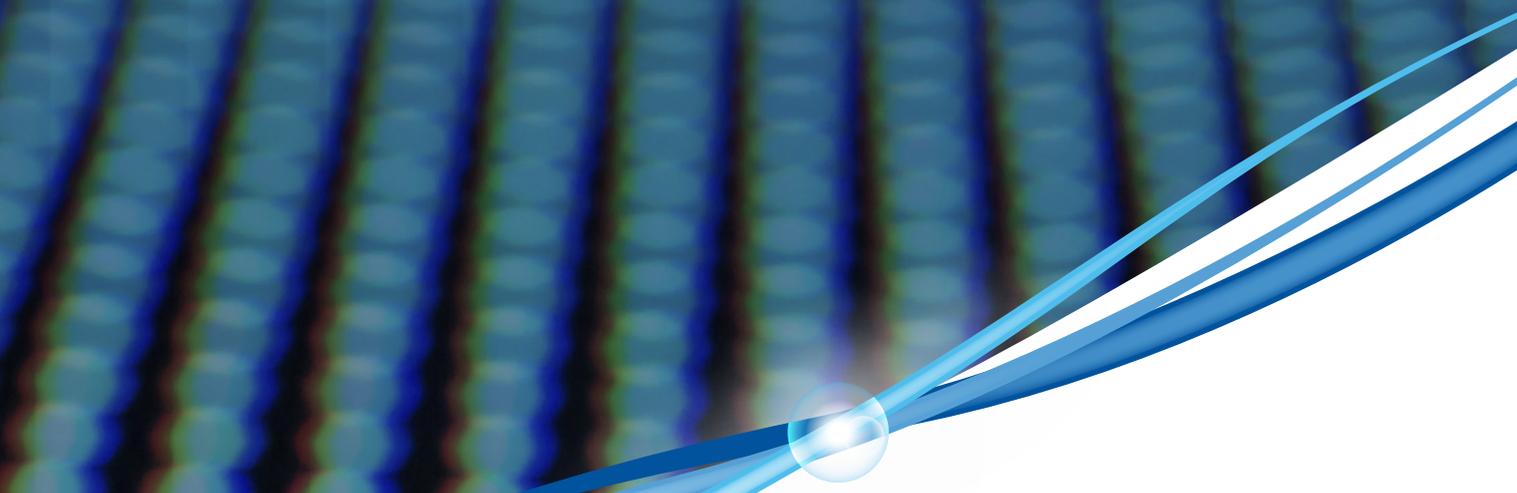


# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2016-2018

## Education Excellence Framework

Promoting excellence throughout courses  
to support exceptional learner outcomes



*Chisholm*



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## ABOUT THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

### Background and objectives

Chisholm Institute (Chisholm) is committed to ensuring people with disabilities receive equitable access to educational and employment opportunities and services. We embrace the diverse nature of the communities with whom we work, we are committed to providing life-long learning opportunities, and we aim to improve employment opportunities fairly, equitably and in accordance with legislative provisions.

We promote and facilitate equal educational and employment opportunities for people who have a disability, and we endeavour to remove barriers that may prevent people with a disability from accessing our services.

The primary strategic plan that drives our commitment is the Chisholm Disability Action Plan (DAP). The Chisholm DAP reflects our obligations under the Disability Act 2006 (Vic) by:

1. Reducing barriers to people with disabilities accessing Chisholm's goods, services and facilities
2. Reducing barriers to people with disabilities obtaining and maintaining employment at Chisholm
3. Promoting inclusion and participation in the Chisholm community
4. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disabilities.

These objectives apply to our organisation as a whole, encompassing the strategic and operational activities of our seven campuses, and governing our approach to workplaces within which we engage.

In 2015 Chisholm Consolidated had 25,759 students across all funding areas. Chisholm students in 2015 tended to be under the age of 25 and employed with a year 12 completion. Students who disclosed a form of disability at the time of enrolling equated to approximately 4% of the total student population.

### Disability definitions

This plan adopts the definition of disability in section 4 of the federal Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) under which disability means:

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment that result in disturbed behaviour

and includes a disability that:

- h) presently exists; or
- i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- k) is imputed to a person.



Disability also includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of a disability under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

## Discrimination in education

The DDA seeks to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people with a disability. Under section 22 of the Act, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability:

- by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student; or
- in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student; or
- by denying the student access or limiting the student's access, to any benefit provided by the educational authority; or
- by expelling, or subjecting the student to any other detriment, or
- by developing curricula or training courses having a content that will either exclude the person from participation, or subject the person to any other detriment; or
- by accrediting curricula or training courses having such a content.

## Standards for education (2005)

In August 2005 a detailed series of Standards for Education Providers (the Standards) was also introduced as an accompanying framework to the DDA. The Standards identify five areas of increased emphasis including:

- Enrolment
- Participation
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- Student support services
- And the elimination of harassment and victimization

## Developing our Disability Action Plan

This is Chisholm's third Disability Action Plan. The earlier DAPs covered the periods 2009 to 2011 and 2012 to 2014, and now we have drafted a 2016 to 2018 DAP which will be presented to Chisholm's Education Committee in the first quarter of 2016.

In 2015 Chisholm completed ground breaking and resource intensive developmental work which culminated in the launch of the Chisholm Educational Excellence Framework (EEF) and the establishment of the Professional Educator College (PEC).

The EEF provides access anywhere for Chisholm educators to find just-in-time resources, guidelines, videos, templates and exemplars to use in their courses. It forms a consistent and professional framework for course development, delivery and assessment within a student centred support structure. The EEF applies to all education sectors including: VET, HE, ELICOS, VCE and VCAL courses.

The PEC was established to support the work of the EEF by achieving sustainable change in educator practice. In 2016 and beyond, the PEC will implement tangible capability building strategies across the educator workforce through a comprehensive and innovative professional development program.



With these two major initiatives occupying the focus of 2015, it was decided to defer the preparation of the third Chisholm DAP until 2016 at which time it would be embedded within the fully operational Educational Excellence Framework.

The 2016-2018 DAP will be:

- published on the Chisholm website
- positioned prominently within the Educational Excellence Framework reinforcing our commitment to the delivery of services to students with disabilities within mainstream course delivery
- promoted on the Chisholm staff intranet
- introduced to teaching areas through information seminars and routine meetings
- reinforced through targeted training activities organized by the Professional Educator College

### What was achieved in 2015?

In 2015, 1607 students indicated on enrolment forms that they had a disability and nominated the nature of their disability. Of this number 152 students registered with the Disability Support Service for direct support.

Students with disabilities were studying at every one of Chisholm's 7 campuses.

In 2015 the Disability Support Service responded to 181 formal enquiries from

- prospective individual students with disabilities,
- feeder schools
- disability job services agencies.

The Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) supported classroom educators to provide an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities. This included the preparation of individual Learning Access Plans for all registered students.

Learning Access Plans provide confidential information about a student's particular disability coupled with practical plans for educators to support delivery and assessment strategies.

Chisholm conducted targeted training workshops involving over 100 educators and support staff on how to better support students with learning difficulties within the classroom.

These interactive workshops, delivered by external specialists, covered the characteristics of specific learning disabilities, outlined strategies to accommodate learners and provided hands on demonstrations of assistive technologies which enable learners to engage more actively in their classrooms. In 2016 the PEC will become actively involved in delivering disability focussed workshops for educators and support staff across all delivery areas.

The Disability Support Service reviewed all student and staff facing information channels. As a result, new quality management documentation on Chisholm's disability strategy was developed, internal and external online platforms were updated, disability resources for Chisholm's information and enrolment sessions were refreshed and distributed for 2016 commencements, and internal processes such as disability registrations, consent forms, privacy and confidentiality protocols were reviewed.



## ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chisholm's 2016-2018 Disability Action Plan sets out 10 actions which we have identified to meet the objectives of s 38 of the Disability Act 2006 (Vic).

### **Our objective is to reduce barriers to accessing Chisholm's goods, services and facilities**

#### **Action 1: Establishing a Disability Action Plan Working Committee (DAPWC)**

Through the leadership of the Executive Director Teaching & Learning, we will re-constitute a DAPWC comprising a representative group of senior management, educational practitioners and service users to direct the implementation of the DAP and support its coverage across the institute. The convenor of the DAPWC will be the Executive Director Teaching & Learning or delegate, and the administrative operations of the DAPWC will be the responsibility of a project team comprising the Manager Learning & Support Services, the Team Leader Student Services and the Disability Liaison Officer.

We will know we have succeeded in 2016 when the DAPWC has been formed with appropriate Terms of Reference and membership, a meeting schedule is in place for 2016 and meeting notes are published

In 2017 and 2018 our achievement will be confirmed through the publication of meeting notes and occasional reports.

An end of year DAP report will be presented to the Education Committee identifying targets achieved in 2016, carry forward action items from 2016 into 2017 and new initiatives identified for 2017 and 2018 to strengthen Chisholm's commitment to the provision of goods, services and facilities to students with disabilities.

#### **Action 2: Ensuring that students with disabilities are able to access course and enrolment information on the same basis as any other student.**

Online and print publications regarding enrolment and courses will adhere to recognised guidelines and be available in alternate formats. The Chisholm website, which will be updated in 2016, will ensure that the support services available to students with disabilities are prominent and equal opportunity information is accessible ensuring that prospective students considering enrolment at Chisholm are confident that their learning needs are understood and will be supported.

We will be able to measure our success in relation to accessible information by conducting a desk audit in December 2016 with Marketing and Student Recruitment.

#### **Action 3: Ensuring that students are aware of the Disability Support Service (DSS) and the reasonable adjustments available at Chisholm to meet their learning needs**

Student Services will provide enrolment officers from delivery areas and Client Services with information regarding procedures to follow when students disclose a disability on their enrolment forms.

The Disability Support Service will seek data from Academic Administration during Term 1 each year to follow up on students who have identified as having a disability on enrolment forms but have not contacted the DSS by the start of Term 2.



Delivery areas will be encouraged to contact the Disability Liaison Officer to discuss student needs and strategies to assist students with special needs to make contact with the DSS.

We will measure our progress by the increasing numbers of students who disclose their disability on their enrolment form and subsequently have contact with the Disability Support Service. A further measure will be feedback from senior educators and educators in relation to the support provided by the DSS.

### **Action 4: Enabling students with disabilities to participate in campus life on the same basis as all other students**

The Student Services Department will ensure that relevant information about non-academic services and activities, including libraries, careers and employment, counselling, study skills and disability support, is widely distributed and available in multiple formats. Chisholm's DLO participates in the TAFE Disability Network (TDN) where best practice strategies are identified through discussions and exemplars.

The student recreation team will ensure that all campus activities are assessed in the planning stage to identify and mitigate access barriers, promotional activities are broadly based but also target specific teaching areas, and additional support staff are engaged at events where students with disabilities require assistance to participate.

We will know we have succeeded when the evaluations conducted after each activity indicate that more students with disabilities have participated in campus recreational events and report that their access needs have been met.

### **Action 5: Ensuring premises and facilities are accessible and safe for students with disabilities, as far as practicable within budget constraints and timelines for facility upgrades**

For the duration of this DAP, the Frankston campus will be undergoing a major re-development. The DAPWC will ensure that the views and needs of students with disabilities are articulated to the project management team. Chisholm's expectation is that the designs and construction of all new built environments adhere to recognised access standards.

We will know we have succeeded when the Frankston campus upgrade is completed and is recognised as a best practice example of accessibility and safety for people with disabilities.

## **Our objective is to reduce barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment with Chisholm Institute of TAFE**

### **Action 6: Maintaining policies and procedures to attract and retain employees with disabilities**

Chisholm is a leading large TAFE institution in Victoria and nationally having been formally recognised as such in 2014. Chisholm will maintain its employer of choice status by constantly reviewing disability and diversity provisions within institute employment guidelines and strategies. This will include regularly reviewing reporting measures for staff with a disability. Chisholm respects the right of staff members not to disclose a disability but is of the view that its inclusive and supportive culture will give staff confidence to seek discuss their workplace needs with their supervisors.

We will know we have succeeded when increasing numbers of employees with disabilities disclose their needs either informally or through the Performance Development and Review Plan activity which all Chisholm staff complete each year.



### **Action 7: Providing flexible and reasonable adjustments for staff members with a disability to support and enhance work performance**

People and Culture (the human resources function across Chisholm) is the primary source of advice to Chisholm employees. People and Culture provides guidelines for managers and supervisors in relation to understanding their responsibilities in the workplace assisting people with disabilities and incorporating consideration of reasonable adjustment provisions within probationary and annual performance planning.

We will measure our progress through feedback from supervisors that they have confidence in the advice and support provided and from staff members who have benefitted from adjustments leading to a higher level of workplace satisfaction.

### **Our objective is to promote inclusion and participation in the Chisholm community and achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disabilities**

### **Action 8: Increasing awareness amongst Chisholm staff of our obligations under disability legislation and regulations**

Student Services will roll out the DAP 2016-2018 across Chisholm via a range of activities including staff intranet posts, attendance at organisational committee meetings, publishing copies with distribution outlets across campuses, opportunities for interested staff to attend or contribute advice to DAPWC meetings, and an alert to staff in the CEO's fortnightly message.

Student Services will deliver disability information workshops to every campus and delivery area over the life of the DAP.

We will know we have achieved the desired outcome through staff feedback and attendance at information workshops.

### **Action 9: Promoting inclusive values and practices to the general student population**

Student orientation and course induction activities at the commencement of each semester will reinforce inclusive messages and celebrate the diversity of Chisholm's student population. Student Services team members are available to deliver short, customised information sessions to class groups on diverse topics (bullying, student complaints, student code of conduct) to support educators in developing and maintaining respectful and harmonious learning environments for all students.

We will measure of success by reviewing annually the number of student complaints relating to discrimination and evaluating the effectiveness of our response to each case.

### **Action 10: Providing educators with professional education related to accommodating and supporting learners with diverse abilities**

The Professional Educator College will liaise with Student Services to develop, deliver and evaluate a program of specific electives for educators and support staff to enhance knowledge of inclusive practices within classrooms for student with disabilities. The Disability Support Service will continue to support organic "communities of practice" within Chisholm educator teams by disseminating information, good practice strategies and non-identifying case studies.



We will measure our success by the uptake of the PEC workshop program specifically focussed on disability issues in the inclusive learning environment and by reviewing the post workshop evaluations.

### HOW WILL WE MONITOR AND REPORT ON THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN?

Responsibility for delivering actions under this plan is a shared responsibility across Chisholm.

To make sure we stay on track and deliver on our promises, the committee comprising the Executive Director Teaching & Learning (T&L) with the Managers reporting to that position will monitor progress against the Disability Action Plan, including receiving reports from the DAPWC after each meeting and determining progress against the action items identified in the DAP.

The Executive Director T&L will prepare an end-of-year report on the outcomes of the DAP, and after consideration by the Chisholm Leadership Group, will present the annual DAP report to the Chisholm Education Committee.

We will undertake a satisfaction survey with the users of the disability service half-way through the plan (2017). We will continue to seek feedback from users of the disability service and review this input regularly at DAPWC meetings.

We will undertake a formal detailed review of our progress at the expiry of the plan in 2018. This review will help us the shape our next plan.

#### Acknowledgements

Chisholm gratefully acknowledges support provided by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission in the preparation of its Disability Action Plan 2016-2018

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