

## Appendix 3: Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy is a policy and planning framework for Australian Government departments and agencies to improve access to their policies, programs and services for people with disability.

The Commonwealth Disability Strategy groups the roles of government agencies into five broad categories: policy adviser, regulator, purchaser, provider and employer. Each category applies to at least one of our divisions or agencies. There are five performance indicators that we achieve through implementing the DAFF Disability Strategy 2008–10:

- appropriate consultation with colleagues and stakeholders on disability issues
- assessment of the impact of proposals on individuals with disability
- accessibility of information to all individuals with disability
- compliance with all relevant legislation
- appropriate review mechanisms.

The DAFF Disability Strategy was developed in consultation with all divisions and several peak disability service providers, including the Australian Employers Network on Disability, to meet the requirements of the Commonwealth Disability Strategy and the objectives identified in the Management Advisory Committee report *Employment of people with disability in the APS* (the MAC 6 Report). Biosecurity Australia participates fully in the DAFF Disability Strategy.

The department's strategy outlines our commitment and approach to:

- increasing employment opportunities and accessibility for people with disability
- increasing disability awareness
- ensuring that people with disability are consulted when we develop policies and programs that might affect them.

Managers' awareness of disability was improved through an information pack about our disability strategy developed in October 2008. The fact sheets in this pack are now available on the department's intranet and are provided to new staff as part of their induction.

### Appropriate consultation with colleagues and stakeholders on disability

As part of our membership of the Australian Employers Network on Disability—a not-for-profit organisation that works to advance employment opportunities for people with disability—human resources staff in various regions have received training on human resource essentials for people with disability. This training is expected to be rolled out to staff involved in recruitment processes.

The department has established a Disability Employees Network. Members hold quarterly meetings and have an online community site where policy and strategy documents can be uploaded for comment.

We actively participate in a number of APS-wide networks relating to disability, including the APS Diversity Network and the Reasonable Adjustment Network. This participation enhances our understanding of best practice across the APS and provides opportunities to learn from other agencies.

### Assessment of the impact of proposals on individuals with disability

The development of a reasonable adjustment policy was identified as a way for department to remove barriers to workplace participation and establish effective mechanisms for responding to individual adjustment needs of employees.

A reasonable adjustment policy has been drafted, with assistance from the Australian Employers Network on Disability and in consultation with divisional representatives, and is expected to be launched in September 2009.

A Workplace Adjustment Officer has been appointed, and will work closely with the Disability Employees Network.

### Accessibility of information to all individuals with disability

We adhere to the Government Online Strategy, ensuring that online information and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their technical capabilities or disability.

Our website ([www.daff.gov.au](http://www.daff.gov.au)) meets Australian Government standards. It has been developed to display on all commonly used browsers and to work effectively with accessibility hardware and software. To accommodate a range of connection speeds, page sizes have been kept to a minimum. Our web pages are scalable to accommodate various common screen resolutions. Where possible, documents and announcements are made available in multiple formats to accommodate the diversity of our stakeholders.

To ensure employment opportunities in the department are accessible to all, we supplied information to job applicants in a range of alternative accessible formats on request (within one day for electronic formats and two days for printed formats). We also provided a 24-hour telephone number for people who have difficulty accessing selection documents online. We made adjustments for people with disability when they attended employment interviews—for example, an applicant was provided with a laptop to enable them to respond to questions.

We ensured that venues for conferences, meetings and launches were accessible for people with physical disabilities. This included installing hearing loops in a number of conference rooms in the Canberra office. Bathrooms and elevators in the Canberra office have Braille signage.

To ensure information on the regulations we administer is available and accessible, we:

- publish a regulatory plan early each financial year on our website ([www.daff.gov.au/about/obligations/reg-plan](http://www.daff.gov.au/about/obligations/reg-plan))
- use plain English in preparing regulation impact statements and guidance materials.

### Compliance with all relevant legislation

During 2008–09, our employment policies, procedures and practices complied with all relevant legislation, including the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* and the *Public Service Act 1999*.

The department's Collective Agreement 2009–11 ensures that our internal policies and procedures will continue to meet the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* through flexible work arrangements and various means of ensuring a balance between work and personal life.

### Appropriate review mechanisms

The DAFF Disability Strategy commits the department to a regular review of the strategy, reporting on and identifying areas for further development. In particular, our achievements against the MAC 6 objectives will be assessed through the 2008–09 State of the Service Report, and we will continue to report against the Commonwealth Disability Strategy in our annual report.

We have a number of internal mechanisms for responding to disability-related concerns raised by employees. These include:

- a Senior Executive Service Disability ‘Champion’
- a network of trained occupational health and safety, harassment and first aid officers
- an online community (see above) and issues register.

During 2008–09 our staff were also able to pursue complaints or grievances through:

- dispute settlement procedures in the department’s Collective Agreement 2006–09
- formal complaint resolution mechanisms under the *Public Service Act 1999*
- the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.