



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**

# REFORMING WA DISABILITY LEGISLATION

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AND  
RELEVANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT



# Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities proudly acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we are meeting and recognises their continuing connection to their lands, families and communities. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

# Presenters for the Information Session

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# Context

- As many of you are aware, the Department of Communities is currently undertaking a process to reform disability legislation in WA. The reforms are premised on the need to ensure State legislation is relevant, contemporary and a reflection of the modern needs and expectations of the community.
- Consultation is central to the reform process and is being used to gather information about issues of importance to people with disability, families, carers, the sector and key stakeholders, including matters to be addressed through legislation.
- So far, the public interest and engagement in the consultation process has been positive. However, it is important that our engagement is broad and reaches a full cross-section of the community, including the Local Government sector.

# Purpose of today's information session

Today's session will:

- provide an overview of the reform and the consultation process being undertaken
- identify the relevance of WA disability legislation for Local Government
- allow attendees to ask questions

This will:

- provide context about our work to reform WA disability legislation and the information we are seeking from stakeholders
- better place attendees to participate in, or invite colleagues or contacts to participate in, our workshop next **Thursday 27 April 2023 at 1:30pm.**



# Background to reforming WA disability legislation

- The *Disability Services Act 1993* is the primary legislation in WA governing disability services. Due to changes to the disability services landscape in WA and nationally, the DS Act is now due for reform (2023 Reforms).
- The release of 'A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030' (State Disability Strategy) and 'Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031', together with the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme in WA and the ongoing work of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, has impacted and changed the disability services landscape in WA.
- The reform of WA disability legislation is premised on the need to ensure State legislation is relevant, contemporary and a reflection of the modern needs and expectations of the community.

# 2023 Reforms

The State Government is committed through the State Disability Strategy to identifying legislative reform opportunities required to improve outcomes for people with disability.

The daily experience of people with disability should be one of inclusion and positive community attitudes, and it is important that the legislation supports this position.

# Consultation process

The consultation process to reform WA disability legislation commenced on 10 March 2023 and will conclude on 10 June 2023.

The Consultation Paper (including Plain English, Easy Read and Text Only versions) and other relevant information may be accessed via the Have your say: Reforming Western Australia's disability legislation website at <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/have-your-say-reforming-western-australias-disability-legislation>

The process to reform WA disability legislation is consistent with the current work being undertaken by other State jurisdictions to reform their disability legislation.



# Methods available to provide feedback

- Fill in the online feedback form
- Speak to someone on the phone by calling 0421 978 786
- Email a written submission, letter or email to [disabilitylegislationteam@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:disabilitylegislationteam@communities.wa.gov.au)
- Send a written submission by post



# What we want to know

The Consultation Paper was developed as a general guide for stakeholders who wish to contribute to the 2023 Reforms. Key themes relevant for Local Government include:

- What principles are or should be applicable to people with disability?
- How can or should people with disability be safeguarded?
- How can the access and inclusion needs of people with disability be met?

# Local Government and WA disability legislation

The role of Local Government is varied, but it touches almost all areas of our day-to-day life as citizens. This role includes:

- infrastructure and property services
- provision of recreational and cultural facilities, and health and community services
- planning and development

The intersection of Local Government's role (above) with people with disability is evident from:

- Local Government Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (and the workings of WALGA's Access and Inclusion Officer Network)
- The increasing availability of Changing Places
- The commitment to creating inclusive communities where people with disabilities have the same opportunities as other community members to access information, facilities and services (WALGA's Advocacy Position Manual, Position Statement).

# Local Government and WA disability legislation (continued)

As promoted by the State Disability Strategy, inclusive communities benefit everyone. Local Government must continue to plan for people with disability, and consider, for example:

- the impact of decisions and processes, not only on a person with the disability, but also on their family and carers
- the additional disadvantages facing people with disability, their families and carers in rural or remote communities
- additional specific opportunities and supports needed by people from a non-English speaking background
- the increased likelihood of disability as people get older
- the continuing rise in the number of people with disability as the Western Australian population ages

# Local Government and WA disability legislation (continued)

- The aim for the 2023 Reforms is to develop legislation that supports the experience of people with disability being one of inclusion and positive community attitudes.
- This correlates with the involvement of Local Government in daily life in terms how people with disability are treated and safeguarded, and the community's current and future access and inclusion needs.

# Questions

Does anyone have any questions?

Please note: should questions subsequently arise, the Disability Legislation Team can be contacted at [disabilitylegislationteam@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:disabilitylegislationteam@communities.wa.gov.au) or by phone on 0421 978 786.

# Thank you for your attention

Please participate in our workshop next **Thursday 27 April 2023 at 1:30pm.**