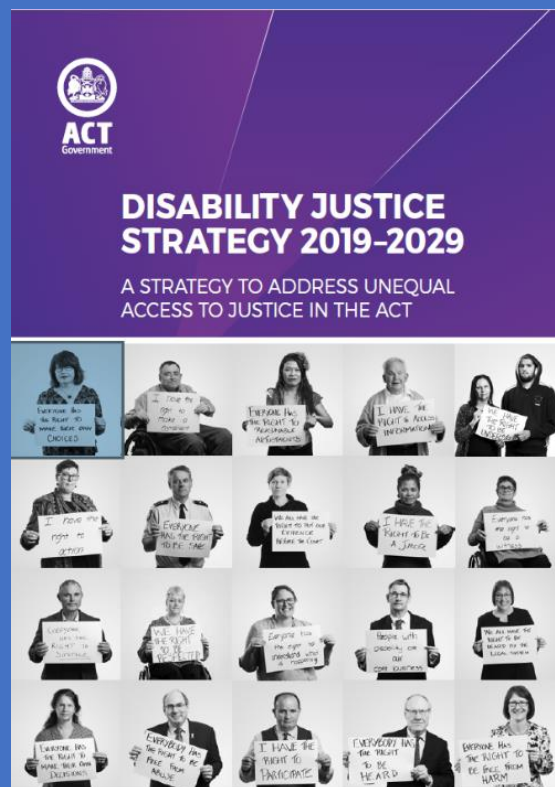


Australian Capital Territory COURTS AND TRIBUNAL



ACTCT Disability Action & Inclusion Plan

July 2021

“Formulating clear action plans with initiatives that can be operationalised will be key to the success of the Disability Justice Strategy. The voices and perspectives of people with disability will be critical in the design, implementation and review of those initiatives.”

Governance and Implementation, Page 9
Disability Justice Strategy 2019 – 2029

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**Foreword from Amanda Nuttall,
Principal Registrar and CEO**

The Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029 provides justice agencies with a framework, highlighting where we can consider making improvements to deliver inclusive services and practices.

This action & inclusion plan shows how the ACT Courts and Tribunal (ACTCT) will improve our inclusive practice.



The ACTCT already has a range of services to assist people with a disability, including a court and tribunal assistance officer, pre-hearing tours of our facilities, access to the National Relay Service, Auslan interpreters, hearing loops, options for transcripts, assistance animals and modified security screening. This action & inclusion plan is about taking us beyond the services we already have, listening to feedback and making improvements to assist people with a disability to access our services.

We understand the need for our staff to learn about the needs of our diverse community and facilitate a range of supports for those who face barriers or challenges in accessing justice services.

Our staff need to be competent in identifying opportunities for improvement, what reasonable adjustments are available and when they need to be considered. In 2022, we will be rolling out awareness training through an e-learning module to our staff, that will develop our organisational competency in the area of disabilities and inclusion.

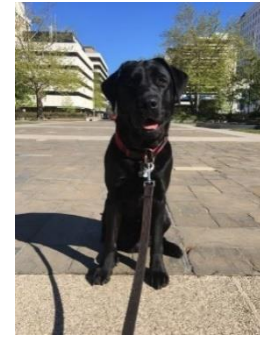


In recent years the ACTCT has come a long way as an organisation.

In 2019 the new ACT Law Courts building opened, providing the opportunity to deliver state of the art modern facilities. The new building has allowed the ACTCT to identify and address a range of physical barriers and implement technological supports to assist people with disability. In 2022 the ACAT will also

move into new premises, which will focus our attention on the facilities at the Tribunal. New facilities have provided the organisation with a new platform on which to build our inclusion foundations.

In 2019, the ACT Courts and Tribunal developed a partnership with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to deliver a canine therapy support program. The program sees a therapy dog visit the court a few hours per week supporting vulnerable persons at court such as children and victims, many of whom are anxious about being at Court.



In mid-2021 the ACTCT recruited a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) for 18 months as an initiative under the Disability Justice Strategy. The role of the DLO is our conduit to developing partnerships with the community sector and with other government agencies. This new role informs our Executive team about what actions we can implement to improve inclusion.

The ACTCT is also working in partnership with other organisations to develop a community of practice. The ACTCT has had long standing relationships with ACT Government mental health and drug and alcohol services in the ACT. Our collaborative practice to support persons with a disability across the justice system continues to develop via our engagement and meetings.



I am pleased to report that in 2021 we have commenced improving the way we provide information to the ACT community. This includes new videos explaining what assistance is available within our Courts and Tribunal and developing materials in easy English.

New initiatives will include a needs assessment tool, community of practice, e-learning module for staff and improvements to the way we deliver and communicate information.

We appreciate that our journey is ongoing and that action & inclusion plans will continually evolve over time. If you have any ideas or would like to provide feedback on how we can improve, please email courtassistance@courts.act.gov.au or contact our Court Assistance Officers on (02) 62050233.

To find out more about what we are doing, please visit www.courts.act.gov.au/disability.

Amanda Nuttall
Principal Registrar and CEO

Areas of focus for the ACT Courts and Tribunal

Five areas of focus for the Disability Justice Strategy have been identified as being critical to improvement and change.



The first five areas of focus above have actions for different agencies. The final area of focus has been created by the Courts and Tribunal in relation to our new facilities.

The identified actions applicable to the ACT Courts and Tribunal under each area of focus are included in the action plan below.

Disability Action & Inclusion Plan – 2021 to 2023

FOCUS AREA	Action area	No.	Tasks	Timeframes	Progress update as at Dec 2022
FOCUS AREA 1: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	1.1 Community of practice (CoP)	1.1.1	Recruitment of a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) to represent ACTCT in the development of a Community of Practice.	Mid 2021	Completed July 2021
		1.1.2	Participate in the interagency Community of Practice meetings each fortnight to discuss common issues.	Ongoing	Ongoing
		1.1.3	Liaison with non-government organisations (NGOs) to inform our inclusive practices and encourage referrals.	Ongoing	NGOs that liaise with our DLO include ADACAS, Advocacy for Inclusion, and Domestic Violence Crisis Service.
		1.1.4	Develop relationships to support referrals from other agencies.	Ongoing	The DLO receives referrals from agencies such as Legal Aid ACT, Victim Support, ACT Corrective Services, ACT Policing, Director of Public Prosecutions, Child and Youth Protection Services.
	1.2 Accessible Information	1.2.1	Develop a Courts Assistance pamphlet explaining supports available and key contact details for Court Assistance Officers.	Late 2021	Developed November 2021
		1.2.2	Develop guidance material outlining reasonable adjustments the Courts can offer.	Late 2021	Completed September 2021

FOCUS AREA	Action area	No.	Tasks	Timeframes	Progress update as at Dec 2022
		1.2.3	Develop videos about coming to Court and the assistance available whilst at the ACTCT.	Mid 2021	Completed September 2021
		1.2.4	Braille and large print copies of the oaths and affirmations are available across the Courts and ACAT.	Mid 2021	Completed August 2021
		1.2.5	Installation of signage for the disabled toilets to assist wayfinding gaps.	Mid 2021	Ongoing with temporary solution in place.
		1.2.6	The development of easily understood videos about Court and Tribunal processes.	Late 2021	Several tribunal videos have been produced explaining ACAT processes. Videos completed in late 2021 include 'Coming to Court' and 'Do you need assistance whilst at the ACT Courts and Tribunal?' A new video, "Do you need assistance at ACAT" was developed to coincide with the new ACAT building in late 2022.
		1.2.7	Development of materials in easy English for persons with low literacy skills.	Late 2021	Ongoing

FOCUS AREA	Action area	No.	Tasks	Timeframes	Progress update as at Dec 2022
FOCUS AREA 2: EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE	2.6 Implementation of Courts and Tribunal Training Tool	2.6.1	"Lets talk Disability" training developed and formatted into e-Learning module.	Mid 2022	The training program is available for staff.
FOCUS AREA 3: IDENTIFICATION, SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT	3.1 Screening and Identification of disability for reasonable adjustments	3.1.1	The ACTCT DLO uses a Needs Identification Tool based upon the Washington Principles.	Late 2021	The ACTCT Disability Liaison Officer integrates the screening tool in conversations to identify persons with a disability.
FOCUS AREA 4: BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY	4.1 Community of practice (service delivery)	4.1.1	ACTCT DLO to be an active member of the Community of Practice and network with other disability justice support workers in key agencies. The Community of Practice provides direct one to one navigation of the justice system, provides support to individuals and fosters cultural change through internal expertise and advocacy.	Ongoing	The ACTCT DLO is participating in fortnightly meetings to promote the Community of Practice and ensure relationship building to support clients in the justice system.
		4.1.2	Increase staff awareness regarding the role of our Court Assistance Officers to ensure Court and Tribunal users who signal that they need support are provided with support.	Ongoing	Internal promotion of DLO and Court Assistance Officers through the ACTCT internal newsletter, intranet, and staff training.
		4.1.3	The remote witness suite is available to support vulnerable persons.	Ongoing	The remote witness suite is made available to vulnerable persons, including people with

FOCUS AREA	Action area	No.	Tasks	Timeframes	Progress update as at Dec 2022
					disabilities upon agreement of the judicial officer.
		4.1.4	Aboriginal, Cultural and other Liaison Officers work with the DLO to identify unique supports required by certain individuals, such as cultural safety.	Ongoing	Relationships with liaison officers maintained.
	4.2 Disability Action and Inclusion Plans (DAIP)	4.2.1	Delivery of the ACTCT Disability Action & Inclusion Plan, including regular reporting, to be led by the Senior Director overseeing the DLO with oversight and support from the Executive.	Ongoing	Delivery of tasks in the Disability Action & Inclusion Plan in progress. Disability Action & Inclusion Plan included as a standing agenda item at monthly Executive meetings.
FOCUS AREA 5: DATA, RESEARCH AND REVIEW	5.1 Data, research and review	5.1.1	The ACTCT will explore internal opportunities to collect data on the number of people requiring assistance.	2022	Community Services Directorate is collecting de-identifying data across all agencies on support provided to people with disabilities by each agency.
FOCUS AREA 6: (ACTCT SPECIFIC) MODIFICATIONS TO FACILITIES	6.1 Facility improvements	6.1.1	Install seating before and after the main security point to assist people with mobility issues.	2021	Completed 2021
		6.1.2	Supply a second disability access ramp to assist mobility impaired individuals access witness or jury stands as required.	Ongoing	Completed – ramps available

FOCUS AREA	Action area	No.	Tasks	Timeframes	Progress update as at Dec 2022
		6.1.3	Supply and install auto door openers to the accessible bathrooms in the public areas of the Courts, Vulnerable Witness Suites, and Registry Staff bathroom.	Late 2021	Completed 2021
		6.1.4	Other changes to improve accessibility in disability bathrooms including regarding hooks, sinks, mirrors and general access.	Late 2021	Completed 2021
		6.1.5	Painting of visibility distinction lines on columns in public area thoroughfares.	Late 2021	Completed
		6.1.6	Supply and install suitable hearing loop system for the Registry counter, including the attached client interview room.	Late 2021	Completed
		6.1.7	Consider improvements to new ACAT premises in design and operational phases.	2021 & 2022	Completed
		6.1.8	Install furnishings in ground foyer to assist people to able to fill in forms in accessible way.	2022 & 2023	Ongoing