



LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

2005 – 2010

Introduction

La Trobe University is a multi-campus university with six regional campuses. It has a population of approximately 27,000 students and 2,800 staff. In 2004, there was approximately 4% of the student population who had identified as having a disability through the enrolment process or registering with the disability support services. However, for a variety of reasons there are many more students who do not identify or seek support for their disability. From anecdotal evidence, these reasons include fear of discrimination and conversely, fear of the perception of unfair advantages being applied. It should be noted also that there are many students with disabilities who do not require any additional support to undertake their study.

The La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2004-2008 includes the pursuit of equal opportunity, the development of its staff, high quality infrastructure and academic services to support learning and teaching, with its paramount objective being to advance knowledge with a strong focus on excellence, access and diversity. The Strategic Plan outlines the University's commitment to its staff and students over that period and identifies strategies, outcomes and key targets to be achieved by 2008. The Strategic Plan is pursued within a context of a number of defining features with the overall intention of achieving three key objectives:

1. to produce from a diversified intake, graduates capable of meeting the various needs of society.
2. to be an internationally recognised centre for quality teaching, scholarship, training and research.
3. to maintain a successful outreach program.

The University reports annually to the University Council on the outcomes achieved against objectives and targets for each year of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan, its Operational Plan, and the annual Outcomes (outcomes achieved against the Strategic Plan) documents can be viewed on the La Trobe University website: www.latrobe.edu.au.

These documents contribute to the framework for the Disability Action Plan. The Action Plan will be a live document and will be revised from time to time.

Format of this Action Plan

The format of this Action Plan is as follows:

1. Principles
2. Aims
3. Expected outcomes
4. Communication
5. Monitoring and evaluation
6. Review
7. Brief overview of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
8. Strategic direction of the University
9. Strategies, method, responsibility and timelines for this Action Plan

1. Principles

La Trobe University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and employment. As an employer and an educator, the University seeks to eliminate from its structures and practices sources of direct and indirect discrimination affecting staff and students with disabilities.

Within the framework of the DDA, the University aims to take reasonable steps to accommodate the needs of staff and students with a disability, to continue to improve its provision of services to staff and students with disabilities including improving its physical access to buildings and facilities, and information computing technology infrastructure in accordance with the University's overall Strategic Plan.

2. Aims

The aim of this Action Plan is to build on the considerable progress the University has already made in regard to people with disabilities. Over the past few years, the University has contributed significant funds to improving the physical access and infrastructure at all of its campuses and will continue to do so. Through the Equity Staff Development Program, relevant planning and policy documents, increased staff awareness about their responsibilities and obligations towards people with disabilities as required in anti-discrimination legislation, has improved the support provided to people with disabilities. However, from comments from staff and students undertaken as part of the consultation process, it is apparent that there are still some improvements to be made. The strategies outlined in this Action Plan endeavour to address these concerns.

The University undertakes to:

- provide staff and students with disabilities the opportunity to realise their potential for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development through participation in university life;
- provide assistance in a manner that ensures staff and students are determining and controlling their needs to access employment and education;
- deliver services to staff and students with disabilities in a manner that promotes personal dignity and respects the right of staff and students with disabilities to privacy and confidentiality;
- to improve physical access to its buildings and facilities;
- provide information, guidance and support to current and prospective staff and students with disabilities to enable them to make informed decisions and participate in university life;
- continue its program of raising awareness within its community of the needs and rights of people with disabilities and to inform members of the University community of their obligations under the DDA;
- take reasonable steps to meet the needs of individual staff and students with disabilities by providing notetakers, Auslan interpreters, readers, equipment or services as required;
- ensure that planning processes take account of the needs of staff and students with disabilities;
- encourage staff and students with disabilities to use the University's sporting and recreational facilities and ensure these facilities are accessible;

- maintain close links with community and government agencies involved with people with disabilities;
- ensure that occupational health and safety procedures take into consideration students and staff with disabilities;
- increase the access, participation, retention and success of students with disabilities through outreach programs and equity scholarships;
- provide an appropriate level of resources over time for the implementation of this policy.

Selection, admission and enrolment

The University undertakes to:

- provide information about course requirements in order for students to make informed decisions about their abilities to meet the essential components of a course;
- admit any student who meets the necessary entry requirements for a course and who is able to perform the essential elements of that course;
- take account of disadvantage experienced as a result of disability in assessing applicants for special entry;
- acknowledge a student's right not to disclose the fact that he or she has a disability or any details of this disability, at enrolment or any time later;
- include information about its provisions and support for students with disabilities in appropriate University publications.

Teaching and assessment

The University undertakes to:

- ensure that appropriate academic needs of students with disabilities are met. Heads of School (or nominee) will consult with students (and their associates when appropriate), academic staff concerned, the Disability Liaison Officer or Coordinator, or Deaf Liaison Officer where appropriate;
- provide professional development for staff members on issues relating to the teaching and learning of students with disabilities;
- modify existing academic programs or provide reasonable adjustments to accommodate students' needs, providing such modifications or adjustments do not compromise the academic integrity or the essential requirements of the academic program. Adjustments might include: giving students extra time for exams if they have difficulties with reading or writing English because of their disability; or providing a student with an extension of time to submit an essay or assignment;
- allow students to tape lectures or provide lecture notes to students prior to the class so that they can follow the lecture more easily;
- provide vision impaired students with clean copies of overheads presented in class;
- provide alternative assessment methods such as oral presentations, or presentations of material on audio-tape, or adjusting the format of exams;
- allow a student to take exams at a different time or provide students with the opportunity to make up classes missed as a result of their disabilities.

Physical access, facilities and services

The University undertakes to:

- improve access to its current buildings and facilities by installing ramps, lifts, automatic doors, or making other changes to capital works, where appropriate;
- ensure that all new buildings, refurbishments or redevelopments comply with the regulatory Building Code of Australia and relevant Australian Standards covering disability access;
- ensure that all classes and lectures for courses in which students with disabilities are enrolled are timetabled in accessible rooms;
- ensure that the University has a strongly coordinated, integrated and accessible ICT infrastructure including Library internet services.

Staff

The University undertakes to:

- employ staff who are able to perform the inherent requirements of each position and who best meet the selection criteria;
- any discussions involving accommodations or adjustments for a staff member shall take place in consultation with the staff member;
- where appropriate the University will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of staff with a disability. Such adjustments might include:
 - providing the staff member with alternative furniture or office facilities; for example, adjusting office furniture, providing ergonomic devices such as footstools, telephone headsets, chairs;
 - allowing the staff member flexibility with working hours to take account of the effects of his or her disability or of medication or the disability of an associate;
 - making changes to a building to ensure that it is accessible to the staff member, for example installing a ramp or automatic doors;
 - providing a staff member with Auslan interpreting services for meetings, or providing print material in an alternative format;
 - modifying lighting due to eye sensitivity such as anti-glare filters for computer screens to relieve eye strain, fatigue, headaches and stress;

3. Expected Outcomes

The University aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- continued improvement with access, participation, retention and success rates of students with disabilities;
- satisfactory understanding of the issues of concern to people with disabilities in planning, policy and budgetary development at all levels;
- reasonable accommodations are provided to staff and students with disabilities as negotiated;

- a University environment that is inclusive, safe and respects the diversity of all of its constituents.

4. Communication

A copy of the Action Plan, when approved by Council, will be lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and provided to senior officers of the University, Heads of all budget areas, and a copy will be available on the University website. Further, reference to the Action Plan will be made at all relevant information sessions and workshops. Extensive consultation was undertaken prior to the preparation of this Plan however, as the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* have only just come into effect, in addition to the Equity Staff Development Program, professional development sessions will be undertaken progressively over the next 12 months to assist staff to better understand their obligations and responsibilities in relation to people with disabilities.

A copy of the Disability Action Plan will be available in an alternative format on request.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Access), on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, will receive from the Disability Advisory Committee regular progress reports from the various areas responsible for the implementation of sections of this Action Plan. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Access) will bring to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee, any matters requiring further evaluation. The Equity, Access and Personal Welfare Committee will receive an annual report on implementation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity and Access).

6. Review of Action Plan

The Action Plan will be a live document which will be revised from time to time. However, a review of the first two years of the Action Plan will be undertaken and a report forwarded to Council for submission to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in early 2008.

7. Brief overview of *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) was primarily introduced as part of the government's social justice policy with its focus being to provide a fair go to all Australians. The DDA requires that people with disabilities be given equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to the full range of social, economic, political and cultural activities, of our society, ie, the aim of the DDA is to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities on the same basis as those people without a disability. The DDA thus seeks to protect people with disabilities (and their associates) from unfair or unfavourable treatment based on their disability.

As indicated by the recent Productivity Commission¹ review of the first ten years of the DDA, the social, economic and cultural environment for people with disabilities has changed considerably. With this change, more opportunities are now available for people with disabilities to progress through the mainstream education system, into higher education and into meaningful and rewarding employment. It is important therefore that the University has the policies, processes and appropriate support in place to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

¹ Productivity Commission. *Review of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Report No. 30: Productivity Commission; 2004.

The DDA provides a broad definition of disability which includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. Physical disfigurement, and the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease (eg HIV) are also covered by the DDA. The DDA protects people who have now, have had in the past, might have in the future, or are believed to have a disability.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability in a number of public areas including: employment, education, access to premises used by the public, provision of goods, services and facilities, accommodation, land, clubs and incorporated associations, sport, and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.²

Section 61 of the DDA provides for a service provider to develop a Disability Action Plan and lodge this Plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). A major reason for the development of an Action Plan is to examine current policies and practices and act as a vehicle to produce systemic change required to eliminate disability discrimination whether it is direct or indirect, and regardless of whether it is intentional or otherwise. As the development of an Action Plan includes a detailed a review of current policies and procedures, setting of goals and targets, evaluating strategies, the allocation of responsibility and communication of policies and programs, an education provider may reduce the risks of having complaints made against it under the DDA. An Action Plan will also assist a tertiary education provider to meet its objective of providing high quality educational services to the whole community. In developing an Action Plan, Section 61 of the DDA stipulates that it must include:

- (a) the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act; and
- (b) the communication of these policies and programs to persons within the service provider; and
- (c) the review of practices within the service provider with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices; and
- (d) the setting of goals and targets, where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed; and
- (e) the means, other than those referred to in paragraph (d), of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a); and
- (f) the appointment of persons within the service provider to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) (inclusive).

8. Strategic direction of the University

As indicated earlier, this Action Plan is based on the Strategic Plan 2004–2008 which incorporates the following strategic direction of the University:

Students: to continue to attract and retain a capable, diverse student cohort and to build on the University's commitment to equity, access and participation for students.

Learning and Teaching: to maintain the commitment of the University to facilitating quality learning outcomes while ensuring that the discipline profile reflects a commitment to both traditional and emerging

² The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*; sections 22-29.

areas, taking account of changing student demand and labour force needs.

Staff: to attract, develop and retain staff of a high calibre.

Research and Training: to enhance the research and research training profile of the University, focusing on areas of existing and emerging research priorities and providing a supportive environment for University researchers.

Regional Development: to build on the long-term commitment of the University to its regional communities.

Internationalisation: to develop and enhance the internationalisation of the University.

Community Engagement: to enhance the engagement of the University with the communities it serves.

Management: to raise awareness of the University regionally, nationally and internationally as a progressive, externally-focused institution dedicated to quality education, training and research.

to continue to increase income and diversify income sources of the University.

to significantly enhance the infrastructure of the University.

to further embed a quality framework to underpin all operations of the University.

9. Strategies, method, responsibility, and timelines

The University undertakes to take reasonable measures to ensure that the following strategies will be either maintained or improved over the period of this Action Plan. These strategies will be revised from time to time to reflect the continuing consultation with University staff and students.

Teaching and Learning

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Develop effective strategies for accommodating and supporting students with disabilities through a flexible approach to teaching, learning and assessment, whilst ensuring academic standards are maintained.	<p>Include a general statement of support for people with disabilities in Faculty and other relevant University publications.</p> <p>Ensure all Faculty publications and other relevant publications are available in alternative format.</p> <p>Provide professional development for staff on inclusive teaching practices and assessment.</p> <p>Ensure that course and subject design meet the standards set out in <i>A Guide to Developing an Inclusive Curriculum</i> developed by the Academic Development Unit and Equity and Access Unit.</p>	PVC (Learning and Teaching) ADU Deans Heads of School Equity and Access Unit staff (all campuses)	2005 and ongoing
Encourage staff members who have demonstrated effective innovations in teaching and inclusive curricula, and those who have supported students with a disability, to share information and strategies, both informally formally.	<p>Faculties to develop a program where staff have the opportunity to showcase their achievement.</p> <p>Develop a proposal to reward staff who demonstrate excellence and innovation in their teaching style to students with disabilities.</p>	PVC (Learning and Teaching) PVC (Equity and Access)	2006
Ensure the various language and academic skills units continue to provide support for students with disabilities and to improve these services where necessary.	Staff will continue to liaise with the Disability Advisory Team with regard to specific needs of students with learning disabilities and Deaf or hearing impaired students.	Language and Academic Skills Advisors Academic Development Unit Disability Liaison Officers Deaf Liaison Officer	Ongoing
Course materials to meet a high quality print standard (hard copy) to ensure conversion to alternative format is	Provide training where necessary for staff on how to produce materials in accessible formats which conform to the AVCC	PVC (Learning and Teaching) CIO	2006 and ongoing

<p>undertaken in a reasonable timeframe.</p> <p>Lecture materials are presented in a format which is accessible by all students.</p>	<p><i>Guidelines on information access for students with a disability.</i> For example:</p> <p>University deadlines for the receipt of reading lists (recommended readings) allow time for alternative format materials to be prepared prior to the commencement of semester.</p> <p>Reading packs or course notes prepared by a lecturer specifically for a unit of a course to be made available to all students prior to the commencement of a semester.</p> <p>Development of a set of guidelines for staff on improving access for students with a print disability to be approved by Academic Board.</p>	<p>COMET Deans HOS Chief Librarian Disability Liaison Officers Equity and Access Unit</p>	
<p>Develop and implement web accessibility standards for online courses.</p>	<p>Provide guidelines and training where appropriate to assist staff in meeting this requirement.</p>	<p>CIO PVC (Learning and Teaching) Disability Liaison Officers</p>	<p>2005 and continuing</p>
<p>Develop Faculty-based schemes to encourage students with disabilities to undertake postgraduate studies.</p>	<p>Establish appropriate mechanisms to identify such students and undertake a suitable program (eg mentoring) to assist students in their transition to postgraduate study. Appropriate schemes could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scholarships targeted at students with disabilities ▪ Awareness training for supervisors of postgraduate students with disabilities <p>Explore what other avenues may be available to assist students with disabilities to undertake postgraduate studies</p>	<p>PVC (Learning and Teaching) Deans DVC (Research) Associate Deans (Research) Equity and Access Unit</p>	<p>2006</p>

Information Computing Technology

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Develop, implement and appropriately resource a plan to provide supporting and responsive institution-wide accessible ICT infrastructure and services.	Finalise development and commence implementation of ICT Strategic Plan.	CIO	2005
Improve staff understanding of disability access obligations in relation to ICT.	All staff will be required to undertake staff development training	CIO Deans HOS Chief Librarian Heads, non-Faculty areas Equity and Access Unit Disability Liaison Officers	Ongoing
Strengthen IT support for students and staff with disabilities to improve access difficulties.	<p>Access features, wherever possible, will be incorporated into the web and course design.</p> <p>New computer systems and software purchased will conform to best practice accessibility standards.</p> <p>All computer laboratories for general student access will have an accessible workstation available for students with disabilities.</p>	CIO Chief Librarian Deans Heads of School	Ongoing
Ensure University websites are compliant with W3C guidelines at levels 1 and 2 and meet best practice accessibility standards.	<p>La Trobe University websites will be redeveloped to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development and implementation of W3C compliant templates for all University websites. ▪ provide relevant training to all staff who develop and maintain websites. 	CIO PVC (Learning and Teaching) Deans Heads of School Chief Librarian Heads, non-Faculty areas All staff	2005 and continuing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> web-based services such as library holdings, online enrolment, online courses will be designed and modified to comply with best practice accessibility standards. 		
Increase computing capacity to ensure that all course materials are accessible to students with print disabilities in a reasonable timeframe	Additional computing equipment to be installed in COMET specifically to meet the demand for alternative formats.	CIO COMET Equity and Access Unit	December 2005
Increase knowledge of assistive technology available for students with disabilities through collaboration with representatives from COMET and Disability Advisory Team	Liaison with external agencies such as RVIB, Quantum Technology, and Spectronics, to keep abreast of latest assistive technology will continue.	CIO COMET Equity and Access Unit	Continuing

Library

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>In consultation with staff and students who have disabilities, the Library will continue to improve its current level of Library services.</p> <p>Improve accessibility of Library facilities and services to people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ensure that online services are accessible to people who have a disability. For example, items in e-reserve will be available in print and large print format on request.</p> <p>Library staff will review computer equipment and adaptive technology required to support staff and students with disabilities on a regular basis.</p> <p>Library staff will participate in the University Web Usability Group.</p>	Chief Librarian (or nominee/s)	2005 and continuing
Ensure that people with disability are more aware of specialised Library support services.	<p>Increase the publicity on the range of Library support services available to staff and students with a disability.</p> <p>Advertise new or changed services available to meet the needs of students</p>	Chief Librarian (or nominee/s) Equity and Access Unit	2005 and continuing

	<p>and staff with a disability, via a section in the existing Library News, and/or a separate flyer available on request.</p> <p>Library tours will include information on resources and services available for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Orientation sessions for groups of students with disabilities will be arranged on request prior to the start of semester.</p> <p>Update information on Library services available to people with a disability via the Library website.</p>		
<p>Develop guidelines on the provision of Library services to people with a disability to ensure consistency across campuses.</p>	<p>Guidelines will identify boundaries and responsibilities. The following support services will form the basis on which further support may be added:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Library staff will assist in the conversion of Library materials to large print. ▪ all students with a disability have access to extended loan periods, on request. ▪ assistance with photocopying, searching and location of books on request/by appointment. 	<p>Chief Librarian (or nominee/s)</p>	<p>Continuing</p>
<p>All Library staff to have access to information about their roles and responsibilities in assisting students and staff who have disabilities.</p>	<p>All Library staff will participate in the Equity Staff Development Program with specific content on their roles within a Library context when assisting staff and students who have disabilities.</p> <p>Staff development sessions will be provided on supporting students with a disability in libraries from Royal Victorian Institute for Blind (RVIB) and National</p>	<p>Chief Librarian (or nominee/s) Equity and Access Unit</p>	

	<p>Information Library Service (NILS). Library staff will continue regular liaison with RVIB, NILS and other relevant external agencies.</p> <p>Library staff will consult with Equity and Access Unit when there is a need for specific information/staff training on assisting people with a specific disability.</p> <p>Staff development sessions will be provided on communicating with people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.</p> <p>A member of staff on each campus will have a basic understanding of adaptive technology by the end of 2005.</p>		
<p>Library staff will establish informal networks with people who have a disability as one way to identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>At least one representative from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity and Access Unit SRC Disability Forum Staff member with a disability <p>will be invited to an annual review and planning meeting with Library staff to review current services as an integral part of the Library's commitment to quality and continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Chief Librarian (or nominee/s)</p>	<p>2005 and continuing</p>
<p>Review the use of the Equity and Access facilities within the Libraries.</p>	<p>Establish and implement a process to review the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ numbers of students who use the computer equipment and adaptive technology; and ▪ software and equipment used. 	<p>Chief Librarian (or nominee/s)</p>	<p>2005 and continuing</p>

Internationalisation

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Marketing of La Trobe University to international students to include information about support services available to students with disabilities.</p> <p>Ensure Agents who are engaged off-shore by La Trobe University are aware that they are also governed by the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>.</p> <p>Ensure students enrolled in La Trobe University courses off-shore are aware of the support services available for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>All promotional material for international students includes information on support services available for students with disabilities.</p> <p>All Agents engaged by La Trobe University to be made aware of the support services available to students with disabilities.</p> <p>Encourage students to seek advice prior to enrolment about what support services are available to assist students with disabilities.</p>	<p>PVC (International) Director (IPO) IPO Communications Manager Agents IPO Student Advisers Admissions Officer Student Exchange Staff Study Abroad Staff Equity and Access Coordinator</p>	<p>Continuing</p>

Physical Access, Facilities and Services

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Ensure a safe and accessible physical environment for staff and students at all campuses.</p>	<p>Communicate temporary and permanent physical access changes to staff and students.</p> <p>Establish a schedule for routine maintenance checks and devices (eg, press button to automatically open heavy doors) in place for assisting people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Manager, Buildings and Grounds</p>	<p>Continuing</p>
<p>Ensure that all building works (refurbishment, alterations and new buildings) and infrastructure (ie, external paths of travel, external lighting, signage, carparks, etc) meet best practices for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>The design and construction of new building works comply with relevant legislative, regulatory and standards relating to access requirements for people with disabilities as detailed in La Trobe University Standard Brief No. 9.</p>	<p>Vice-Chancellor Manager, Buildings and Grounds Capital Management Advisory Committee</p>	<p>La Trobe University Physical Access Audit to be implemented within the University's annual budget to achieve full</p>

	<p>The design and construction of building works to incorporate the recommendations made in the <i>La Trobe University Physical Access Audit</i> (all campuses).</p> <p>All building works aim for best practice in the educational arena.</p>		compliance by 2014.
Ensure that adequate accessible car park spaces in suitable locations are available on all campuses.	An audit of car parking for people with disabilities will be undertaken and additional accessible spaces made available where appropriate in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.	Manager, Facilities and Services Manager, Buildings and Grounds	2005 and continuing
Increase the priority given to building refurbishment to ensure accessibility.	Implement a space management plan which includes a schedule of phased accessibility upgrading of all buildings and all campuses.	University Secretary and relevant University staff	Strategic Plan 2004-2008
Ensure that people with disabilities are provided with up to date physical access information.	<p>Develop physical access maps for all campuses to be upgraded on an annual basis.</p> <p>Develop physical access maps for all libraries on all campuses.</p> <p>Physical access maps to be available on relevant University websites as well as in printed format.</p>	Manager, Buildings and Grounds Manager, Facilities and Services	2005 and continuing
Ensure that transport services within and externally from the campuses are accessible and support the needs of people with disabilities.	Liaise with external transport providers to ensure that transport is accessible and that drop off and pick up points are safe and meet relevant legislation requirements.	Manager, Buildings and Grounds Manager, Facilities and Services	2005 and continuing
Ensure the Bundoora campus mini-bus is available for people with disabilities at all times.	Explore the cost of converting current mini-bus so as to have wheelchair accessibility.	Manager, Facilities and Services Equity and Access Unit	2006

Ensure that students and staff with disabilities have access to University charging system for copying and printing required to ensure equitable access.	Review current University charging system.	Manager, Facilities and Services	2006

Academic Services

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that access to the wide range of academic services reflect the diversity of students that seek and gain enrolment at La Trobe University.	<p>Maintain links with Equity and Access Unit and encourage the regular exchange of information to ensure that policies and procedures reflect the diversity of its student population.</p> <p>Review all policies relating to selection, admission, enrolment and graduation to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are included.</p> <p>Continue to engage with students with disabilities where appropriate to ensure that electronic access is achievable, eg, Student Online.</p> <p>Ensure that all policies relating to selection, admission and enrolment are available in alternative formats and available in a reasonable timeframe.</p>	<p>Manager, Academic Services</p> <p>Manager, Student Records</p> <p>Manager, Admissions, Exams and Graduations</p> <p>Selection and Enrolment Committee</p> <p>Equity and Access Unit</p>	2005 and continuing
Ensure that administrative procedures and facilities for graduation are accessible for students with disabilities, especially ensuring wheelchair access to graduation ceremonies.	<p>Sufficient information regarding access to the venue and details of the ceremony and procedures is provided to students with disabilities.</p> <p>Information to be provided in alternative formats when requested.</p> <p>Identify any possible difficulties prior to the</p>	<p>Manager, Admissions, Exams and Graduations</p> <p>Disability Liaison Officers</p>	Continuing

	ceremony and implement reasonable adjustments where necessary to enable students with disabilities to participate.		
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Course and Careers Services

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that all information sessions and publications are accessible to people with disabilities seeking information about undergraduate, postgraduate programs and research degrees	<p>All information sessions to be held in accessible venues.</p> <p>Information to be available in alternative formats.</p> <p>Auslan interpreters to be available for Deaf students as requested.</p>	<p>Director, Course and Careers</p> <p>Senior Liaison Officer, OPS</p>	2005 and continuing
Ensure that staff members in the Office for Prospective Students provide informed advice to prospective students with disabilities.	<p>Information sessions presented at school visits, information sessions, exhibitions, seminars include information of support services available to students with disabilities.</p> <p>Staff to maintain links with Equity and Access Unit.</p>	<p>Director, Course and Careers</p> <p>Senior, Liaison Officer, OPS</p>	2005 and continuing
Ensure that all information sessions and publications are accessible to people with disabilities seeking information about careers and employment	<p>All information sessions are to be held in accessible venues.</p> <p>Information to be available in alternative formats as required.</p> <p>Auslan interpreters to be available for Deaf students as requested.</p>	<p>Director, Course and Careers</p>	2005 and continuing
Ensure Career Counsellors are aware of specific needs of students with disabilities to enable them to provide appropriate advice and guidance.	<p>Disability awareness training sessions to be provided for Career Counsellors.</p> <p>Career Counsellors maintain networks with external disability career/employment</p>	<p>Director, Course and Careers</p> <p>Equity and Access Unit</p> <p>Career Counsellors</p>	2005 and continuing

	<p>support agencies such as Willing and Able Mentoring (WAM) Program.</p> <p>Career Counsellors to maintain links with Equity and Access Unit and the Regional Disability Liaison Officer (RDLO).</p>		
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Marketing

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that all University publications reflect the University's commitment to students and staff with disabilities.	Continue to update the University's publications with information for students with disabilities.	Director, Public Affairs Deans HOS Heads of Division Marketing Liaison Officers	Continuing
All publications to ensure that appropriate terminology to be used in reference to disabilities and people with disabilities.	<p>Equity and Access Unit to conduct workshops for staff involved in the preparation of material used in publications about sensitivities of language to be used when referring to disabilities and people with disabilities.</p> <p>Statement to be included in all publications that material can be provided in alternative format upon request.</p>	Director, Public Affairs Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team Marketing Liaison Officers	2005

Student Support

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Promote awareness and understanding of mental health issues to students and staff	<p>Develop mental health promotion campaign for students and staff in conjunction with Equity and Access Unit.</p> <p>Weekly "drop in" outreach program established to assist students in residential colleges with mental health issues.</p>	Director, Counselling Services	Continuing

	<p>Workshop for staff on “Responding to distressed students and difficult behaviours” conducted on a regular basis.</p> <p>Information Flyer available to staff on how to respond to distressed students and difficult behaviours.</p>		
<p>Liaise with Deaf and hearing impaired students to identify and address issues of communication and access to their course of study.</p>	<p>Liaise with service providers, such as Auslan interpreters and external agencies who provide Auslan interpreting services to identify other issues associated with communication processes for the Deaf and hearing impaired.</p> <p>Undertake research to improve accessibility for Deaf and hearing impaired students in light of the shortage of interpreters to meet the number of Deaf students.</p> <p>Ensure the University community is aware of issues relating to the teaching and assessment of students who are Deaf or hearing impaired through the Equity Staff Development Program.</p> <p>Discuss with relevant areas the provision of appropriate tutoring and literacy support for Deaf and hearing impaired students.</p> <p>Maintain links with external agencies such as VicDeaf.</p>	<p>Deaf Liaison Officer Equity and Access Coordinator PVC (Learning and Teaching) Language and academic skills advisors Deans HOS</p>	<p>Continuing</p>
<p>Develop a “Auslan in the Workplace” short course for Bundoora staff dealing with Deaf students.</p>	<p>In collaboration with the National Institute for Deaf Studies (NIDS) provide a short course to learn the basic Auslan interpreting skills to communicate with Deaf students.</p>	<p>Equity and Access Coordinator Deaf Liaison Officer NIDS</p>	<p>December 2005</p>

	Investigate the feasibility of offering the course at regional campuses.		
Conduct information seminars periodically with staff and students on disability related issues and invite external speakers to conduct workshops and seminars.	<p>Liaise with relevant areas on particular disability-related topics that require further information.</p> <p>Liaise with the Academic Development Unit to develop relevant seminars/workshops for academic staff.</p>	Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team PVC (Learning and Teaching) ADU	2005 and continuing
Coordinate a University-wide register of resources and staff expertise in the area of disability.	Develop a database of staff expertise to be utilised as appropriate.	Equity and Access Coordinator	December 2005
Ensure the Equity and Access Unit website has relevant information relating to people with disabilities.	Redevelop the Equity and Access Unit website for students with a disability.	Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team	2005 and continuing
Redevelop printed information to assist prospective students or current students with a disability.	Update and rewrite the <i>Trekking La Trobe</i> guide.	Equity and Access Coordinator	March 2006
Establish links with secondary schools and ensure students are aware of the services and support offered to students with disabilities at La Trobe.	<p>Liaise with the Office of Prospective Students to distribute information to secondary schools and appropriate agencies.</p> <p>Work collaboratively with the Local Learning and Employment Networks to improve understanding of student needs and developing appropriate outreach programs.</p>	Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team Office of Prospective Students	2005 and continuing
Seek feedback from students with disabilities on services provided to them.	Establish an online questionnaire for students with disabilities.	Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team	December 2005

Continue close collaboration with COMET to improve the provision of alternative format materials for students with a print disability.	Meet regularly with COMET to maintain and further develop an efficient and effective system in collaboration with the La Trobe University Library.	Equity and Access Coordinator Disability Advisory Team COMET Library	2005 and continuing
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Staff

Strategy	Method	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that information about equitable practices in recruitment and selection is provided to all staff through staff development/training programs.	All staff will be required to undertake the Equity Staff Development Program.	Human Resources Equity and Access Unit Deans Chief Librarian HOS Heads, non-Faculty budget areas	Continuing
Provide assistance to injured staff through occupational rehabilitation services which provide physical, psychological and financial support.	Policies regarding support available will be made available via website.	Occupational Health and Safety Relevant budget areas	Continuing
Liaise with specialist employment agencies for people with disabilities.	Attend meetings, conduct forums for such agencies as appropriate.	Equity and Access Unit Human Resources	Continuing
Provide training to staff involved on selection panels regarding reasonable accommodations and employment strategies for people with disabilities.	Development of inclusive selection processes already established. All staff will be required to undertake the Equity Staff Development Program.	Human Resources Equity and Access Unit Deans Chief Librarian HOS Heads, non-Faculty budget areas	Continuing
Ensure that reasonable accommodations for staff with a disability are provided in a reasonable timeframe.	Funding is made available for reasonable accommodations as required.	Heads, all budget areas	Continuing
Identify, utilise and promote where possible, government initiatives to employ people with disabilities	Develop a register of government agencies and resources available from those agencies to assist people with disabilities in	Human Resources Equity and Access Unit	2006

	the workplace.		
Implement return to work programs for staff with disabilities where required.	Successful transition into the workplace following leave directly related to, or as a result of their disability	Human Resources Occupational Health and Safety All budget areas	Continuing
Ensure occupational health and safety procedures, including evacuation procedures, incorporate consideration of people with disabilities.	Review policy and procedures annually. Training of Building Wardens to include specific training on managing people with disabilities in emergency situations.	Occupational Health and Safety Building Wardens	2005 and continuing
Development of a Disability Employment Strategy	A committee comprising key staff within the University will be established to assist the University prepare the Disability Employment Strategy.	Manager, Human Resources	December 2006

Documents consulted

La Trobe University Strategic Plan 2004 - 2008
La Trobe University Operational Plan
La Trobe University Outcomes 2004
La Trobe University Annual Report 2003
Equity Update 2005
Learning and Teaching Plan 2005-2008
Learning and Teaching Operational Plan 2005 - 2008
Disability Discrimination Act 1992
Disability Standards for Education 2005
Equal Opportunity Act 1995
Guidance Notes for *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: www.hreoc.gov.au/disability
Productivity Commission. *Review of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. Report No. 30: Productivity Commission; 2004.
Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (1996). *Guidelines relating to students with disabilities*. Canberra
Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (2004). *Guidelines on information access for students with print disabilities*.
Action Plans of the following universities:

- Monash University
- University of Melbourne
- Queensland University of Technology
- Griffith University
- University of Technology Sydney

Consultation undertaken

Email forwarded to all staff seeking input to the Action Plan
SRC Focus Group incorporating students with disabilities
Student Focus Group (students with disabilities)
Staff Focus Group
Major management areas throughout the University
University Colleges are currently under review so consultation not undertaken at this stage.