

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE – ANNUAL REPORTING 2018-19

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

SAPOL's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2017-2020 was launched on 5 July 2017 along with a significant communication strategy delivered to all employees. The structure of the DAIP aligns with the specified outcomes under the South Australia Government's DAIP strategy.

Work has commenced on implementing the actions outlined in the DAIP. In 2017, the SAPOL Executive Leadership Team approved the establishment of a Diversity and Inclusion Branch (D&IB) to oversee and focus on the priorities and actions of the DAIP. The D&IB was launched on 18 July 2018 and commenced work on a variety of priority areas in the diversity space, one of which has been stakeholder engagement in relation to the DAIP.

Some actions which support the DAIP and are already underway include:

- The Flexible Work Team's commitment to an 'If Not, Why Not' approach to flexible working arrangements;
- The Police Volunteer Manual, which specifies that volunteers have the right to be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation. This includes an interview process for volunteers which enables applicants and interviewer to discuss any special requirements that applicants may have; and
- Specialised training for interviewers of vulnerable witnesses, particularly those with cognitive or communication impairment, recognising that eliciting accurate and detailed information from such witnesses is a highly complex task. This links directly to Priority Action 2.11 of the Disability Justice Plan which called for the provision of specialist training for the interviewing of vulnerable persons.

Since 2016, SAPOL have enrolled 182 members within this course, with 132 having successfully graduated to date. The training has improved investigative interviewing skills of members across the organisation by enabling them to obtain comprehensive and reliable testimonies from vulnerable witnesses. It has also been instrumental in removing communication barriers for persons with a disability and children affording them their right to dignity, respect and a voice when accessing the justice system.

SAPOL has committed to internally fund a further 50 members to complete this course by 31 January 2020. A review is to be conducted to assess the feasibility of SAPOL facilitating specialist interviewing courses in house to continue to equip members with the specialist skills required.

In the coming year, D&IB will advise, consult and collaborate with stakeholders both within SAPOL and externally to continue the implementation of the current DAIP and begin drafting the succeeding action plan.

