

DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLANS

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Disability Services) [10.04 am]: I will update the house on progress achieved by the Liberal–National government in the area of access and inclusion for people with disabilities. Disability access and inclusion plans are a requirement of the Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993. Under the act, state government agencies and local governments are required to make progress towards ensuring that their services, buildings, facilities and information are accessible by people with disabilities. The “Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) Progress Report 2008–2009” has just been released following the second year of implementation by public authorities in Western Australia, and it outlines the significant progress that has been made. Currently, 229 Western Australian public authorities are required to develop and implement disability access and inclusion plans. One hundred per cent of the 89 state government agencies and 98 per cent of the 140 local governments required to do so have lodged legislatively compliant disability access and inclusion plans. A high percentage of planned strategies have been fully or partially completed, with 83 per cent for state government agencies and 92 per cent for local governments. The strategies address the six access and inclusion outcomes of services and events, buildings and facilities, accessible information, staff awareness, complaint processes, and consultations.

Why are disability access and inclusion plans so important? Because they offer a systemic approach to identifying access issues and to developing strategies for people with disabilities to have access to, and inclusion in, our community. One in five Western Australians has a disability. This number will rise to one in four by 2025 as our population ages, yet many people with disabilities still face barriers to full inclusion in the community. Disability access and inclusion plans assist with access and inclusion for everyone. Last year, the state government launched “Count Me In — Disability Future Directions”, a 15-year strategic vision to develop a Western Australia in which all people live in welcoming communities that actively promote citizenship, friendship, mutual support and a fair go for everyone. Disability access and inclusion plans support that future direction and will ultimately benefit everyone in Western Australia.

It is important to bear in mind that our state has a prosperous and bright future, and it is a measure of a progressive society that our wealth flows through to all sectors of the community and that we meet our social responsibilities to all citizens. I encourage members to look through the “Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) Progress Report 2008–2009”, which I now table.

[See paper 1895.]

Consideration of the statement made an order of the day for the next sitting, on motion by **Hon Ed Dermer**.