

GOULBURN-MURRAY
WATER



**Disability Action Plan
2009 to 2011**

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1. MANAGING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present Goulburn-Murray Water's (G-MW's) first Disability Action Plan 2009 – 2011.

As approximately 20% of the total population has some form of disability it is essential for us to take steps to assist such people in employment and accessing our resources.

Our Disability Action Plan (DAP) is important because it enables us to recognise what we can do to start a long term program to better serve all those who depend on us for customer service, employment and those of the general community in which we operate.

The DAP will help us to better understand the needs of those who may be in need of specialised assistance as well as raising awareness within G-MW to ensure that our policies and practices are more inclusive of people with a disability.

In addition G-MW will use its position of influence in the general community in which it operates and within the wider water industry network to promote consistent business practices that do not exclude people with disabilities.

David Stewart
Managing Director
Goulburn-Murray Water

2. ABOUT DISABILITY

Disability is difficult to define however formal definitions defined in legislation at state (Disability Act 2006) and federal level (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) reveal disability is much wider than most people would expect.

For the purposes of this plan, G-MW refers to the definition of disability as contained in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. This covers disabilities, which are physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological. This definition also covers physical disfigurement and the presence of disease causing organisms, such as HIV. It is important to note that this definition covers a disability that currently exists, may exist in the future or is imputed to a person.

With such a wide-ranging definition, it is not surprising that the incidence of disability is far higher than normally considered. This comes from recent demographic data which reveals 20 per cent of the Australian population has a disability (data provided by the Office for Disability Victoria).

The data also reveals that the incidence of disability is increasing, in line with the ageing of the population as the baby-boomer generation moves into retirement.

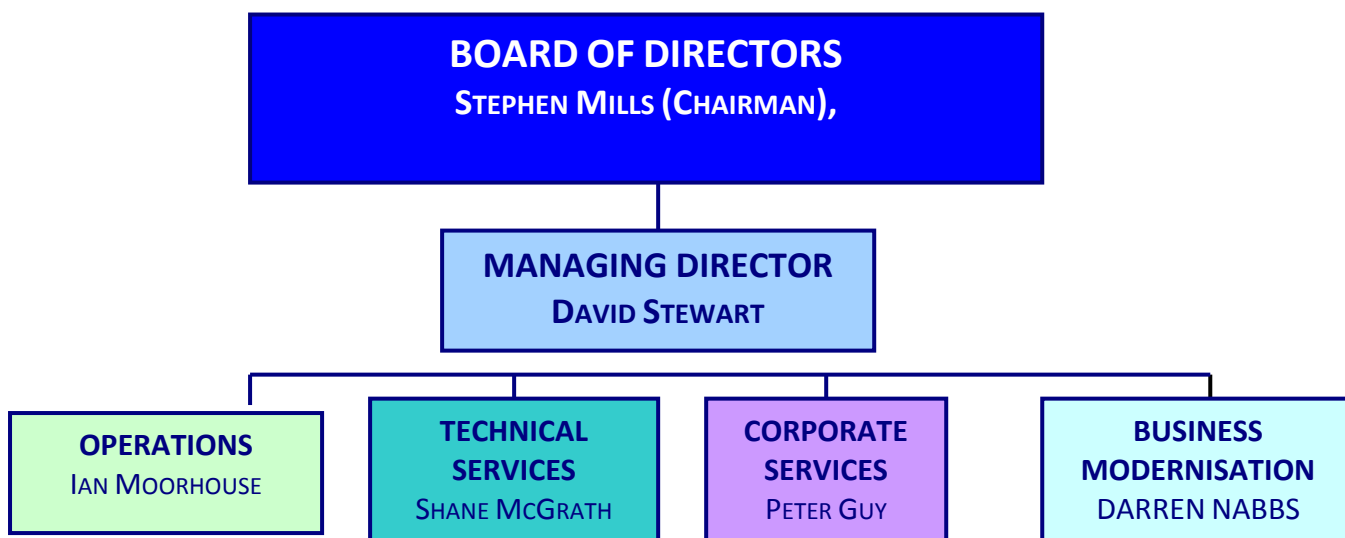
3. GOULBURN-MURRAY WATER

G-MW manages water storage, delivery and drainage systems, involving 70% of Victoria's stored water. Our business is harvesting, storing and delivering water, and ensuring water is available for all of our customers.

Our region covers 68,000 square kilometres between the Great Divide, the River Murray and west down river to Swan Hill and the Loddon River. Goulburn-Murray Water is also Victoria's Constructing Authority for the Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

We provide service to approximately 32,000 customers through the efforts of approximately 700 staff. In addition our facilities such as dams, channels and their surrounds provide recreation and relaxation opportunities for many more thousands of people.

The organisational structure of Goulburn-Murray Water consists four Divisions: Operations, Technical Services, Corporate Services and Business Modernisation as indicated below:



Each of the above Divisions and their General Managers will be responsible for parts of the Disability Action Plan as it relates to their particular field and for the overall co-ordination of the DAP across the Corporation.

This recognises that all work units have a role to play in the development, implementation, review and ongoing improvement of the DAP.

4. STAKEHOLDERS , ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

G-MW undertakes to consult with people with disabilities and experts, to follow best practice principles in hiring and sustaining its employees with disabilities and to encourage similar undertakings with other organisations.

A Disability Action Plan sub-committee has been established to develop, review and coordinate the implementation of the plan. The sub-committee consists of a representative from each division and is chaired by Julie Marshall, HR Partner. As the chair Julie will report regularly to the General Managers and Managing Director through the Executive Manager People and Development.

The group will meet at least four times per year and at other times when required. The members of the working group are:

- Lyn Madden – Business Manager - Operations
- Kelly Stevens – Business Manager - Technical Services
- Hayley Collins – Manager Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Corporate Services
- Karleigh Goodwin – Project Officer Modernisation – Business Modernisation

The implementation of our DAP will be reported on in the annual report as consistent with section 38 of the Disability Act 2006.

5. ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

The following is an overview of the steps that will be taken to implement the plan.

- Communicate the plan to all staff
- Establish a customer disability advisory committee to identify the major barriers to customers accessing our goods, services and facilities
- Commence disability awareness training with senior management and customer service staff
- Review employment barriers and make necessary adjustments to employment practices
- Conduct a building audit and identify costs for any building changes that may be required
- Commence removing barriers that have been identified
- Devise a whole of organisation training policy
- Review the plan on an ongoing basis

6. Action 1 - Section 38 (a) Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)

Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities				
Action	Responsibility	Action Required	Timeline	Evaluation
A1 - Determine major barriers about which G-MW can act to improve	General Manager Operations	Because G-WM serves a specific sector the State's population, generic actions do not apply therefore consultation with customer groups is required to determine the main disability barriers about which G-WM can do something which can have improvement benefits within the first 18 months.	November 2009	A report is completed which lists the major barriers confirmed or perceived by customer representatives, faced by people with disabilities in accessing G-MW services.
A2 - Communicate the Disability Action Plan to Staff	Managing Director	A communication strategy for staff developed and implemented	September 2009	90 per cent of all employees have received the DAP.
A3 - Develop an action plan to improve identified major barriers	Managing Director	A report from Action A1 to be completed by the end of November 2009 will be required from which a working group will need to be formed to determine what action can be taken to overcome or improve the major barriers identified.	March 2010	An Action Plan that the Customer group is satisfied, to address the main barriers, is in place and responsibilities allocated by the end of March 2010.
A4 - Implement steps for improvement	Managing Director	As follow up to Action A3, implementation to address the major barriers will be commenced by June 2010	June 2010	Action commenced on the main barriers by 30 June 2010 and the Customer group is satisfied with progress
A5 - Conduct building audit	General Manager Technical Services	All G-MW buildings which provide customer service to be audited for disability access and service provision	Jan 2010	Audit completed and plans for action to overcome barriers for access and service formulated by end of Jan 2010.
A6 - Develop and cost building change plans	General Manager Technical Services	The findings of Action A5 to be evaluated and priorities for building change to be defined and costed and budget allocation made for expenditure in 2010-11 budgets.	March 2010	Priorities and budget established by March 2010.

7. Action 2 – Section 38 (b) Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)

Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment				
Action	Responsibility	Action Required	Timeline	Evaluation
B1 - Determine the main barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment with G-MW	Executive Manager People and Development	Through liaison with existing employees define and describe the major barriers that exist (or are perceived to exist) in G-MW that obstruct people with disabilities from obtaining or maintaining employment.	November 2009	Major barriers are defined and listed by the end of November 2009
B2 - Develop action plan for implementation of the removal of barriers for disability employment	Executive Manager People and Development	A plan for implementing action to reduce barriers to disability employment is developed and published by end of November 2009.	November 2009	The implementation plan is published by end November 2009.
B3 - Produce a reasonable adjustment policy	Executive Manager People and Development	A reasonable adjustment policy will be developed by November 2009 which will outline measures that G-MW will take to ensure that people with a disability gain what they need to do the job.	November 2009	The document developed and published by the end of November 2009.
B4 - G-MW participates in local disability employment network	Executive Manager People and Development	Contact and liaison with local disability group(s) is made and a program for involvement is developed and agreed for implementation.	November 2009	A Network formed and program developed
B5 - Induction manual updated informing new staff of the disability action plan	Executive Manager People and Development	Update online induction program to include the DAP	September 2009	Following approval of the DAP it is placed on the G-MW Intranet and in the G-MW induction manual and on-line process.

8. Action 3 - Section 38 (c) Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)

Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability				
Action	Responsibility	Action Required	Timeline	Evaluation
C1 - Establish and provide resources for a customer disability advisory committee	General Manager Operations	Through the existing Water Services Committees, establish a committee, with a representative from each Irrigation Area, for the ongoing liaison and advice in relation to the reduction of barriers for customers with disability. This is closely linked to Action A1	September 2009	Committee established and two meetings held before December 2009.
C2 - Produce two articles per year on disability for G-MW web site, employee and customer newsletters	Manager Stakeholder Relationships	Articles to be researched, written and published	November 2009	The Articles are written and appear and generate discussion
C3 - Devise communications methods to maintain links with disability groups	Manager Stakeholder Relationships	In co-operation with Committee of Action C1 develop and implement new methods for communication with disability groups.	Ongoing	Feedback from community groups indicates high satisfaction with G-MW's communications
C4 – G-MW nominated contact to liaise with Office for Disability	Executive Manager People and Development	An employee to be nominated and provided with work time for liaison with the Office for Disability and who can then provide drive and direction for improvement actions	July 2009	Meeting with Office of Disability arranged by end July 2009.

9. Action 4 – Section 38 (d) Disability Act 2006 (Victoria)

Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminates against persons with a disability				
Action	Responsibility	Action Required	Timeline	Evaluation
D1 - Office Customer Service Staff attend disability training	Manager Water Services and Manager Water Administration	All office (Tatura and Area) based staff who deal with customers complete two hours of training about the definition of disability and actions that can be taken to reduce barriers and improve service.	April 2010	Tatura customer service staff have received training by April 2010
D2 - Attend information sessions on Disability Action Plan	General Manager, Corporate Services	Through liaison and advice from the Office of Disability arrange for half day information/training sessions for all Group and Unit Managers	April 2010	All General Managers and Unit Managers to have attended the session by April 2010
D3 - Devise whole-of-organisation training policy in disability awareness	Executive Manager People and Development	As an outcome and evaluation of Actions D1 and D2 devise a program for disability awareness training for all staff and Water Service Committee members.	June 2010	Program developed and arrangements made for implementation by the end of June 2010.
D4 - Review this DAP	Executive Manager People and Development	Reports against this Action to be reported to the Group Manager Forum twice per year and the total DAP reviewed and revised by December 2010.	Ongoing and December 2010	Reporting takes place at scheduled meetings and a revised DAP is produced by end December 2010.

10. Further Information

If you have any questions in relation to the Goulburn-Murray Water DAP please contact:

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