

IP Australia AccessAbility Action Plan 2016-2019



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Revision history

Date	Amendments
2/08/2016	Document created
19 Aug 2016	Document amended to include IP Australia in the title.

Disability Champion's Foreword

At IP Australia we have a wonderful workplace that values fairness, equity and diversity.

To be a truly diverse and inclusive workplace, it is vital that we are representative of the community we serve.

It must be acknowledged that IP Australia already has a range of activities and workplace supports in place to assist employees with illness, injury and disability, including, to name a few:

- wellbeing programs;
- various health and safety activities;
- workplace resources assisting employees both in the workplace and returning to the workplace, eg rehabilitation case managers and return to work plans; and
- an ongoing relationship with the Australian Network on Disability (IP Australia maintains a Silver membership).

However, we can always do more, and we plan to. So the initiatives outlined above, and many others not mentioned here, will continue to be the platform from which we leverage diversity. The overarching goal that drives the creation and implementation of this, IP Australia's inaugural AccessAbility Action Plan, is to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace by identifying barriers to inclusion and implementing solutions to overcome them.

To achieve this goal we've outlined some practical activities we can implement quickly and others that are going to take time. They all contribute to increasing the participation of all people in the IP Australia workforce based on their ability. We also commit to implementing initiatives which would make us an employer of choice in the Australian Public Service.

I look forward to working with you all to implement the actions in the IP Australia AccessAbility Action Plan 2016–2019.

Victor Portelli

Disability and Diversity Champion

IP Australia

Our Vision – to be a disability confident employer

Our vision is to be a disability confident employer that supports people with disability to be fully effective in the workplace and fosters an environment where people feel able and confident to share information about personal disability.

The IP Australia AccessAbility Action Plan 2016–2019 sets out our commitment and approach to improving employment opportunities and accessibility for people with disability. The plan details our objectives and activities to identify and remove barriers to participation in our work environment for employees and in our services for customers. It builds on the aims of the [Workplace Diversity Program 2014–2018](#) to create a supportive, flexible and fair workplace in which differences between employees are respected and all employees are valued and enabled to participate in the workforce.

Diversity is about having a workforce profile that reflects the broader community. Activities around attracting and retaining a talented and diverse workforce, and creating a culture within IP Australia where people feel comfortable to share and disclose information, form the basis of achieving diversity.

Facilitating and providing reasonable workplace adjustments is a key strategy in achieving this outcome. The reasonable workplace adjustment processes aim to establish effective mechanisms for responding to the individual adjustment needs of existing and potential employees. These mechanisms should address barriers to equal opportunity, participation and performance at work for employees with disability.

For more information please see IP Australia's [Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#).

Where we are now....

IP Australia is a medium sized APS agency with around 1100 employees. Our business is specialised and our workforce is diverse with many employees from culturally diverse backgrounds, some who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, some who identify with disability and some who form part of other diversity groups.

Australian Bureau of Statistics research shows one in five Australians has a disability, however currently only around two percent of our employees have shared information regarding a disability with IP Australia. The sharing of this information is voluntary, and there may be many reasons why a person chooses to share or keep private information regarding a disability.

The [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA) is the main piece of legislation that ensures people with disability can obtain employment fairly and have a career free from discrimination. As an APS agency, the DDA applies and this plan is consistent and complies with it.

The term 'disability' is defined in subsection 4(1) of the DDA. The definition is a broad one, meaning:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; 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 judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The definition covers a disability that:

- presently exists, including any symptoms or manifestations of the disability; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future, including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability; or
- is imputed to a person.

Our AccessAbility Action Plan (AAP)

As of April 2016 the agency had 2.4 per cent of employees self-identify as a person with disability.

Through this plan, IP Australia aims to:

- create an inclusive culture that values diversity and understands the needs of people with disability;
- actively promote the employment of people with disability;
- retain and encourage employees with disability by offering support and appropriate assistive technologies;
- ensure that our workplaces remain accessible; and
- track and report our progress.

The activities set out detail the targeted actions IP Australia will undertake. These actions are further detailed in the AAP Implementation Plan which includes timeframes for delivery and action owners.

The AAP includes the following key areas of focus:

- Respect – an inclusive and supporting culture;
- Opportunity - recruitment and retention; and
- Accessibility - premises, and technology.

Accountability

IP Australia will monitor the implementation of the AAP and be accountable for tracking progress and reporting by:

- Lodging the AAP with the Australian Human Rights Commission;
- Including key achievements against the AAP in the Annual Report and celebrating and sharing success; and
- Reporting to the People and Communication Committee annually on progress.

The Plan

Respect – An inclusive and supportive culture

Action 1 – Disability Champion to provide leadership to IP Australia on working with people with disability.

Disability Champion to represent IP Australia at:

- APS Disability Champions forum; and
- Australian Network on Disability (AND) Champions Network.

Disability Champion to :

- host annual “lunchtime seminar” to discuss accessibility in IP Australia;
- promote and lead awareness raising events coinciding with relevant days such as International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD);
- brief the Executive Board and embed key messaging on events and activities in the Director General’s message;
- share success stories with IP Australia employees – from the Executive articles, or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discussions as appropriate; and
- engage AND to present to the Executive and SLT to improve disability confidence and challenge misconceptions and myths about disability.

Action 2 – Build supervisor skills and capability

Provide mental health and accessibility training for all employees in a supervisor/manager position.

Raise supervisor awareness of available resources and tools including:

- AND Disability Managers Guide – Disability in the Workplace;
- Reasonable Adjustment Policy; and
- Mental Health resources.

Provide tailored support and coaching to supervisors where requested, in managing employees with disability.

Ensure all employees are aware that Emergency Management Procedures include Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS), encourage employees to develop one where appropriate and remind employees to review them annually.

Action 3 – Raise awareness and improve employee understanding of accessibility in the workplace

Develop a communication strategy to:

- include notable accessibility champions as speakers in IP Australia's guest speaker series;
- acknowledge significant accessibility days and encourage employee involvement;
- include information on accessibility issues and services in induction, management and leadership training;
- outline available options to encourage safe and accessible work practices (e.g. ergonomic assessments, sit stand workstations, tracking mouse, Equity and Diversity Contact Officers (EDCOs);
- review existing intranet information, including the Manager's Workbench, with the assistance of the AAP Working Group; and
- proactively engage with line areas and employees on the completion of return-to-work (RTW) plans to reduce the risk of re-injury and manage the workload impacts of RTW plans.

Action 4 – Reputation as an employer of choice

Publish IP Australia's AccessAbility Action Plan on the website.

Develop profiles of employees with disability and publish these on the IP Australia website as appropriate.

Establish IP Australia as a disability confident leader through regular attendance at AND Round Table meetings and other APS disability forums/events as appropriate.

Opportunity – Recruitment and retention

Action 5 – Review Recruitment processes to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.

Review recruitment processes to:

- ensure consideration is made for applicants with disability;
- ensure the job document template models inclusive language, with a focus on the outcome or deliverables rather than how the work is done (ie flag the use of accessible technology, or flexible work practices eg working from home);
- provide information to selection panel members to improve disability and inclusion awareness, specifically on reasonable adjustments that can be made for or during interviews and on commencement;
- review and use candidate information captured on WebRecruitment to ensure it informs how candidates are managed through the recruitment process; and
- ensure information is available to candidates regarding pre-employment medical requirements.

Action 6 – Continue to partner with inclusive recruitment programs and providers to facilitate placement and engagement of employees with disability.

Engage two placements during the life of the plan through Disability Employment Services (eg Koomari).

Place two Stepping Into interns annually.

Apply the Public Service Commissioners special measures provisions to recruit to identified positions where appropriate.

Utilise the Supported Wage Scheme where appropriate.

Accessibility – premises and technology

Action 7 – Improve workplace accessibility

Increase supervisor and employee awareness of support available including:

- availability and use of ergonomic assessments/ equipment; and
- assistive technologies and reasonable adjustments capability.

Utilise Job Access to fund workplace adjustments where appropriate.

Review Emergency Management procedures, first aid officer and Work Health Safety officers training material to ensure it addresses accessibility for ingress and egress as well as other emergency requirements.

Action 8 – Provide dignified access to buildings and facilities ensuring compliance with the DDA and/or other relevant building codes and regulations

Undertake annual premises (Discovery House and MPEC) and immediate surrounds accessibility review for compliance with the current standards and implement remedial action as required.

Use the AND Dignified Access Checklist to assess IP Australia premises and surrounds.

Ensure the Future Way of Working project considers and provides accessible workplaces/practices and maximises the use of assistive technology where appropriate.

Action 9 – Enhance systems accessibility

Web Browser Content:

- best efforts are made to ensure current internal and external systems meet current WCAG standards; and
- ensure all future (new) systems, both internal and external facing to IP Australia, meet the whole of Government standards under the [Digital Service Standards](#) as required by the [Digital Transformation Office](#).

Non-web based applications:

- make use of resources available to improve accessibility eg: [Software Application Style \(Usability\) Guide](#)

User Acceptance Testing (UAT):

- where applicable all UAT to include assistive technology compatibility testing including but not limited to Dragon, JAWS, screen reader programs, and other technologies utilised by employees (including teleworkers).

Other resources:

- <http://www.accessiq.org/>

Further Information

Legislation and Strategies

This strategy is supported by the:

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\)](#)

[Fair Work Act 2009](#)

[As One – APS Disability Strategy \(2012\)](#)

[Using Commissioner’s Direction 2.16 – Affirmative measures for people with intellectual disability \(APSC\)](#)

[Using Commissioner's Direction 2.17 - Engaging a person with disability through a Disability Employment Service provider \(APSC\)](#)

[National Mental Health and Disability Employment Strategy](#) published by the Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations. (2009)

[National Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020](#) - launched by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2011

[UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) ratified by Australia on 17 July 2008

IPA Plans and Policies

A number of internal plans and policies support this strategy including:

- [IP Australia’s Workplace Diversity Program 2014-2018](#)
- [IP Australia Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#)
- [IP Australia’s Capability Action Plan—Activities](#)
- [IP Australia Managing Injury and Illness at Work Policy](#)
- [IP Australia Mental Health Policy](#)

External resources

[Australian Network on Disability](#)

[Ability at Work: Tapping the talent of people with Disability \(APSC\)](#)

[Employment of People with Disability in the APS \(APSC\)](#)

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) - 1300 360 364](#)

