

COMCARE ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN 2021–2023



Australian Government

Comcare



PURPOSE

Comcare values and respects the diversity of our employees. We are dedicated to fostering a positive and inclusive workplace that drives innovation and performance.

Comcare's [People Strategy 2019–22](#) outlines our commitment to maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce. We strive to promote and embed an inclusive culture through our leaders and employees, to ensure that our people feel valued and are treated with respect.

Our Accessibility Action Plan 2021–2023 (AAP) provides practical actions to further build on our People Strategy, with the overall aim of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace culture – one that supports and champions difference and ensures that everyone has equal opportunity to participate, contribute and achieve their full potential.

This AAP outlines the actions that Comcare will take to:

- > increase disability representation
- > improve the experiences of our employees and stakeholders living with disability
- > ensure our compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.




This AAP will also implement initiatives to help Comcare reach the Australian Public Service (APS) wide goal of increasing the employment of people with a disability to 7% by 2025. Our AAP is committed to ensuring that people with a disability have access to appropriate support and reasonable adjustments throughout their employment with us. As of December 2020, 3.7% of Comcare employees identified as having a disability.

The commitment to create an accessible and inclusive workplace for our employees with a disability is intrinsically linked to our purpose and outcome statement of promoting and enabling safe and healthy work.

Comcare's AAP focuses on the experiences and contributions made by all employees, creating a positive and inclusive workplace for employees living with disability and providing a better service to the community. Our commitment to attract, recruit, engage and retain people living with disability is reflected in the identified AAP actions, to increase disability representation and improve the employment experience for our employees.



Comcare values and recognises the importance of flexible working arrangements in attracting and maintaining a diverse, adaptive and high performing workforce that can deliver on our strategic objectives. Flexible working arrangements provide mutual benefit for employees and our organisation through the recognition of individual needs in the workplace. They allow for increased engagement and creativity, which are crucial to achieving work satisfaction and delivering organisational priorities. We encourage employees and managers to consider flexible working options to help balance work/life commitments, to facilitate collaboration and foster an inclusive and engaged workforce, where employees feel supported to work. In order to integrate the AAP into our workplace culture, the identified actions that arise from the plan have been aligned to Comcare's values:

Values	Values in action
Act with integrity and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> We are honest, courteous and respectful> We think about the impact of what we are doing on others> We are willing to listen, and work to understand different perspectives> We make objective evidence-based decisions.
Collaborate and innovate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> We consider the needs of our key stakeholders in the work we do> We build consultation into our work processes> We actively engage with others outside of our immediate teams to seek views and new ideas> We are open minded and are willing to explore new ideas and diverse perspectives.
Strive to have a positive impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> We consider others' perspectives and work together positively to optimise our processes and systems and to find positive solutions to problems> We acknowledge the work and achievements of others> We lead by example, strive to deliver outcomes and learn from our mistakes without blame> We do what we say we will, but are realistic in what we can achieve and are prepared to be flexible.



PROGRESS

The actions in this AAP have been identified through the progress and achievements made from the previous Comcare Accessibility Action Plan 2018–20. That plan achieved the following outcomes:

- > Successfully developed an accessibility support toolkit for managers, providing managers and other employees with quick and easy access to resources which may help them understand the accessibility needs of employees and/or colleagues and identify ways to assist them.
- > Undertook an analysis to identify technology gaps for employees with disabilities and successfully implemented hearing loop technology in large meeting rooms.
- > Comcare has registered to participate in the Australian Network on Disability (AND) “Stepping Into” summer internship program.
- > Retained gold skilled workplace accreditation for Mental Health First Aid by undertaking refresher training throughout August and September 2020. Following re-accreditation, additional training has been undertaken for those who have not previously been trained.
- > In collaboration with the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), Comcare developed practical resources to help individuals protect their mental health during the COVID–19 response. Comcare’s dedicated COVID–19 webpage has a specific ‘mental health and wellbeing’ section. Our Corporate Group also procured the Black Dog Institute online skills training (for managers and employees).
- > The 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Group Calendar of Events incorporated activities for various diversity events, including Wear it Purple, RUOK Day, World Mental Health Day and International Day of People with a Disability.

Comcare intends to continue the progress made by these actions, and to build on these achievements with the new actions identified in this AAP.

REPORTING AND REVIEW

The AAP will be managed and monitored by the People, Property and Security team in consultation with the People Committee, Diversity Champion and the Diversity and Inclusion Group. We will track progress of this AAP through regular monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Progress reporting against the AAP will be provided quarterly to the Operational Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities for the actions contained in this plan are outlined in the Action Plan (below).

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

We will evaluate the success of our AAP by the following measures:

- > Positive representation of employees who identify with disability across the duration of the AAP.
- > Striving to meet the Australia Public Service goal of increasing the employment of people with a disability to 7%.
- > Maintain or increased results in comparison to other similar sized agencies in the Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census for questions relating to Inclusion and Diversity.
- > Feedback received from employees with disability reflects a high level of satisfaction with the support and reasonable adjustments made to enable them to perform their roles.

Values priority area one – Act with integrity and respect

How this is demonstrated in our AAP: Comcare will build trust with and empower prospective and current employees and external stakeholders living with disability. Our employees are committed to embodying a culture that values the contributions of people living with disability, and this commitment is demonstrated by Comcare's Senior Executive Service leaders and modelled by all employees. The result of this will be that Comcare's commitment to improving outcomes for people with disability will be known and recognised by all employees and stakeholders.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Ownership
Promote Comcare as a leading employer in our field for people with a disability.	Continue to advertise job vacancies with the ability to opt into the RecruitAbility scheme.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Explore opportunities for disability graduate and traineeship programs and test viability of participation (for example the Australian Public Service Commission's (APSC) GradAccess and NextStep programs).	Annually	People, Property and Security
	Explore opportunities to partner with external organisations to create employment pathways for people with a disability (for example, Job Active, universities).	March 2022	People, Property and Security
	Ensure that Comcare's careers web page and job advertisements continue to include an accessibility statement and that we support all candidates with disability.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Improve retention of employees identifying with a disability by fostering an inclusive culture, providing an accessible working environment and taking a flexible approach to job design.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
Ensure we meet all workplace access and inclusion obligations with respect to systems and property.	Continue to ensure planning, design and construction processes of Comcare offices abide by Australian Government accessibility standards in our accommodation.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Ensure all employees with disability are aware of and have access to a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).	July 2021	Technology and Information Management and People, Property and Security
	Undertake an analysis of employee disability needs to determine where technology gaps may exist.		
	A business case is developed to include hearing loop technology in large meeting rooms across all our offices as part of infrastructure upgrades.		
	Ensure technology supports employees with different needs and requirements.		
Demonstrate Comcare's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity principles in procurement processes and promoting socially inclusive procurement	Review and update procurement guidance to include information about disability-specific procurement platforms for consideration in procurement processes.	September 2021	Finance and Assurance
	Communicate the changes to procurement guidance and the benefits of socially inclusive procurement to all employees.		

Values priority area two – Collaborate and Innovate

How this is demonstrated in our AAP: Comcare employees work together to create an environment that is healthy and safe, and that acknowledges and supports employees living with disability. The impact of this will be that all Comcare employees are engaged in conversations about how to improve outcomes for people with disability and are accountable for achieving this.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Ownership
Comcare's Senior Executive Service (SES) leaders commit to creating an inclusive and accessible workplace and encourage commitment of the same from all employees.	Comcare's Diversity Champion will engage with SES leaders in the implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) 2021–23.	Ongoing	Diversity Champion, SES leaders, supported by the Diversity and Inclusion Group and People, Property and Security
	Comcare's Diversity Champion will attend the APSC Disability Champions Network meeting (or nominate an SES proxy) and report on topics discussed to the Diversity and Inclusion Group.	Ongoing	Diversity Champion, SES leaders, supported by the Diversity and Inclusion Group and People, Property and Security
	Our SES leaders will promote and support internal events relating to accessibility.	Ongoing	SES Corporate Communications and Strategy
Demonstrate our commitment by maintaining membership of disability expert bodies and leverage off opportunities provided by them.	Renew corporate membership of Australian Network on Disability (AND) annually.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Our Diversity Champion attends the AND Champions Network meetings and reports on topics discussed to the Diversity and Inclusion Group.	Ongoing	Diversity Champion
	A member of the Diversity and Inclusion Group attends AND members roundtable meetings and reports back on topics discussed.	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Group
	Comcare continues to participate in the AND 'Stepping Into' internship program for tertiary students with a disability to assist them to develop their work skills, with at least one internship offered per summer/winter season.	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Group
Cultivate a workplace that provides high levels of support for people with disabilities to assist them to successfully perform their duties.	Ensure that Comcare employees with disability are provided with reasonable adjustments (if any are required) and are supported in being able to communicate or identify any workplace improvements in support of Comcare's AAP.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security

Values priority area three – Strive to have a positive impact

How this is demonstrated in our AAP: Opportunities will be provided for all Comcare employees to develop a better knowledge of matters associated with living with a disability. This will ensure that Comcare's collective understanding of matters relating to disability awareness continues to increase and remain current.

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Ownership
Mature our approach in promoting disability confidence of managers and employees.	Promote resources from AND membership to provide information and support for Comcare employees about disability confidence through ComNet and other communication platforms.	Quarterly	People, Property and Security
	Deliver a pilot session of Disability Confidence training for employees and assess the viability of delivering to all employees.	August 2021	People, Property and Security
Promote and celebrate key awareness events relating to disability and mental health.	Commemorate RUOK Day, World Mental Health Day, and International Day of People with Disability annually with an appropriate event, such as a speaker presentation or ComNet awareness piece.	Annually	SES Diversity and Inclusion Group Corporate Communications and Strategy
Increase the level of confidence among employees with disability to include this information in the Equity and Diversity section of ESS.	Communicate how equity and diversity details are used in Comcare, to alleviate potential concerns for employees with a disability, and explain the importance of Comcare having this information to inform disability inclusion strategies and other initiatives.	Annually	Diversity and Inclusion Group People, Property and Security
Increase the level of awareness and understanding of the AAP.	Promote key activities of the AAP to Comcare employees via Comcare's intranet (ComNet) and other communications platforms.	Ongoing	Diversity and Inclusion Group Corporate Communications and Strategy People, Property and Security
Develop and maintain psychological health resources that promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.	Maintain Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace gold status, with at least 10% of employees trained in Mental Health First Aid.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Continue to develop Team Talk resources (used as a focal point for discussion to increase understanding of health and safety at Comcare) in line with emerging issues related to mental health.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
	Leverage the work of Comcare's Workplace Mental Health Strategy to promote an inclusive culture and a mentally healthy workplace through the sharing of mental health resources and tools.	Ongoing	People, Property and Security
Mature our approach so that leaders at all levels understand accessibility issues and are confident in implementing reasonable adjustments and flexible working arrangements to support people with disability or ill health.	Continue to promote and evaluate Comcare's accessibility support toolkit for managers.	March 2021	People, Property and Security
	Supporting and promoting a workplace where employees and managers feel confident in discussing mental health and accessibility issues and are supported in implementing reasonable adjustments.	July 2021	People, Property and Security

CONTACT DETAILS

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