

# **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2012-2017**

(This plan is available upon request in alternative formats such as standard or large print, email, by post and audio format on CR ROM)

## Table of contents

<b>Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2012-2017</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1. <i>Background</i> .....	3
1.1 Synergy .....	3
1.2 Functions and services provided by Synergy .....	3
1.3 Planning for better access .....	3
1.4 Review of the 2007–2011 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan .....	3
1.5 Development of the 2012–2017 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan .....	4
1.6 Amendments to the 2012–2017 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan—Inclusion of the Verve Energy/Generation business and Introduction of Outcome 7 .....	4
2. <i>Access and inclusion policy statement for people with disabilities, their families and carers</i> .....	4
3. <i>Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan</i> .....	5
3.1 Responsibility for the planning process .....	5
3.2 Community consultation process .....	6
3.3 Outcomes of the consultation process.....	6
3.4 Responsibility for implementing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan .....	6
3.5 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability .....	7
3.6 Review and evaluation mechanisms .....	7
3.6.1 Review and monitoring .....	7
3.6.2 Evaluation .....	7
4. <i>Reporting on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan</i> .....	8
5. <i>Contact us</i> .....	8

## **1. Background**

### **1.1 Synergy**

Synergy and Verve Energy merged to become the Electricity Generation and Retail Corporation (trading as Synergy) on 1 January 2014. Synergy is owned by the State Government of Western Australia, represented by the Minister of Energy.

### **1.2 Functions and services provided by Synergy**

Synergy is Western Australia's largest energy generator and retailer to more than one million residential, business and industry customers. Synergy operates as an energy generator and retailer in an area known as the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) that extends from Kalbarri in the North, East to Kalgoorlie-Boulder and South to Albany.

Synergy now has an extensive and diverse portfolio of power stations and sustainable generation such as wind and solar around the state, including around Collie, Kwinana, Cockburn and Pinjar, Greenough and Albany.

The primary activities of Synergy include the generation of energy through our power stations, wholesale energy procurement and trading, marketing, sales, billing, payment processing and customer service.

### **1.3 Planning for better access**

Disability affects one third of the Western Australian population. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures indicate that 405,500 people in Western Australia have some level of disability and an estimated 246,800 Western Australians are carers for people with disability.

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that all public authorities develop and implement a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan demonstrating how people with disability will have equal access to services and facilities.

### **1.4 Review of the 2007–2011 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

Synergy's inaugural Disability Access and Inclusion Plan commenced in 2007 and provided a number of key strategies to improve access and raise awareness of issues for people with disability.

As a result of the 2007–2011 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan the following outcomes were achieved:

- any external events organised by Synergy were planned so that they were accessible to the public
- key contract providers (as outlined by the DAIP contract guidelines) were provided with information regarding our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
- ongoing training was provided to customer-facing Synergy staff to assist them to interact with customers with disability or other accessibility concerns

- the reception area of the Synergy office was renovated in 2011 to incorporate changes to the design that complied with AS1428.2
- Synergy advertised its process for making a complaint or handling a grievance and staff knowledge was improved to facilitate with the receipt of complaints from people with a disability

## **1.5 Development of the 2012–2017 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

In initially developing the 2012–2017 DAIP, a series of consultations were held in order to develop implementation strategies for achieving the six desired outcomes set by the Disability Services Commission. Internally, workshops were conducted with stakeholders from key areas of the business to brainstorm and develop the strategies applicable to each desired outcome. During these workshops, each strategy was assigned a completion timeline and to the departments responsible for their implementation and progress reporting. Each of these strategies has been endorsed by the working group.

The complete list of outcomes and associated implementation strategies can be found in Annexure 1.

## **1.6 Amendments to the 2012–2017 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan—Inclusion of the Verve Energy/Generation business and Introduction of Outcome 7**

The *Disability Services Act 1993* was reviewed in 2013, resulting in a key change for public authorities. There has been an additional outcome added to the list of requirements for public authorities. The introduction of Outcome 7 requires Synergy to include information in the DAIP about how it will improve employment opportunities for people with disability and break down existing barriers. Synergy already provides employment opportunities to people with disability through its business as usual processes, and we are committed to ensure that this continues into the foreseeable future.

Through its integration with Verve Energy and the introduction of Outcome 7, we have extended the scope of our disability access and inclusion strategies across all areas of the business to ensure Synergy is consistent in its approach to providing equal opportunities to people living with a disability.

## **2. Access and inclusion policy statement for people with disabilities, their families and carers**

Synergy is committed to:

- ensuring that people with disability, their families and carers are able to fully access the range of departmental services and facilities (both in-house and contracted), providing them with the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities enjoyed by all people in the community
- ensuring that people with disability are given the opportunity to participate in shaping the development of their community through the consultative process

- consulting with people with disability, their families and carers and, where required, disability organisations to ensure that barriers to access and inclusion are addressed appropriately
- ensuring that its agents and contractors work towards the desired access and inclusion outcomes in the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan by providing a copy of our current Plan when requested
- achieving the seven desired outcomes of its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

The following seven outcomes were used to create the supporting strategies (as outlined in Annexure 1) that will be used throughout the implementation process. The seven desired outcomes are:

1. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the relevant public authority.
2. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the relevant public authority.
3. People with disability receive information from the relevant public authority in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.
4. People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of the relevant public authority.
5. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to the relevant public authority.
6. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the relevant public authority.
7. People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.

### **3. Development of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

#### **3.1 Responsibility for the planning process**

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was the responsibility of the People and Culture team in consultation with Synergy's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group.

The Working Group was established in January 2012 and comprised 10 members of staff from key areas of the business. The size of the working group has now increased to include representatives from all areas of the larger and more diverse business. This Working Group will ultimately be responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of this plan.

### **3.2 Community consultation process**

Synergy created this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in consultation with key stakeholders to improve its validity.

#### **The consultation was advertised and promoted:**

- on the Synergy external website
- on the Synergy intranet
- in the West Australian Newspaper
- by key staff to their teams.

#### **Consultation methods included:**

- workshops with the Synergy Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group
- written and verbal responses to a survey
- telephone interviews with external stakeholders
- face-to-face interviews with internal stakeholders (including members of the Working Group)
- an online survey for Synergy internal staff regarding their knowledge of disability access and inclusion—30 surveys received
- investigation of trends and best practice in access and inclusion information
- review of relevant organisational documentation.

### **3.3 Outcomes of the consultation process**

Through consultation with Synergy staff and the public, we have outlined key areas of focus for our implementation strategies. The feedback received was largely positive, with customer facing areas of the business highlighting the importance of continual training. Overall, the staff members who were interviewed felt that Synergy needed to maintain the strategies included within the 2007–2011 DAIP and continue to enhance the profile of the DAIP through articles on the intranet and on the Contact Centre Knowledge Base. External feedback was also positive and highlighted the need to continue the level of awareness that staff have when communicating with customers who have a disability.

### **3.4 Responsibility for implementing the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

It is a requirement of the *Disability Services Act 1993* that public authorities must take all practical measures to ensure that the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is implemented by all staff and contractors of Synergy.

Implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is the responsibility of all departments of Synergy, depending on the action required. The Disability Access

and Inclusion Working Group will oversee and monitor the overall implementation process.

### **3.5 Communicating the plan to staff and people with disability**

The following strategies will be used to inform staff and people with disability of the development and implementation of Synergy's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan:

- the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group will advise staff, at team meetings about the planned implementation
- the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be made available on the Synergy intranet and internet sites
- through the Synergy internet site, Synergy will advise that copies of the plan will be made available to members of the public, and where applicable, will be made available in various types of format, being electronic, hard copy in standard and in large print
- a notice promoting the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be placed in the West Australian newspaper
- if amendments are made to the annual implementation plan of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, an updated version will be uploaded on to the Synergy intranet and internet sites.

### **3.6 Review and evaluation mechanisms**

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum review requirements for public authorities in relation to disability access and inclusion plans. This plan will be reviewed at least every five years, in accordance with the Act.

The annual implementation plan may be amended from time to time as required. If this occurs, the amended version will be uploaded to the Synergy intranet and internet sites, and re-submitted to the Disability Services Commission.

#### **3.6.1 Review and monitoring**

The working group will meet yearly to discuss suitability of the plan for the organisation. Any strategies that come from the yearly meetings resulting in any changes to the plan will be re-submitted to the Disability Services Commission as appropriate.

A status report on the implementation of the strategies of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be completed each year to determine the completion of each outcome.

#### **3.6.2 Evaluation**

Synergy will evaluate the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in the following manner:

- reporting will be conducted and will be made available to the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive upon request

- on an annual basis, once reporting has been completed, the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive will endorse the implementation of outcomes. Feedback will also be sought at this stage regarding the effectiveness of the plan, and if changes are made to the plan it will be updated on the Synergy intranet and internet sites
- staff, at any stage from the date of validity of the plan, will have the opportunity to provide feedback on how well they believe the strategies are working and make suggestions. Should the plan be changed, the plan will be updated on the Synergy intranet and internet sites and re-submitted to DSC.

#### **4. Reporting on the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan**

The *Disability Services Act 1993* sets out the minimum reporting requirements for public authorities in relation to Disability Access and Inclusion Plans.

Synergy will report on the implementation of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan through its annual report and the prescribed pro-forma to the Disability Service Commission by 31 July each year, outlining its progress towards the achievement of the desired outcomes of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

#### **5. Contact us**

Synergy welcomes your feedback. If you would like to comment on our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan or make a suggestion to improve access, please contact us by one of the following methods:

Phone	(08) 6212 1278
TTY	(08) 9221 8608
TIS	13 14 50
Email	<a href="mailto:daip@synergy.net.au">daip@synergy.net.au</a>
Address	228 Adelaide Terrace Perth WA 6000
Mail	People & Culture Synergy GPO Box K851 Perth WA 6842
Website	<a href="http://www.synergy.net.au">www.synergy.net.au</a>



Annexure 1: Strategies to improve access and inclusion

**Outcome 1: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and events organised by Synergy.**

Strategy	Timeline	Area Responsible
Continue to ensure people with disability are provided with an opportunity to comment on access to services.	ongoing	all areas
Ensure that events are organised so that they are accessible to people with disability.	ongoing	Retail Products & Markets, Strategy & Innovation
Ensure that Synergy staff and contractors are aware of the relevant requirements of the <i>Disability Services Act 1993</i>	ongoing	Commercial Services, Learning and Development, IT Commercial Services , Procurement and Contract Management
Occupational Health and Safety procedures are reviewed to ensure the safety of staff, contractors and visitors with disabilities in the event of a fire, evacuation or other critical incidents.	ongoing	Safety People and Culture, Commercial Services

**Outcome 2: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access Synergy's buildings and facilities.**

Strategy	Timeline	Area Responsible
Ensure the Synergy buildings are physically accessible to people with disability as far as reasonably practicable.	ongoing	Commercial Services
As required Synergy will aim to carry out an access audit of any new sites and facilities, using the DSC Access Resource Kit checklist and will take reasonable steps to reduce the barriers	as required	Commercial Services
Budget for, and schedule any, required access improvements to the Synergy building and facilities as identified in the access audit.	ongoing	Commercial Services
Ensure that the advice of an access consultant is sought where required when planning and designing any facilities or undertaking major refurbishments.	ongoing	Commercial Services

**Outcome 3: People with disability receive information from Synergy in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Area Responsible</b>
Improve community awareness that information on the Synergy website is available in alternative formats upon request.	ongoing	Retail Products and Markets, Corporate Communications
Continual review of Synergy employee knowledge of how to deliver information in alternative formats.	ongoing	Learning and Development Corporate Communications
If the Synergy intranet is reviewed during this time, the accessibility of content published will be included in the replacement strategy.	as required	Corporate Communications
Review accessibility of content on the Synergy website against World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) accessibility guidelines and implement improvements as required	as required	Retail Products and Markets
Review the accessibility and formatting options that Synergy bills are available to customers in (including large print, text to speech compatibility, etc.)	June 2017	Retail Products and Markets

**Outcome 4: People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from Synergy staff as other people receive**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Area responsible</b>
Improve staff awareness of disability and access issues and improve skills to provide a good service to people with disability.	ongoing	Learning and Development
Maintain policies and procedures to continue to ensure they prohibit discrimination; harassment and victimisation of staff, contractors and visitors with disability.	ongoing	People and Culture
Ensure key information (such as how to arrange an interpreter or translator and convert information into an alternative format) is readily available to customer service staff on the Intranet and Contact Centre Knowledge Base.	ongoing maintenance as necessary	Continuous Improvement, Corporate Relations

**Outcome 5: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Synergy.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Area Responsible</b>
Maintain current complaint mechanisms to	ongoing	Service Quality

continue to ensure they meet the needs of people with a disability.		
Maintain staff knowledge so they can facilitate the receipt of complaints from people with a disability.	ongoing	Service Quality

**Outcome 6: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by Synergy.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Area Responsible</b>
Synergy will continue to provide inclusive opportunities for staff, contractors and visitors with disabilities to participate in Synergy public consultation.	ongoing	all areas
Synergy will commit to ongoing monitoring of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan to ensure implementation and satisfactory outcomes.	ongoing	People and Culture as the caretaker of the Plan with input from all other areas

**Outcome 7: People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with a public authority.**

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Area Responsible</b>
Synergy will ensure that all job advertisements are available in an different formats such as 12 or 14pt Arial font).	ongoing	People and Culture
Synergy will continue to encourage people from all diversity groups to apply for all roles by including an equal employment opportunity statement to all adverts.	ongoing	People and Culture
Synergy will continue to monitor and review our policies and procedures to be inclusive of people with disability.	ongoing	People and Culture
Synergy will ensure staff who have a disability are provided with appropriate development / promotional opportunities to meet longer term plans for career development.	ongoing	People and Culture/ Management
Synergy will ensure training/ information is available to hiring managers on how to interview a person with a disability.	as required	People and Culture
Take immediate corrective action on any complaint or concern that disability has been a barrier to obtaining or maintaining employment.	as required	People and Culture People Managers