



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN
2022-2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The following pages set out the committed response from East Wimmera Health Service to enhancing access to services for all users. The **Victorian Disability Act 2006** requires all public sector bodies to have a Disability Action Plan.

A Disability Action Plan can help reduce discrimination and increase access for people with a disability to everyday services and employment. Disability Action Plans are also useful in addressing attitudinal barriers in organisations and communities.

Common barriers include:

- Physical access to buildings
- Access to information
- Access to community services and programs
- Access to employment.

Other members of the public who may have difficulty using services might also benefit from a Disability Action Plan. They include elderly citizens, parents with prams, and people with short-term injuries or health conditions.

The implementation of this plan also contributes to our organisation's obligations under the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992** and the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**. It also supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

I am pleased to present this document for your interest and our action. The document will be reviewed and modified in accordance with new information so please feel comfortable providing feedback on your experiences.

Feedback can be provided via the following means:

- Utilising Feedback forms available from all EWHS campuses
- Contacting any EWHS campus reception and request to be sent with a feedback form
- Providing feedback on our Website
- Contacting Sherwin Chan - 54776814

Trevor Adem
Chief Executive Officer
East Wimmera Health Service

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are pleased to present the Disability Action plan 2022-2025 which outlines the commitment and strategic direction of the organisation and describes how we will provide a positive health experience to those that access our services, those that are employed and those seeking employment in our organisation. Our organisation plays a crucial role in eliminating disability discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for people with disability.

The purpose of a Disability Action Plan is to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with disability by providing information and implementing strategies that increase equity of access to a range of services and programs. A Disability Action Plan also provides an effective means to ensure accessibility for people with disability to all programs, services and infrastructure and ensure that our facilities, services, and programs do not exclude people with a disability or treat them less favourably than other people.

East Wimmera Health Service Disability Action Plan has been developed through examining and identifying local data, considering government legislation, and listening to our local community. This has resulted in the identification of key strategies for people with disabilities and their families.

The plan has a life of three years and forms a suite of consumer centred organisation plans that assists East Wimmera Health Service to deliver safe, quality health care that is accessible and adaptable to meet (and exceed) the needs and expectations of the consumer and our communities. East Wimmera Health Service Diversity Plan, Consumer Engagement Plan, and Wellness and Reablement Plan enhance the actions of the Disability Action Plan and together formulate actions that make our services consumer and quality focused.

WHY IS A DISABILITY ACCESS PLAN IMPORTANT TO US?

East Wimmera Health Service is committed to ensuring we provide a safe, high quality, positive health experience for every person, every time, and a safe and inclusive workplace for all employees. We ensure that the needs of all individuals within our diverse community are met in an appropriate and respectful manner.

Our Values of: Together, Honesty, Empathy, Community, Open, Respect and Excellence guides how we interact with each other, with the people who access our services, our stakeholders and service partners and community.

We prepare this disability action plan with the 4 purposes specified by the Disability Act (2006) of:

- Reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services, and facilities
- Reducing barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment
- Promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.

(Disability Act, 2006 s.38)

CONSUMER AND STAFF CONSULTATION

We meet our commitment to engaging our consumers by consulting with our communities and staff and learning from their access experience to ensure that people with a disability have equal access to the services and resources within the organisation. We listen to their comments, feedback, and complaints to develop priority areas of action and we will monitor our changes to ensure they are effective in achieving their aim.

East Wimmera Health Service has consulted extensively with consumers and staff through surveys distributed by multiple mediums. Significant community organisations were also offered opportunity to provide feedback in the accessibility of our services.

KEY DISABILITY RIGHTS AND LEGISLATION

East Wimmera Health Service's Disability Action plan has been developed with the understanding of obligations and principles of the:

- Disability Act 2006,
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006,
- Disability Discrimination Act, 1992.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the Act)

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* requires respect for the basic human rights of people with disabilities and defines 'disability' in relation to a person as:

- Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental function; or
- Total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- The malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behavior;

And includes a disability that:

- presently exists, or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is attributed to a person.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

EWHS Quality Governance System consists of four Quality Governance Committees. These committees have specific consultative and action roles within the Disability Action Plan.

Pillar	Consumer Partnerships Committee	Safety and Quality Systems Committee	Governance, Leadership and Culture Committee	Workforce Performance Committee
What are we going to do?	Develop effective consumer partnerships to improve health outcomes	Develop robust systems, designed to facilitate safe care and service delivery across the organisation	Develop a culture of safe and effective high-quality care	Provide comprehensive plans for the recruiting, allocating, developing, and retaining high performance staff.
How are we going to do it?	Provide our consumers with the skills and knowledge to participate fully in their care to the extent they want to.	Monitor and manage our organisational systems for safety and early detection of risk factors	To develop the right people with the right skills to provide the right care every time	Data on clinical effectiveness (performance vs. goals) and consumer centeredness is collected, analysed and shared for the purpose of accountability, safety and improvement
Why are we going to do it?	Consumers want to be able to make informed decisions about their health care and treatment.	To ensure our systems are delivering appropriate services at the point of care	To ensure our care is safe and harm is minimised.	Every patient, every time received professional safe patient centred care

The Consumer Partnerships Committee is delegated to oversee the development and monitoring of the action plan. The Chair of the Consumer Partnerships Committee is the Director of Primary Care who is the Executive responsible for overseeing the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the plan. There will be 6 monthly reviews of action plans to monitor progress in meeting goals and achievements. The review and monitoring of this plan will be presented to the East Wimmera Health Services Board of Directors on a 6 monthly basis.

GOALS, ACTIONS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Goal Area 1. Reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services and facilities

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicators	Monitoring and Progress notes
1.1 East Wimmera Health Service conducts assessments and consultations that identify barriers for accessing goods, services and facilities.	1.1.1 Assess East Wimmera Health Service current standing in relation to Disability (Access to Premises – Building) Standards 2010 (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010) to identify areas on improvements or non-compliance.	Director of Primary Care.	August 2023	Completion of report of findings against standards.	18/10/2022 Need to identify appropriate person to do the assessment and report
	1.1.2 Enquire and consult with consumers and staff about known barriers in accessing services, goods, and facilities.	Director of Primary Care.	December 2024	Evidence of consultation. Summary of information.	18/10/2022 Review feedback and complaints
	1.1.3 Develop an action plan from the outcome 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.	Consumer Partnerships Committee.	August 2023	Action plan developed.	Completed
1.2 Program information and services are accessible for all people.	1.2.1 Formalise the organisation process of development and endorsement of health information for consumers by utilising contemporary standards of health literacy and consumer involvement and feedback.	Health Promotion Team Quality and Risk Manager.	Ongoing	Development of policy and Audit tool. Review of Document Endorsement Party.	18/10/2022 Policy and audit tool developed. Outward facing documents being reviewed regularly by CPC and health literacy person
	1.2.2 Promote access to information on concessions, subsidies and discounts available for people with a disability to encourage inclusion and assist with financial hardship.	Director of Primary Care. Director of Finance and Administration.	Ongoing	Community Health Fees Policy. Advertising fees on My Aged Care	Fees reviewed and updated according to the Department guidelines (annually) This information is provided to all clients on admission to health service by Central Intake staff
	1.2.3 Work in partnership with external services, including My Aged Care, NDIS and National Health Services Directory to ensure information regarding	Service Coordinator. Sally	Completed, Feb 2023	Documented evidence of partnership/meeting minutes. Staff education sessions.	

	our services is available to people with a disability and their carers.				
1.3 Provide assistance and opportunities that supports people to exercise and promote their rights.	1.3.1 Develop pathways which allow additional assistance, where required, is available to eliminate or reduce access barriers to people living with disability or their carers.	Service Coordinator	Ongoing	Evidence of process developed.	31/5/23 Central intake or clinicians refer to external providers if EWHS waitlists are too long or we do not currently provide the required service

Goal Area 2. Reducing barriers to people with a disability in obtaining and maintaining employment

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicators	Monitoring and Progress notes
2.1 Support recruitment that is inclusive of people with a disability	Recruitment and Selection Policy	Workforce Performance Committee	Completed	Ensure a uniform application of the Recruitment & Selection Policy across all Campuses.	Ongoing
2. 2 Provide education opportunities to staff on the needs of people living with disability.	2.2.1 Investigate opportunities to support educational and training scholarships for people with a disability.	Workforce Performance Committee. Clinical Support Nurses. Education and Training Manager.	Ongoing	Partnerships with local Disability employment networks.	
	2.2.2 Include Disability Action Plan education on induction to the organisation including information on staff responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act.	Workforce Performance Committee. Director of Primary Care.	Ongoing	All orientation programs contain content about the Disability Action Plan.	
	2.2.3 Support and educate the organisation to enhance their understanding when working with people with disability	Workforce Performance Committee. Clinical Education Coordinator	Ongoing	Demonstrated support and training given.	
	2.2.4 Provide Professional Development opportunities to all staff to ensure a high quality of care for people with disability.	Campus Managers	Ongoing	Education training register.	18/10/2022 Opportunities for education is promoted via email and newsletters to all staff

Goal Area 3. Promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicators	Monitoring and progress notes
3.1 East Wimmera Health Service will celebrate and recognise the value and contribution of all people in the community	3.1.1 Take a leadership role in the promotion of inclusion with the community by celebrating significant days and advertising the value and contribution of all peoples and staff.	Health Promotion Team. Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Ongoing	Advertising internally and externally. Campaigns. Staff and community acknowledgements. Celebration/Awareness events.	18/10/2022 Process embedded in EWHS ongoing work
3.2 Access issues are eliminated to ensure we are able to involve the community in any community engagement activities.	3.2.1 When reviewing, designing, or redesigning services and facilities a Co-Design approach should be taken and actively encouraged	Consumer Partnerships Committee.	Ongoing	Consumer Engagement Plan. Open Access meetings. Service level Meetings. Community consultations. Community forums. Responses and actions to complaints and feedback.	18/10/2023 Need to develop this process more. Currently engaged a person with lived experience to develop and review the Disability Action Plan
3.3 Support and enhance consumers with disability to have a voice in service and organisation decisions.	3.3.1 East Wimmera Health Service Consumer Participation and Engagement plan to ensure equal representation in consumer representation on Governance committees	Director of Primary Care. Consumer Partnerships Committee.	Ongoing	Consumer Partnership and Engagement Plan.	18/10/2022
	3.3.3 Engage people living with disabilities to review the Disability Action Plan and Diversity Plan.	Consumer Partnership Committee. Karleen Plunkett (Consumer Rep for Disability)	Ongoing	Evidence of consultation and actions made.	18/10/22 Currently undertaking this process. 19/5/2023 Feedback provided by person living with disability. All suggestions implemented into the plan

Goal Area 4. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.

Goal	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe	Performance Indicators	Monitoring and progress notes
4.1 Improve staff awareness and understanding of the needs of people living with a disability.	4.1.1 Provide practical training for staff on their obligations embedded in everyday decision making and enhance general awareness of disability at induction.	Clinical Education Coordinator.	Ongoing	Orientation attendance numbers.	
	4.1.2 Include information about the disability action plan periodically in the Informer.	Communications & Marketing Officer	Monthly	Evidence of articles and publications.	Diversity & Inclusion Officer
	4.1.3 The Disability Action Plan and the reviews will be made available on the intranet for staff.	Executive Assistants.	Ongoing	Accessible and promoted.	Completed
	4.1.4 The Disability Action Plan will remain as a standing agenda item on the Consumer Partnerships committee.	Consumer Partnerships Committee Secretariat.	Ongoing	Meeting minutes.	Embedded in the TOR and responsibility.
	4.1.5 Create a folder on intranet where publications, resources and useful information on disability can be accessible to staff.	Service Coordinator	December 2024	Folder development and updates.	To update

Disability Act (2006). [online] Available at:
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/0B82C05270E27961CA25717000216104/\\$FILE/06-023a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/0B82C05270E27961CA25717000216104/$FILE/06-023a.pdf) [Accessed 23 May 2019].

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006). [online] Available at:
[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/54D73763EF9DCA36CA2571B6002428B0/\\$FILE/06-043a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/54D73763EF9DCA36CA2571B6002428B0/$FILE/06-043a.pdf)[Accessed 23 May 2019].

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<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00125>[Accessed 23 May 2019]

Human Rights Commission. Disability Standards & Guidelines Available at :
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/disability-standards> [Accessed 26 June 2019]