



Optus Disability Action Plan

6 Month Progress Report December 1999 - May 2000

The following report aims to summarise progress with the implementation of the Optus Disability Action Plan. It does not attempt to assess progress against Key Performance Indicators, as this will be completed for the Annual Review of the Plan.

The report has been prepared for submission to the Optus Disability Action Plan Working Group and to internal and external stakeholders.

1. Background

The Optus Disability Action Plan was launched in December 1999. The Action Plan aims to remove barriers to access for customers, potential customers and staff. It links closely with the Optus corporate values of 'Respect for the Individual', 'Customer Focussed' and 'Performance Driven'.

The Action Plan was developed in consultation with a Working Group comprising disability representatives of the Optus Consumer Liaison Forum. Organisations represented on the Working Group are Blind Citizens Australia, Deafness Forum and Tasmanians with Disabilities. Liaison with the Australian Association of the Deaf also occurred with regards to implementation of specific strategies for the deaf. Not only did the Working Group provide guidance on the development of the Action Plan but have played an active role in advising on the implementation of strategies and in monitoring of progress.

The Optus Disability Action Plan has been included on the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (HREOC) Register of Disability Action Plans. It has been recognised by the UK Employers' Forum on Disability as a model of best practice and has been received positively by disability groups within Australia.

Summary of key objectives of the Action Plan:

Objective 1 - Corporate Culture

- To achieve a responsive anti-discriminatory culture

Objective 2 - Accessible Communications

- To improve accessibility to information about Optus' products and services

Objective 3 - Confidentiality

- To ensure that privacy and confidentiality is maintained in the handling of customer and employee personal information

Objective 4 - Physical Environment

- To ensure that Optus' physical environment is as free as possible from impediments or barriers which unduly constrain the access of people with disabilities

Objective 5 - Products and Services

- To enhance access to Optus products and services

2. Summary of Progress

Progress with the implementation of the Optus Disability Action Plan has been on target with key priorities of the first Phase of the Plan being met. One of the major initiatives implemented has been the progress toward the introduction of a disability equipment solution to ensure access to Optus Local Telephony products.

Outcomes of the Plan have achieved the overall aim of removing barriers to access. For instance, additional forms of identification now mean that potential customers with a disability can connect to Optus products and services. The relaunch of our TTY customer service has ensured that the deaf and speech impaired have access to information and an avenue for feedback. The launch of SMS across the Optus, Vodafone and Telstra networks has resulted in significant benefits for the deaf, hearing and speech impaired and has been one of the most significant initiatives to removing barriers to access to mobile telephony.

Positive feedback on the implementation of initiatives has been received from many disability organisations. Other initiatives have been recognised by Government, for example, HREOC have advised that the Optus Corporate Website has achieved a high level of accessibility.

While anecdotally there is evidence that the Action Plan is being received positively by external stakeholders; that it has resulted in an increase in inquiries from customers; and that it is generating interest and action within Optus, it is difficult to quantify such outcomes at this stage. This will be achieved via an assessment of outcomes against Key Performance Indicators at the Annual Review of the Plan.

The first 6 months of implementation has seen resolution of some long standing issues for the disability sector. The continuation of such positive progress over the next 6 months will ensure the increasing benefit not only to people with a disability but to all our customers.

Focus of Implementation – December 1999 to May 2000

Implementation of strategies in the first 6 months of implementation of the Disability Action Plan has focussed on the following:

- Establishment of an internal specialist contact point for all disability inquiries – particularly for use by Customer Service Representatives
- Implementation of an Internal Communications program to ensure staff are aware of the Disability Action Plan and contact point for inquiries
- Ensuring TTY customer service operational and effective
- Progress towards implementation of an equipment solution for the Optus Local Telephony product
- Ensuring updates to Websites take account of International Accessibility Guidelines
- Commencement of information in alternative formats – including Optus Welcome Kit in Braille and finalisation of DAP in large print and audio formats
- Resolution of major access issues in Optus Centre Melbourne, particularly progress for resolution of wheelchair access at main entrance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for logging disability queries introduced for Customer Service Staff • Disability awareness training for other targeted staff to commence in parallel with equipment solution (use of video as key element) 	Phase 2 in progress
<p>1.3 – Reinforce Positive Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability responsiveness, as demonstrating Corporate Core Values introduced into Melbourne Call Centre quarterly Reward and Recognition program for December '99 • TTY Customer Service Staff member received corporate recognition for excellence in customer service with article featuring recognition in staff newsletter • Implementation of other initiatives to follow introduction of equipment program 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.4 – Employer Responsibility:</p> <p>1.4.1 – Review of EEO policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative Action Policies reviewed and considered consistent with aims of Action Plan <p>1.4.2 – Updating of EEO procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing monitoring of EEO procedures/policies to be conducted to ensure they are maintained to remove barriers to access for people with disabilities and ensure discrimination is prevented <p>1.4.3 – Review of OH&S procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OH&S Policies reviewed and considered consistent with aims of Action Plan <p>1.4.4 – Identification and Resolution of specific OH&S issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action on specific issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hot water dispensers in kitchens of Preston and in Optus Centre Melbourne realigned to ensure equitable access - Emergency/evacuation procedures considered consistent with needs of people with disabilities - Need for automatic door access to front entrance of Melbourne Office has been tabled with Building Management. Building Management have advised that intention is for work to resolve this issue to be undertaken this year • Close working relationship established between Regulatory, Building Mgt and OH&S Officer to ensure issues proactively resolved. Similar model to be established in Sydney premises 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.5 – Externally Focussed</p> <p>1.5.1 – Monitor work in international forums relating to disability matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive feedback received from CEO of UK Employer's Forum on Disability, noting Optus Disability Action Plan as a model for other organisations to adopt • General monitoring of international activities occurring via media, disability and other network • Copies of the Action Plan distributed by a representative of TEDICORE at a technology conference in Europe – this may potentially initiate contact from other organisations internationally 	Ongoing

1.5.2 – Build strong links with parent company <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optus represented on International Discussion Group into Disability Issues	Ongoing
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Objective 2 - Accessible Communications

- To improve accessibility to information about Optus' products and services

Strategy	Status
2.1 – Information Needs Identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix of information needs developed in consultation with DAP Working Group. 	Completed
2.2 – Review existing methods/identify gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps identified and prioritised in consultation with DAP Working Group. 	Completed
2.3 – Implement strategies to address gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from disability sector and International Accessibility Guidelines (WC3) incorporated into design of Corporate Website. Corporate Website recognised as one of most accessible in Australia by HREOC study • Draft Internal Website Accessibility Guidelines developed from International Guidelines • Retail website under review with Accessibility Guidelines being taken into account • Website Disability Committee planned to achieve ongoing user input into website design • Audit of information materials requiring advertising of TTY customer service number being conducted • Specialist trained TTY customer service team established. Message on TTY answering function amended in response to feedback from users • User evaluation of IVRs being established for input into future upgrades • Inclusion of Disability Support Pension Card and Blind Citizens Australia Identity Card as valid Forms of Identification. Other Forms of Identification to be identified to assist other sectors. • Optus Welcome Kit available in Braille. The availability of this format to be advertised • Production of audio and large print version of the Action Plan being finalised • Standard Form of Agreement included on OPTUS website. 	In progress
2.4 – Adequacy of Third Party Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPA considered adequate to ensure access is provided for third party while protecting customers from illegitimate access. This policy is adopted consistently for all customers, ie. those accessing via TTY customer service line 	Completed
2.5 – ACIF Codes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As ACIF Codes completed, implementation of specific disability provisions will be actioned. Scoping of implementation options of the Billing Code has commenced. PTC Code is recognised as key focus under Disability Action Plan. 	In progress

Objective 3 - Confidentiality

- To ensure that privacy and confidentiality is maintained in the handling of customer and employee personal information

Strategy	Status
3.1 to 3.5 – Privacy Requirements of new Legislation and relevant ACIF Codes to be implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent completion of ACIF Customer Personal Information Code and Drafting of Private Sector Privacy Legislation, provides for the development of strategies relevant to OPTUS. • Activity to commence in consultation with DAP Working Group 	To commence

Objective 4 - Physical Environment

- To ensure that Optus' physical environment is as free as possible from impediments or barriers which unduly constrain the access of people with disabilities

Strategy	Status
4.1 – Prioritise business and retail premises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to business premises prioritised 	Completed
4.2 to 4.4 – Access Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access issues of concern identified with respect to Optus Centre Melbourne. No current access issues were identified for action in Optus Centre Sydney • Access to kitchen facilities identified and resolved in majority of floors in Melbourne (4 still to be actioned) • Building Owner has advised that action will commence this year to resolve wheelchair access issue to main entrance of Optus Centre Melbourne • access to retail premises to commence 	Completed based on user feedback for Sydney and Melbourne To commence
4.5 – Checklist for requirements of new premises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to business premises prioritised 	Completed
4.6 to 4.9 – access information, signage, staff training	To commence

Objective 5 - Products and Services

- To enhance access to Optus products and services

Strategy	Status
5.1 – Disability Equipment Policy -develop policy -implement policy	Completed In progress
5.2 – Staff awareness of Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and information included on internal website – including specific information for customer service staff • Scripting for customer service staff produced to ensure 	Completed

<p>consistent message to customer queries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist email dropbox and automated webform established to support customer service staff in the event of detailed inquiries. Dropbox supported by specialist trained staff. Within first 6 months of implementation, dropbox has received 72 inquiries, 61 of these regarded equipment options and 58 related to issues for people who are deaf or with a hearing impairment • Trial of equipment solution for Local Telephony product anticipated for July 2000 • Product/information initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nokia Loopset available in retail outlets - SMS available across the network - Deaf/hearing impaired mobile brochure being printed - CDMA trial phones available – information about location to be actioned - Use of Auslan (sign language) video clips on OPTUS website being trialled over next quarter 	
<p>5.3 – Incorporation into Universal Design Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering on UDP has commenced • consideration of current OPTUS products/services which meet UDP will be considered as part of activity arising from ATIA Industry/Disability Partnership group – in particular, their development of a database of compliant products and those which provide accessible features. 	To commence
<p>5.5 – Technical options for Pay TV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering has commenced on regulatory requirements and user feedback as to preferences for closed captioning options for Pay TV 	In progress