



Curtin University



CURTIN UNIVERSITY  
DISABILITY ACCESS  
AND INCLUSION PLAN

2017 | 2020

FACILITATING UNIVERSAL DESIGN



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## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE



It is with pleasure that I present Curtin University's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017 – 2020: Facilitating Universal Design (DAIP).

This year, as we celebrate 50 years of innovation, and having the benefit of twenty years' experience in developing and implementing disability plans, the University has approached the DAIP 2017 – 2020 differently. We have moved from a five-year to a three-year plan to not only ensure that strategies remain relevant and embedded in other University plans, but to better align with the University's strategic planning cycle.

Curtin's latest plan resulted from a thorough review of the previous plan, in consultation with students, staff, campus visitors and the local community. Through this review, it was clear that we achieved many milestones over the five-year period. These can be strengthened by further educating our staff, embedding our recent achievements in daily practice and continuously evaluating our progress. Partnering with our students to enhance our access and inclusion practices will also be key.

In addition, we are building on our decade-long understanding of the principles of universal design by applying these to our day-to-day operations, including the ways in which we deliver academic programs, construct and refurbish our facilities, and seek to improve access and inclusion to our events and all of our processes. We will use our inaugural publication, Universal Design Guidelines – Built Environment, as a template to develop further guidelines that can be applied across our core activities of learning, teaching and research.

To date, each plan has brought about notable improvements to Curtin's accessibility and inclusion for people with disability, to assist them in pursuing their study journey. We look forward to working with students, staff and the wider community and our partners in setting and achieving future goals.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Curtin University appreciates the feedback received during the five-year review of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012–2017 from our students, staff, and individuals in the Western Australian community. This has been invaluable in helping us understand our achievements and the work we have ahead, and has informed our preparation of this Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

Curtin University also acknowledges the professional work undertaken on its behalf by E-QUAL Disability Consultants in reviewing our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2012–2017 and in assisting us to formulate our new plan.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Curtin University is committed to innovation and excellence for the benefit of our diverse global community. Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) commits to making Curtin's education, employment and services accessible to people whose innovation and excellence might otherwise be denied or lost to the community. It builds on our values of integrity, respect, courage, excellence and impact, and aligns with our Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

Curtin is required by a 2004 amendment of the *Disability Services Act 1993* (WA) to prepare and lodge a DAIP. The Disability Services Commission (DSC) is mandated to receive the plan and to require annual reporting in Curtin's Annual Report. Curtin is also required to report to the DSC each July on the progress of its plan. A full review of the DAIP must be undertaken every five years.

This plan replaces Curtin's 2012-2017 DAIP. It seeks to consolidate our previous achievements in improving access and inclusion and further embed universal design thinking and practice into all that we do.

The seven outcomes of the DAIP have been prescribed by the DSC. The strategies identified to achieve these outcomes have been developed following a comprehensive review and community consultation process, involving students, staff and community members, conducted between September and November 2016.

The implementation of the DAIP is the responsibility of all Curtin staff and is led by the Disability Access and Inclusion Committee.

# ABOUT CURTIN UNIVERSITY

**Curtin University is an innovative, global university known for its high-impact research, strong industry partnerships and commitment to preparing students for jobs of the future.**

Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) commits to innovation and excellence in its actions for the benefit of our students and community; and further, makes Curtin accessible to people whose innovation and excellence might otherwise be denied or lost to the community. It builds on our values of social justice and inclusion, and equality of opportunity in education and employment for all.

Curtin is Western Australia's largest and most culturally diverse university with more than 58,000 students and 4240 full-time employed staff. Our main campus is located in Bentley, six kilometres south of the centre of Perth, WA's capital city, with an additional metropolitan campus in the Perth CBD. We also have a strong commitment to our regional community through our campus in Kalgoorlie WA.

To date, our education has been focused in the Asia-Pacific region, with offshore campuses in Singapore and Malaysia. However, our recent push towards realising our vision of becoming a global leader in research, education and engagement has seen us expand our

presence into the Middle East through the launch of our Dubai Campus in 2017. We are also actively developing strategic international partnerships, alliances and integrated campuses in the Indian Ocean Region and Africa, and building deeper relationships through existing collaborations in Europe.

#### **OUR TEACHING AREAS INCLUDE:**

- The Centre for Aboriginal Studies
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Science and Engineering
- Faculty of Humanities
- Curtin Business School.

#### **MISSION**

Transform lives and communities through education and research.

#### **2030 VISION**

A recognised global leader in research, education and engagement.



## VALUES AND SIGNATURE BEHAVIOURS

Curtin's shared values define what is important to us collectively and how we work together to achieve our strategic ambition and mission. Building on a foundation of integrity and respect, and through courage, we will achieve excellence and have an impact on the communities we serve.

Our values and signature behaviours foster inclusion and encourage the development of graduates who are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to meet global industry standards. Our values and signature behaviours include:

- **integrity:** to act ethically, honestly and with fairness
- **respect:** to listen, value and acknowledge
- **courage:** to lead, take responsibility and question
- **excellence:** to strive for excellence and distinction
- **impact:** to empower, enable and inspire.

Curtin will express these values through its commitment to the DAIP 2017–2020: Facilitating Universal Design.

## CURTIN UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2017–2020

**Learning and student experience:**  
Lead in educational innovation and prepare graduates for the future.

**Research and innovation:**  
Deliver excellence and impact in research and innovation.

**Engagement and impact:**  
Make a difference globally through engagement and partnerships.

**People and culture:**  
Empower our staff to lead as part of a strong, values-led organisation.

**Global positioning:**  
Secure Curtin's position as a leading global university.

**Sustainable future:**  
Embed a business model that supports our strategic ambitions.

**Curtin will support these objectives through the outcomes outlined in the DAIP 2017–2020: Facilitating Universal Design.**



# FACILITATING UNIVERSAL DESIGN THROUGH OUR DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN



## STATEMENT OF INTENT

To create and maintain an accessible and inclusive environment for all.

## HOW WILL THIS BE ACHIEVED?

Curtin has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to providing a quality experience to a diverse student and staff body. Universal design is about acknowledging and designing for this diversity from the outset.

Since 2007, Curtin has been committed to becoming a centre of excellence in universal design practice among Australian universities and to use the principles of universal design in our buildings, processes, academic programs, information technologies, services and handling of complaints.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN<sup>1</sup>

**Equitable use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

**Flexibility in use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

**Simple and intuitive use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.

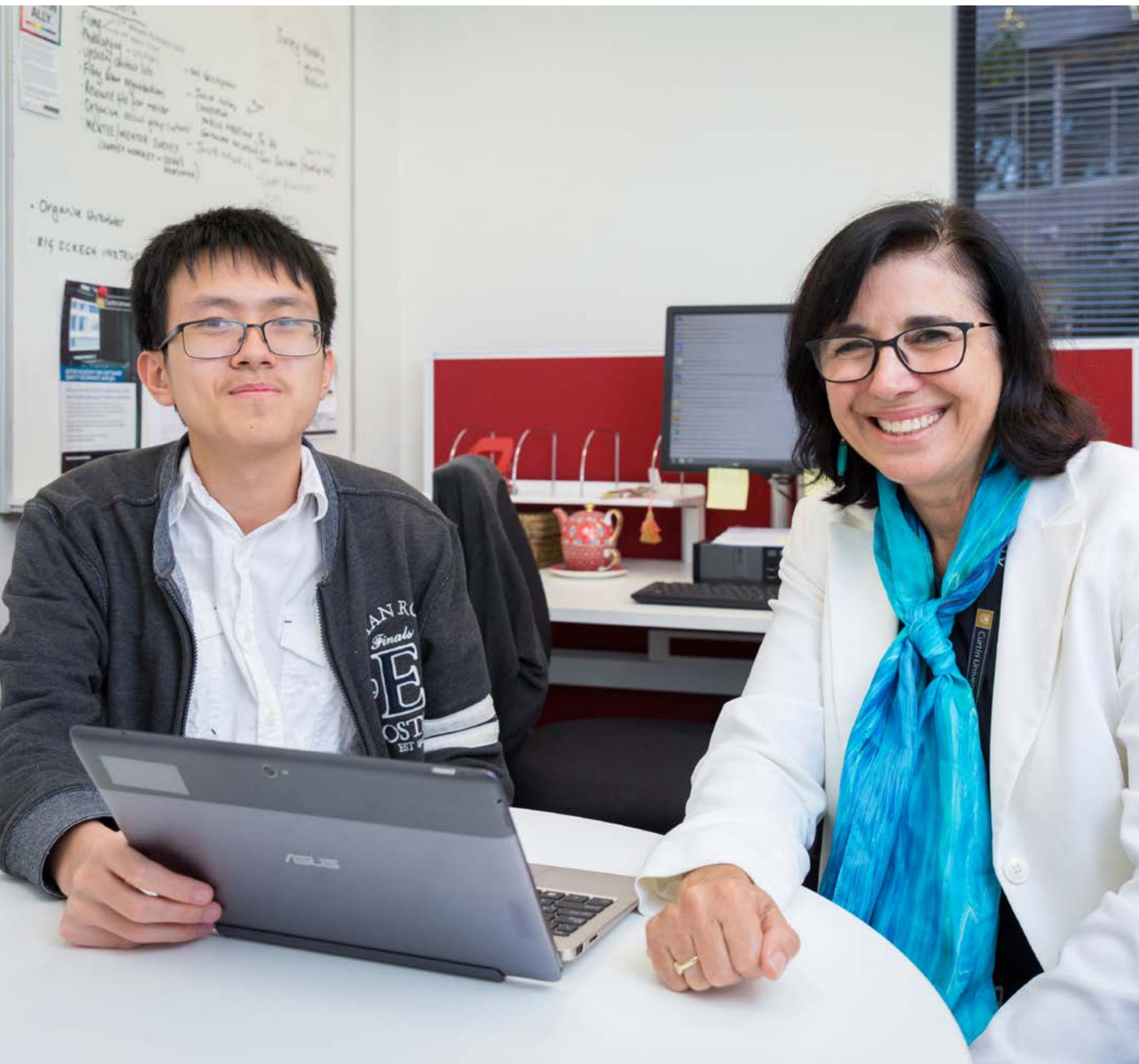
**Perceptible information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

**Tolerance for error:** The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

**Low physical effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with minimum fatigue.

**Size and space for approach and use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

<sup>1</sup>: The Center for Universal Design (1997). *The Principles of Universal Design, Version 2.0*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.



### STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OF THE DAIP

Curtin has a number of achievements in universal design, including the newly developed *Universal Design Guidelines – Built Form* – a first for Australian universities. These Guidelines will support not only the work of Curtin staff, but also our agents and contractors who undertake work on Curtin’s behalf.

Our new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017-2020 (DAIP) seeks to align our commitment to access, inclusion and universal design with Curtin’s new strategic plan, and to deliver on excellence.

Over the next three years Curtin is committed to:

- increasing staff awareness of the principles of universal design
- increasing our capability to deliver on universal design
- including universal design thinking into our everyday practices
- demonstrating leadership in universal design thinking.

These commitments will also inform Curtin’s intentions to consolidate its achievements of the DAIP 2012 -2017, when staff will:

- be better informed about the achievements
- helped to embed the achievements in their day-to-day work
- evaluate the achievements.

# DAIP OUTCOMES



The following outcomes will guide the activities Curtin takes from 2017 until 2020 to improve access and inclusion to our services, buildings and information, and embed universal design thinking into the Curtin culture.

Each outcome area is aligned to one or more of our strategic objectives.

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

**Supporting the strategic objectives:** *Learning and student experience; and Global positioning.*

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

**Supporting the strategic objectives:** *Sustainable future.*

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

**Supporting the strategic objectives:** *Learning and student experience; Research and innovation; Global positioning; and Sustainable future.*

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

**Supporting strategic objectives relating to:** *Learning and student experience; Engagement and impact, and People and culture.*

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

**Supporting strategic objective:** *Sustainable future.*

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

**Supporting the strategic objectives:** *Research and innovation; and Engagement and impact.*

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

**Supporting the strategic objectives related to:** *People and culture; and Global positioning.*

# DEVELOPMENT OF OUR DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN



## GOVERNANCE OF OUR DAIP

### Meeting legislative and Curtin compliance requirements

Curtin was the first Western Australian University to develop a voluntary Disability Services Plan (the equivalent of a DAIP) in 1997, to meet its obligations under the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. The Disability Services Plan was regularly reviewed and revised. An amendment to the *WA Disability Services Act 1993*, in 2004, required Curtin to prepare and lodge a new five-year DAIP in 2007. This plan was subsequently reviewed in 2011, and the DAIP 2012–2017 developed. The DAIP 2017–2020 will be Curtin's third DAIP. It will be reviewed in its final year in conjunction with the review of the Curtin University Strategic Plan.

Our DAIP is determined by state legislation (the *WA Disability Services Act 1993*) and applies to our Western Australian campuses. It is also lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission to demonstrate our compliance with the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and its standards. This ensures that our access and inclusion strategies apply to all our onshore Australian campuses and provides the benchmark for access and inclusion standards at our offshore campuses, where a particular country may not have disability legislation.

The DAIP aligns with Curtin's policies that support diversity, ethics and social justice; guiding ethical principles; and procedures for the elimination of discrimination and harassment.

### Responsibility for our DAIP

The Vice-Chancellor has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the objectives of the DAIP are implemented and that they are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. The University is responsible for providing an annual statement to the Disability Services Commission on the achievement of the objectives contained within this plan, as well as reporting DAIP achievements in Curtin's annual report, under part 5 of the *Finance Management Act 2006*.

The responsibility for the review, evaluation and reporting of our DAIP will rest with the Disability Access and Inclusion Committee (DAIC). The DAIC is made up of senior Curtin leaders and chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic. The DAIC meets four times each year and reports to the Planning and Management Committee and ultimately, the Vice-Chancellor.

The *Disability Services Act 1993* also requires that the Curtin DAIP is implemented by our agents and contractors, with the expectation that they will provide services in a way that is in keeping with Curtin's access and inclusion standards and practices. Agents and contractors used by Curtin will be advised of the DAIP through procurement documentation, via the dedicated website for agents and contractors and through professional development for Curtin's contract managers.

All Curtin staff, however, are equally responsible for the implementation of our DAIP, through embedding inclusive practices in our normal business, both academic and general.

## PREPARATION OF OUR DAIP

To prepare this DAIP, our last DAIP 2012-2017 was reviewed, as required under the *West Australian Disabilities Services Act 1993*. Curtin contracted E-QUAL Disability Consultants to undertake this review, in close collaboration with the Curtin DAIP Review Steering Group. The review included examination of Curtin's DAIP 2012-2017, DAIP progress reports, Curtin's Strategic Plan 2017-2020, disability legislation, contemporary trends and best practice in access and inclusion.

The review report noted many areas where Curtin demonstrated leadership and commitment to improve access for people with disability to its facilities and services. The review also identified opportunities for Curtin to further enhance access and inclusion. A full report on the review is available from the Director Student Experience.

Some of the examples of Curtin's achievements since the last DAIP include:

- Curtin's Specialist Mentoring Program for students on the autism spectrum
- Curtin Mentoring Program for students with disability
- participation in the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the social enterprise Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance, with the latter launched in 2016 and located at Curtin's Innovation Central Perth on the Bentley Campus. Both initiatives are the first of their kind in Australia
- greater collaboration and service provision between the Centre for Aboriginal Studies and Counselling and Disability Services
- integration of the principles of inclusion and universal design into Curtin's teaching and learning

- increased senior executive interest and support for Curtin to become a centre of excellence in universal design
- improved method of capturing complaints about access and inclusion
- improved iLectures system with screen reader accessibility and captions on request
- developed 'Guidelines for providing information in alternative formats for people with disability'
- developed Curtin Procurement Procedures which includes information regarding the *WA Disability Services Act's 1993* special clause for contracts, and agent and contractor requirements to report to Curtin
- improvements to the web content management procurement process, ensuring that accessibility compliance is an essential functional requirement
- improved advice for web content developers and software vendors regarding accessibility standards
- the development of Universal Design Guidelines – Built Form, an Australian university-first, to inform, guide and support the development of a physical environment that is welcoming and inclusive for all people
- a large program of works to address access and inclusion issues in existing buildings and facilities
- regular disability awareness training for staff
- the appointment of two part-time disability advisors to provide resources and support to staff with disability

- increased collaboration with the Disability Services Commission through the preparation of a series of audio-visual material regarding universal design and intended for use as an academic resource for students. This builds on the Housing Industry Association's 'Liveable Housing Project'.

The review also involved extensive consultation with staff, students and visitors, including agents and contractors, to identify Curtin's progress and where improvements could be made. The consultation was advertised in *The West Australian*, on the Curtin website, on Curtin FM 100.1 and via staff and student websites and social media channels.

The consultation included:

- meetings and consultation with the DAIP Review Steering Group
- interviews with individual staff
- a web-based survey (with alternative formats available) for staff, students and visitors, in collaboration with Curtin's Market and Institutional Research team.

In total, 68 students and visitors and 70 staff contributed to the consultation. The total number of student respondents reflects the tight consultation period which unavoidably coincided with the study period and exams timeline. Feedback was received regarding policies and procedures, services, buildings and facilities, information, staff training, our complaints process, public consultations and Curtin events. Further consultation was offered to 63 students in March 2017 regarding the universal design content in the draft DAIP. All the above feedback has been incorporated into our strategies for the new DAIP. A full report of the consultation findings is available from the Director Student Experience.

Some of the suggestions for improvement received in the consultation included:

- increased involvement of people with disability in addressing barriers, and increased representation of people with disability on boards and committees across Curtin
- specific improvements to identified buildings and facilities
- improved wayfinding on Curtin's Bentley Campus
- an affirmative action in employment policy
- a common language of access and inclusion to be developed and promoted
- Curtin to expand its commitment to access and inclusion, and universal design for all staff, students and visitors, regardless of location or mode of study
- the inclusion of universal design principles and practices in the new DAIP
- for the DAIP to go beyond just compliance.

## PROMOTION OF OUR DAIP

Once completed and endorsed Curtin will advertise the availability of the DAIP 2017-2020 in *The West Australian*, make it available on the Curtin website and include it in staff development and induction programs. The DAIP will be made available in alternative formats including electronic format, Word version, hard copy format in standard or large print, audio or other formats including email, on request. The DAIP will also be available on the Australian Human Rights Commission website as an action plan to address the requirements of the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

# DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN INITIATIVES

The recommended initiatives relating to specific DAIP outcomes are informed by the review and consultation process. The following initiatives will guide the activities Curtin will undertake from 2017 until 2020 to improve access to our services, buildings and information.

Outcome	Strategies
<p><b>1.</b> People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objectives: <i>Learning and student experience; and Global positioning.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: DVC Academic</p>	1.1 Audit admission, selection and enrolment procedures for online students to ensure they are inclusive in design and accessible for students with disability.
	1.2 Audit services and co-curricular programs to ensure they are inclusive in design and accessible for students with disability.
	1.3 Engage with faculties and schools to establish processes for the design, delivery and assessment of academic programs which are inclusive of and accessible for, all students with disability.
	1.4 Investigate the potential impact of the DAIP on Curtin's global partners.
	1.5 Establish processes to engage Curtin students and staff with disability in improving access and inclusion at Curtin.
	1.6 Engage with faculties and schools to embed universal design (UD) in current Curtin benchmarking practices.
	1.7 Develop and implement a communication plan to share Curtin achievements and progress towards universal design, with the Curtin community.
<p><b>2.</b> People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objective: <i>Sustainable future.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: Chief Operating Officer</p>	2.1 Implement the Universal Design Thinking Communication and Implementation Strategy (Properties, Facilities and Development) across all Curtin campuses.
	2.2 Implement the Curtin Wayfinding Strategy to ensure safe and accessible paths of travel.
	2.3 Implement Curtin's Integrated Transport and Movement Plan.
	2.4 Embed universal design into the Properties, Facilities and Development benchmarking processes for teaching and learning, research, workplace and public realm management.
	2.5 Improve access and inclusion outcomes in projects delivered by the capital programme.
	2.6 Respond to access and inclusion issues to improve the accessibility of the built environment.

Outcome	Strategies
<p><b>3.</b> People with disability receive information from Curtin in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objectives: <i>Learning and student experience; Research and innovation; Global positioning and Sustainable future.</i></p> <p>Outcome owners: Chief Operating Officer</p>	3.1 Update Procurement Procedures to ensure accessible products and services are key evaluation criteria.
	3.2 Conduct feasibility study regarding actions to achieve the W3C requirements for AAA level from Curtin's current AA level.
	3.3 Maintain W3C AA status when acquiring and designing web or internet-facing digital capabilities.
	3.4 Continue to improve the accessibility of corporate applications eg. student, financial and academic portals.
	3.5 Continue to improve the accessibility of Curtin promotional material.
	3.6 Embed Universal Design (UD) in the development and production of Curtin student, staff and teaching and learning information.
<p><b>4.</b> People with disability receive the same level and quality of service from the staff of Curtin as other people receive from the staff of Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objectives: <i>Learning and student experience; Engagement and impact, and People and culture.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: Provost</p>	4.1 Include responsibilities for the Curtin DAIP in Responsible Officers' Work Planning and Performance Review process.
	4.2 Engage with Faculties and Schools to upskill all leaders and managers regarding the principles of universal design and best practice relevant to staff roles and responsibilities (which includes agents and contractors) through induction and other training opportunities.
	4.3 Provide support to leaders and managers to progressively train their staff to embed the principles of universal design into their school or area.
<p><b>5.</b> People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make complaints to Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objective: <i>Sustainable future.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: Chief Operating Officer</p>	5.1 Provide opportunities for students, staff and visitors to be consulted and have their views/feedback heard.
	5.2 Establish a process to collect feedback to continually improve complaints process, including its accessibility.
	5.3 Develop and implement a strategy to promote the Curtin complaints and feedback process to students and staff using existing communication channels which include social media.
<p><b>6.</b> People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objectives: <i>Research and innovation; and Engagement and impact.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: Vice-President, Corporate Relations</p>	6.1 Establish process to ensure that universal design principles are included in all public consultation initiatives.
	6.2 Provide training and support for staff to enable them to deliver accessible and inclusive consultations.
<p><b>7.</b> People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with Curtin.</p> <p>Supporting Curtin's strategic objectives: <i>People and culture; and Global positioning.</i></p> <p>Outcome owner: Chief Operating Officer</p>	7.1 Audit transition-to-work programs for graduates with disability to identify opportunities to enhance employment outcomes.
	7.2 Address the findings of the Curtin Corporate Wellness Team's 2016 Curtin Career Development survey that examined career opportunities for staff with disability.
	7.3 Develop and implement a strategy to increase staff and student confidence to disclose disability.
	7.4 Inform and support managers to provide flexible employment opportunities for staff.

**DAIP:** Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.

**DAIC:** Disability Access and Inclusion Committee.

**DVC:** Deputy Vice Chancellor.

## ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Often, people think that access relates only to buildings. While physical access is very important, it is only part of the picture, and the legislation requires that public authorities consider access more broadly in their DAIPs so that people with disabilities are considered and included in all areas of the authority's operations. This means that people with disabilities must have equitable access to:

- Services and events (e.g. library service - resource collections and IT hardware, accessible parking and toilets at events)
- Buildings and facilities (automatic doors, toilets, ramps, outdoor environments)
- Information (information in other formats such as Braille, large print, audio, website accessibility, interpreters when required, easy to read brochures)
- Staff with awareness and skills to assist people with disabilities (e.g. training in disability awareness)
- Complaints processes (making sure processes are flexible, that people know about them and are supported to access them as required)
- Consultations (ensuring people with disabilities are able to take part in ALL consultations – not just those regarding disability issues)
- Employment - the University has made a commitment to improve access to employment within the University (e.g. work experience, recruitment practices, employee support).

## DISABILITY<sup>2</sup>

'Disability', in relation to a person, means:

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
  - b) total or partial loss of 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 judgement or that results 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; or
  - k) is imputed to a person

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<sup>2</sup>: Definition of disability as per the Disability Discrimination Act 1992



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