.1.6	Ensure that delivery of services by Zoo staff, agents & contractors of the Zoo take into account the full range of disability types (including cognitive, intellectual, sensory and psychological) in addition to mobility and DAIP requirements.	June 2013	Corporate Executive

## 4.2 Outcome 2: Access to Buildings and Facilities

*People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.*

4.2	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.2.1	Ensure that design and specifications for new and upgraded exhibits, facilities and premises meet physical access requirements and improve the experience for people with disabilities, where practicable.	Ongoing	Corporate Executive
4.2.2	Ensure that capital works and procurement practices are aligned with DAIP principles, wherever practicable, including contractors.	June 2017	Corporate Executive
4.2.3	Investigate opportunities to design “purpose built” facilities to meet the needs of people with disabilities eg respite areas, special needs playground, toileting facilities	June 2012	DCE – Visitor Services & FES
4.2.4	Ensure that the Zoo continues to actively support federal and state initiatives to improve access (eg: ACROD program, Companion Card).	June 2017	DCCD – Commercial Operations
4.2.5	Review Zoo policy regarding assistance/seeing-eye dogs in light of the recent revocation of quarantine status.	June 2012	DCE – Visitor Services

## 4.3 Outcome 3: Access to Information

*People with disabilities receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.*

4.3	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.3.1	Continue to improve the variety of formats in which information is kept and/or published as a standard practice and better promote these to the community.	Ongoing	Corporate Executive
4.3.2	Develop communication strategies to improve the community’s understanding of ways to experience the Zoo.	June 2013	DCCD & DCE
4.3.3	Maintain the accessibility standards of the website.	June 2012	DCCD & DCE
4.3.4	Progressively apply and promote a range of interpretive devices and strategies to engage people with disabilities. Eg sensory gardens, tactile signage, downloadable technology.	June 2014	Corporate Executive

#### 4.4 Outcome 4: Equality in Staff Service

*People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.*

4.4	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.4.1	Ensure that services provided to those with disabilities are the same as those provided to others and are provided sensitively.	Ongoing	Corporate Executive
4.4.2	Deliver training to staff and Docents to enhance the level of understanding and service experienced by people with disabilities and their families.	June 2013	DCCD – Human Resources
4.4.3	Improve consultation and engagement with staff around the implementation of the DAIP, by using different mediums eg Attention All Staff, managers meetings, section meetings, or broader representation on Committee.	July 2012	Corporate Executive
4.4.4	Corporate Executive will ensure that DAIP requirements are incorporated into Operational Plans.	Ongoing	Corporate Executive

#### 4.5 Outcome 5: Access to Complaint Mechanisms

*People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.*

4.5	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.5.1	Provide training and support to staff/volunteers so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with disabilities.	Ongoing	DCCD & DCE – Human Resources & Visitor Services
4.5.2	Maintain a variety of formats in which complaints and grievances can be made to the Zoo.	Ongoing	DCE – Visitor Services
4.5.3	Develop improved feedback mechanisms to inform customer recovery and service/facility improvements.	June 2013	DCE & DCCD – all sections

#### 4.6 Outcome 6: Participation in Consultation

*People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in public consultation by a public authority.*

4.6	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
4.6.1	Ensure annual market research processes allows for the inclusion of those with a disability.	Ongoing	DCCD – Business Development
4.6.2	Seek a range of views on disability and access issues from the community through community groups, Zoo visitors with disabilities and the wider community.	Ongoing	DCCD & DCE – Business Development & Visitor Services
4.6.3	Develop an advisory/reference network for community consultation.	June 2012	DCE – Visitor Services
4.6.4	Ensure focus groups are conducted to track progress against DAIP during the life of the plan.	Ongoing	DCE – Visitor Services

## **5 PROGRESS UNDER THE 2007-2011 DAIP**

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A significant amount of capital works has been undertaken in the past decade to redress access issues for those with disabilities. Additionally, systemic and policy changes have led to improvements in provision of Zoo services since 2007.

**Outcome 1: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, a public authority.**

- The Zoo's Disability Services Group increased its meetings to monthly to help progress DAIP outcomes.
- A range of school holiday activities was provided to suit children with different needs.
- Wheelchair access was provided at major concert events.
- Information relating to Zoo events, including details on how to purchase tickets by phone or internet, was made available on the Zoo's website.
- The Zoo reviewed its pricing and discount structure and ensured that the free-of-charge carer/companion admission was maintained.
- Work progressed on a major upgrade of the Zoo's Customer Management System which will provide on-line access to Zoo products and services including admission tickets, memberships, adoptions, events and other products.

**Outcome 2: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of a public authority.**

- The Zoo maintained its fleet of electric scooters for visitors with mobility impairment and its fleet of 11 wheelchairs for free use by those with mobility impairment.
- Affordable Zebra Car tours for the elderly and frail visitors or parents with small children were provided for visitors.
- Ten ACROD parking bays for Zoo visitors including two ACROD bus bays were maintained.
- Quarterly audits were undertaken to review access impediments and resulting recommendations.
- A review of the inclusive playground was undertaken. An upgrade is scheduled to begin in 2012.
- Consideration of access/inclusion issues including non-mobility disability is now a formal part of Perth Zoo's project management framework and must be included in all capital works projects. The following project used the DAIP checklist:
  - Orangutan Visitor Experience Project
  - Eco-Toilet Project: This sustainable toilet facility includes the Zoo's first fully accessible, unisex parenting room/toilet and a second accessible unisex toilet set in lush gardens and with an environmental focus.
  - Veterinary Science Research and Teaching Facility
  - Crocodile Exhibit
  - Otter Exhibit.
- Some new entry gates installed in the Australian Bushwalk were designed to be lightweight for use by the frail or those with mobility disabilities whilst also ensuring animal safety and have capacity for automation in the future.
- Automatic door openers were installed on entrances to three major exhibits (Reptile Encounter, Penguin Plunge and Australian Wetlands) for those with mobility disability, the frail or parents with prams.
- A full audit of all accessible toilet facilities was conducted and recommendations for review were forwarded to the Zoo's Corporate Executive group.
- The front entrance of the Zoo was reviewed with a few palm trees removed to improve overall visitor access.

- The requirement to demonstrate an 'awareness of and commitment to compliance to the principles of the Disability Act' was included in all tender documentation for Zoo projects.
- Creation of a Perth Zoo accessibility map (see Appendix 2). This free map caters to different types of disabilities and identifies facilities offered on-site including audiovisual, tactile/interactive, olfactory/sensory, tranquil/rest areas and aural/keeper talks. The map also identifies doors, steep hills and ACROD parking.
- Examination of areas outside the Zoo (City of South Perth property) for access issues that may affect visitors.

**Outcome 3: People with disabilities receive information from a public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.**

- Access to information about Perth Zoo services was available by various mechanisms (in person, telephone, publications, internet and email).
- A prominent link was included on the Zoo's website homepage leading to comprehensive accessibility information for website users on both the technical aspects of using the site and also general information about accessible aspects of a visit to Perth Zoo.
- Plain English was used in public documentation published by Perth Zoo.
- Services offered online and on the Zoo's 24-hour recorded telephone information line were maintained.
- Information was available in alternative format upon request.
- Approval was secured for a project to create a suite of brochures highlighting points of interest for people with various disabilities. Design and implementation will be staged over the period of the next DAIP.
- Thirty-six specially created audio-files of the Zoo's most popular animals were added to the Zoo's website. These are designed to be downloaded before or after a visit to the Zoo (or in lieu of for those who cannot physically access the Zoo) or to be used while at the Zoo as an aid in comprehension.
- The development of a Perth Zoo disability and access map in collaboration with the City of South Perth and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure.
- Provision of interpretation material in various forms including graphic signage, recorded messages and audio visual presentations with sub-titles.
- The Zoo's website has been completely redeveloped three times to keep up with advancing standards in websites including disability access. It now features increased audio, video and interactive components as well as being compliant for use by people who use text-readers or other technologies. It meets WCAG 2.0 Level A website accessibility requirements.

**Outcome 4: People with disabilities receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of a public authority as other people receive from the staff of that public authority.**

- On-the-ground volunteers and trained staff provided assistance to people with special needs.
- Training was provided to all new Perth Zoo volunteers using the Disability Services' 'You Can Make a Difference to People with Disabilities' DVD.

**Outcome 5: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to a public authority.**

- A range of mechanisms for making a complaint, including in-person, by telephone, email, internet and comment cards was available to all members of the community.
- Key complaints about a service or product related to Accessibility and Inclusion were tabled with the Disability Services Group for specific discussion and/or action.

**Outcome 6: People with disabilities have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by a public authority.**

- Market research was conducted with awareness of DAIP Outcome 6. Random collection protocols statistically ensured inclusion of those with a disability but in a way that was unbiased towards or against those with a disability.