

DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN

December 2018 – December 2020



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department



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Message from the Secretary

Our people are our most important asset and as such, I am pleased to present our second Disability and Mental Health Action Plan (DMAP). The DMAP aims to provide a more inclusive workplace for people with disability and carers of people with disability, positioning us an employer of choice.

We are committed to breaking down barriers which might prevent an employee or stakeholder with disability or a long term medical or mental health condition, from fully participating in our workplace.

By implementing the DMAP, we continue the department's efforts to embrace the unique qualities of all our staff, improve career opportunities and support and build a stronger culture of inclusion.

We have made significant progress in establishing a work environment that supports diversity with our Flexibility and Inclusion Action Plan and the introduction of the Flexible Work Toolkit and Reasonable Adjustment Passport. Our 2018 census results are evidence of this progress, with 83% of staff acknowledging the department supports and actively promotes an inclusive workplace culture. The DMAP builds on these efforts and sets out clear, definitive and achievable goals through its four key focus areas; culture of inclusion, recruitment, retention and development of people with disability, accessibility, and reporting and accountability.

This DMAP has a strong focus on mental health awareness and support. Mental health is a growing concern within society and the Australian Public Service. We are faced with increasing work pressures to deliver quality outcomes with reduced resources, in an ever changing environment. At times this can have a significant impact on our mental health and wellbeing. The DMAP aims to address this by building the capability of our people to have open discussions about mental health and equipping them with the tools needed to support colleagues and remove the stigma surrounding this topic.

I look forward to your support in implementing the DMAP and continuing our efforts to build a workplace where people with disability, mental health condition or carer role feel valued and supported.

Chris Moraitis PSM

Celebrating Ability Co-Champion

CULTURE OF INCLUSION

An inclusive culture that values diversity and understands the sharing of disability and mental health experiences and knowledge creates a supportive and positive working environment for all.

Focus area: *ensuring senior executives lead by example in building a healthy and resilient workforce, by promoting existing support resources, attending events and training and encouraging open discussion to remove the stigma surrounding disability and mental health.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
Make disability inclusion a standing item on relevant leadership discussions.	Lead: Governance Team Facilities and Property	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Strategic Operations Steering Committee Business Unit quarterly reviews discuss implementation of the Disability and Mental Health Action Plan (DMAP).
	Secretary's Office Chief Operating Officer Supported by: Human Resources (HR) Celebrating Ability Network (CAN)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the item is on the agenda for the Secretary's Executive Quarterly Reviews. • Consider inclusion of disability agenda item for Consultative Forums.

Develop, publish and implement a communication strategy for disability inclusion.	Lead: HR Supported by: CAN	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine areas of focus for communication strategy to develop a broader understanding of what a 'disability confident' department means in practice. • All SES to communicate and encourage staff participation and use of disability and mental health initiatives.
	Lead: CAN	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAN to send through feedback regarding communication strategy, to the relevant HR areas
Celebrate key dates such as International Day of People with Disability, World Autism Awareness Day, Mental Health Week etc.	Lead: CAN Celebrating Ability Co-Champions Supported by: HR Graduate Fundraising Committee (GFC) Talking Heads Committee (THC)	December yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold an event annually to promote International Day of People with Disability to acknowledge and celebrate all the contributions of people with disability and continue to promote the contribution to a successful and diverse departmental culture.
		April yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold an event annually to promote awareness and increase understanding and acceptance of people and supporters of people with Autism.

<p>Develop a program of meetings between senior staff and staff with disability.</p>	<p>Lead: CAN Supported by: HR Celebrating Ability Co-Champions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an annual '5+5' program to provide staff with disability the opportunity to meet with senior leaders to discuss their challenges in the workplace. • Extend invitation to '5+5' program to AGD Portfolio agency staff.
<p>Develop a training and support program for staff to facilitate disability inclusion in the workplace.</p>	<p>Lead: HR (Training programs) CAN (Guidance and advice) Supported by: Celebrating Ability Co-Champions THC</p>	<p>June and December yearly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct seminars and learning opportunities for staff about how to have a disability confident conversation.
		<p>December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include relevant content and materials in programs such as Manager Essentials to build manager capability and awareness about a culture of inclusion. • Identify and engage disability confidence training and mental health training for managers at least twice yearly.
		<p>August 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and promote detailed guidance for managers or supervisors about mental health conditions. • Encourage managers to proactively analyse work processes and apply reasonable adjustments as required.
		<p>July 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate targeted training opportunities and consult with the CAN and the Australian Network on Disability (AND) to determine the best solution for the department, including interstate offerings. • Host at least two Mental Health in the Workplace training sessions for managers per year.

		Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of the appropriate support networks available to them in the department.
Promote awareness and participation in events, activities and training to reduce stigma.	Lead: Managers Supported by: CAN HR	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers to champion and focus on the benefits of preventative activities, in supporting a healthy and resilient workforce. This may include participation in physical (e.g. Yoga) or mindfulness activities. • Managers to encourage staff to take regular breaks from their work. • Senior staff to visibly champion the benefits of a healthy and resilient workforce, by attending events and training to help increase participation. • SMC to encourage and promote Business Unit Heads to attend and participate in relevant training and events.
		May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop accountability measures for leaders within the department to attend relevant training.
Promote policies and manager responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments, including for mental health and wellbeing support.	Lead: HR Managers Supported by: Business Units CAN	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote manager responsibilities to support staff with disability or mental health conditions in induction and Manager Essentials training and through periodic messaging (e.g. after significant relocations or accommodation changes).
		Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess staff awareness of the role and scope of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). • Increase awareness and promotion of Mental Health Matters content and vicarious trauma training. Promote the Flexible Work Toolkit and the department's support of flexible work arrangements. • Promote the use and benefits of the Reasonable Adjustment Passport.

Promote HR's positive role in supporting staff who require reasonable adjustments.	Lead: HR Supported by: CAN Managers	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the benefits of sharing information about mental health conditions or disability and the positive impacts on work arrangements if reasonable adjustments are made.
		April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update guidance on the handling of personal information in supporting requests for reasonable adjustment. Develop and distribute regular promotional materials to outline the role HR and specifically the Performance and Wellbeing section plays in supporting and providing assistance to staff and managers about disability.
Improve team capabilities in relation to flexible work arrangements by promoting the use of existing training and resources.	Lead: HR Business Units Supported by: All SES CAN	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Flexible Work Toolkit and the department's support of flexible work arrangements, building awareness of flexible work opportunities and staff entitlements, including attending appointments necessary for managing disability. Consider training options for work areas to assist them to manage individual and team flexible work arrangements.
		Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAN and HR to offer attendance at Divisional Info sessions to promote flexible work opportunities and experiences.
		June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include question about supporting diversity, inclusion and flexible work in PPIs for all staff. Ensure there is a Census question about whether managers have encouraged flexible work with their staff.

<p>Encourage staff to share experiences with disability and mental health.</p>	<p>Lead: CAN</p> <p>Supported by: HR Celebrating Ability Co-Champions</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite and include personal stories about accessibility and inclusion to promote internally, e.g. COO News, intranet, etc. • Profile personal stories of SES leaders to promote disability in leadership.
<p>Leverage cross-agency lessons and experiences to improve inclusion and accessibility for the department.</p>	<p>Lead: HR CAN</p> <p>Celebrating Ability Co-Champions</p>	<p>November 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the APSC and other lead agencies that have significant experience or success in facilitating an inclusive and accessible workplace. • Share Reasonable Adjustment Passport learnings with other APS agencies and investigate a whole-of-APS solution. • Support secondees opportunities i.e. BizLab Mental Health Taskforce.

ACCESSIBILITY

Building a workplace where adjustments are made as part of everyday operations to enable staff with disability or mental health condition to fully participate.

Focus area: *the development of guidelines and policies, which ensure employee consultation and consideration of reasonable adjustments is standard practice in relation to building access, moves, and IT updates.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
Undertake a review of existing premises (including interstate), physical and digital supports, information systems and guidance material for access and inclusion.	Lead: HR Facilities and Property Supported by: CAN Building Managers	June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope out current resources to determine if a review of all existing premises, physical and digital supports, information systems and guidance (including the Reasonable Adjustment Passport) and training material for access and inclusion is feasible.
		March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all existing premises, physical and digital supports, information systems, and guidance (including the Reasonable Adjustment Passport) and training material for access and inclusion. • Ensure appropriate systems to support staff with disability are in place, information is readily available and up-to-date, and access requirements are met.
Develop standard protocols for use of First Aid, Carers Rooms and Sick Bays.	Lead: HR Supported by: AGS interstate offices CAN	February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish standard protocols and procedures for the use of First Aid, Carers Rooms or Sick Bays by all staff, including interstate offices. • Establish protocols for the use of meeting rooms for disability or mental health purposes where a dedicated support room is not available.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
<p>Establish accessibility guidelines to assist external visitors to the department.</p>	<p>Lead: HR</p> <p>Supported by: Facilities and Property Media and Communications</p>	<p>May 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop guidelines for staff to consider accessibility or adjustments before hosting external visitors to the department. • Develop standard words to include in stakeholder communications asking if an adjustment is required.
	<p>CAN THC GFC</p>	<p>January 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide formal information sessions to relevant members of the Royal Commission for Aged Care to ensure they are aware of accessibility guidelines to provide support for stakeholders.
<p>Consultation with CAN representatives prior to any departmental moves or building works.</p>	<p>Lead: Facilities and Property</p> <p>Supported by: CAN HR Health and Safety Representatives (HSR)</p>	<p>As required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with staff who identify as having disability prior to physical moves around the building or significant building modifications. • Consult with staff who identify as having disability prior to any amendments to work stations and working conditions. • Ensure appropriate communications are provided prior to moves and staff relocations, including staff to consider changes to work environment(s) following moves.
<p>Improve use and availability of IT accessibility applications.</p>	<p>Lead: Information Division</p> <p>Supported by:</p>	<p>December 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility software available to staff e.g. JAWS. • Consider other IT services/software options for improved accessibility.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
	HR	November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make tablets available to all staff for increased accessibility and flexibility, prioritising those staff who require one as part of their reasonable adjustment. • Develop guidelines setting expectations relating to reasonable use of tablets.

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

In order to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce, we need to support employees with disability through all stages of their career to have equitable access to promotion and leadership opportunities.

Focus areas: *commit to becoming an accredited ‘disability confident recruiter’, through the development and promotion of guidance material for candidates with disability. Undertake annual statistical analysis of staff demographic with disability, in order to identify the career barriers staff with disability may face.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
Achieve and maintain Australian Network on Disability ‘disability confidence recruiter’ accreditation.	Lead: HR Supported by: CAN Celebrating Ability Co-Champions	December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to gaining a ‘disability confidence recruiter’ accreditation through the AND.
Increase the recruitment of people with disability across the department.	Lead: HR Supported by: Business Units	December yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop additional guidance material regarding RecruitAbility, the Reasonable Adjustment Passport and the Flexible Work Toolkit to be included in Vacancy Information kits for all advertised roles. • Increase annual recruitment of staff who identify with disability. • Increase Recruitability candidates for each bulk recruitment round and for the graduate program annually. • Participate in the Stepping Into Summer Intern Program.
		March yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the APS GradAccess Program.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
		December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake affirmative measures recruitment of people with disability in non-entry level positions, including at the higher-APS, EL and SES levels.
Investigate the need for a mentor/buddy program for staff who identify with disability.	Lead: HR CAN Supported by: Celebrating Ability Co Champions	July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the suitability and benefits of a mentor program for staff with disability.
Provide development opportunities for people with disability.	Lead: CAN HR Supported by: Celebrating Ability Co Champions Diversity Council	October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate secondment opportunities to increase capability in support of progression to more senior roles by shadowing or observing senior leaders to gain experience.
		April yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAN to include a budget for attendance at conferences/seminars for staff with disability. Invite CAN members to attend Senior Management Committee and Executive Board meetings.
Identify barriers to career progression for people with disability.	Lead: HR Supported by: Celebrating Ability Co Champions Diversity Council	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track candidates employed through Recruitability or those identified as having disability (subject to their consent) and their career progression through the department.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Initiatives
<p>Increase department's presence at disability inclusion events.</p>	<p>Lead: HR</p> <p>Supported by: CAN Celebrating Ability Co Champions</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff with disability to attend careers fairs, along with HR representatives, to represent the department and speak to final year university students/local high schools. • CAN members to be invited to participate in Graduate Assessment Centres.
<p>Increase the number of staff with disability in leadership positions.</p>	<p>Lead: HR and all SES</p> <p>Supported by: CAN Celebrating Ability Co Champions</p>	<p>May 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a statement within all externally advertised processes outlining the department's position as an inclusive employer of people with disability and encouraging people with disability to apply.
		<p>Bi-annually</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop recruitment profiles of those who have disability to attract new recruits and promote on the department's internet.

REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Reporting and accountability measures ensure that the department is accountable for and remains transparent in its implementation of the plan.

Focus area: *the regular reporting of DMAP progress to relevant departmental committees, as well as publishing progress on the intranet for all staff visibility.*

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverables
Report DMAP achievements, challenges and learnings annually.	Lead: Celebrating Ability Co Champions Supported by: HR	October yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report DMAP progress to Diversity Council at least annually.
		December yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in AND Access and Inclusion Index Annually.
Report DMAP achievements, challenges and learnings internally and externally.	Lead: Celebrating Ability Co Champions Supported by: HR Strategic Communications	June yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publically report our DMAP achievements, challenges and learnings in the Annual Report on the department's internet page.
Review, refresh and update DMAP	Lead: Celebrating Ability Co Champions Supported by: HR	By April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with DMAP Working Group and AND to develop a new DMAP based on learnings, challenges and achievements.
		By November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with all staff for formal review, feedback and endorsement of next DMAP.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Deliverables
Develop baseline data.	Lead: HR Supported by: CAN	March yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate an annual reporting framework for baseline data relevant to the DMAP. • Consult with relevant stakeholders to identify relevant baseline data information. • Review progress made on baseline data annually.

Contact Details

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