

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOC SA INC

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2011

Introduction

Riding for the Disabled (RDA) is an International Organisation with representative bodies in many countries. The organisation is represented in Australia by a National body RDA Australia Ltd. (RDAA) and in each state by a State body; Riding for the Disabled Association SA Inc. (RDA SA) is South Australia's representative body.

Riding for the Disabled Assoc SA Inc (RDA SA) is a voluntary, not for profit, organisation which provides riding instruction and other horse-related activities, including harness driving, for people with disabilities. RDA SA provides opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy a safe, stimulating, healthy, therapeutic and recreational sport. The association was established in 1972 and currently has 13 affiliated centres operating under its control and caters for approximately 350 riders with disabilities.

RDA SA activities and processes are embodied and reflected in its mission statement and constitution.





MISSION STATEMENT

Vision:

“Towards personal achievement through Equestrian Activities”

Mission:

Riding for the Disabled Association enables people with disabilities and volunteers throughout Australia to experience enjoyment, challenge and a sense of achievement through participation in horse riding and associated activities, resulting in the development of life skills; improving quality of life and the attainment of personal goals.

We are dedicated to providing these services through an organisation which is:

- Relevant, Innovative, Effective and Rewarding
- Operated by trained and caring people, committed to our aims now and in the future
- Recognised as having active involvement within the equestrian and general communities

PREAMBLE

What is the Disability Discrimination Act and what is 'discrimination'?

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the Act) came into effect in March 1993, and defines discrimination as treating a person with a disability less favourably than someone without one.

The Act aims to:

- eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of work, accommodation, education, access to premises clubs and sport, the provision of goods, facilities, services and land, existing law.
- ensure, as far as practicable, the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community.
- promote recognition and acceptance within the community that people with a disability have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community

The Act encourages everyone to recognise the contributions people with disabilities can make to the community and the economy and contains the accessibility requirements for new building construction and renovations to existing buildings.

Definition of discrimination

Discrimination covers less favourable treatment of a person because of a disability, or the disability of a relative or associate. Discrimination may be direct or indirect

- **Direct discrimination** occurs when individuals with a disability receive less favourable treatment than someone without a disability in the same circumstances.
- **Indirect discrimination** is treatment that appears neutral but disadvantages someone with a disability e.g. buildings with steps but no ramp exclude people who use wheelchairs.

Areas covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Act aims to reduce discrimination in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- public access to premises
- provision of goods, services and facilities
- activities of clubs and organisations
- sport

The Department of Families and Communities SA has further attempted to improve disability access, inclusion across all funded services and compliance with both the Act and the Equal Opportunity Act (South Australia 1984) by the development of the strategy *Promoting Independence: Disability Action Plans for South Australia*. This strategy sets the guidelines for developing disability action plans in government funded agencies.

INTRODUCTION

Why RDA SA needs a disability action plan

A Disability Action Plan (DAP) is a strategy for changing an organisation's practices to reduce the potential for disability discrimination to occur. The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission encourages service providers to develop a DAP and to lodge it with their organisation.

The RDA SA Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2008-11 represents our commitment to minimising discrimination towards people with a disability whilst participating in horse related programs, volunteering or seeking employment within our organisation. This plan will assist us to implement the requirements of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act [1992]* (DDA) and the South Australian Governments' Strategy, *Promoting Independence: Disability Action Plans for South Australia*.

The RDA SA Disability Action Plan was developed in consultation with RDA SA stakeholders, Board and staff. The accountability and implementation of the above actions will occur at all levels of RDA SA.

As it is implemented, this RDA SA Disability Action Plan will draw on the experience and expertise of staff and volunteers who contribute to the organisation, as well as consulting with peak disability service providers to improve the RDA SA environment for people with disabilities.

This Plan will aid RDA SA in complying with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and the South Australian Disability Services Act 1993.

We welcome comments and suggestions from people involved at all levels of the organisation at any time. Suggestions or comments may be forwarded to:

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About RDA SA

RDA SA is governed by a Board of Management and its activities are bound by the constitution and a comprehensive suite of policies. The RDA SA Board of Management directs the State Manager and subsequently State Office employees in the day to day business of the organisation. RDA SA is governed by National (RDAA) policies along with its State specific policies.

RDA SA State Office oversees the administration of all affiliated Centres, ensuring compliance with National (RDAA), Government, legal and Funding Body requirements. The State Office oversees financial matters, insurance, development and review of policies, training of coaches and volunteers, grant applications and fundraising activities which benefit the whole organisation.

RDA SA Centres deliver horse related programs (services) Centres are run by Management Committees which are bound by the RDA SA Constitution, RDAA guidelines and the same suite of policies which govern the Board of Management. Centre Management Committees conduct regular monthly meetings and each Centre delivers riding programs by appropriately trained volunteer coaches and volunteers.

Centres have a high degree of autonomy over their daily management but must adhere to prescribed processes and practices in order to meet their organisational, legal and financial requirements. State Office collaborates with Centres to ensure these requirements are met. State Office conducts major fundraising activities and disseminates the proceeds to centres. Centres also conduct fundraising necessary to meet their individual needs.

Client profile

RDA SA services are accessed by people with a wide range of disabilities from a broad cross section of the population. Every effort is made to remove any barriers to service access. All clients undergo a medical assessment prior to joining the program in order to establish their level of need. Access to the program is on a needs basis but is moderated by the availability of an appropriate coach, horse and volunteers.

RDA SA's functions are to:

- provide horse related activities to riders with disabilities within the community through the use of:
 - nationally accredited coaches
 - accredited horses
 - trained volunteers
 - planned program delivery
 - policy driven processes
- help riders with disabilities integrate into the broader community
- develop premises and facilities which are suitable for people with disabilities
- include riders from all backgrounds including indigenous people, those from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) and those who are wheelchair bound or with other physical limitations.

PUTTING THE ACTION PLAN INTO PRACTICE

RDA SA Disability Action Plan Monitoring and evaluation

The RDA SA Disability Action Plan is a working document for all levels of RDA SA. The plan outlines strategies, actions, people responsible and timeframe for meeting its goals.

The plan will be evaluated by RDA SA as per Section 61(e) of the Act. Evaluation involves development of specific performance indicators to assess the success and effectiveness of the strategies and actions used in achieving the Plan's outcomes.

Promotion and dissemination of the RDA SA Disability Action Plan

Copies of the Disability Action Plan will be sent to peak disability organisations and to all centres and interested stakeholders. The RDA SA DAP will also be made freely available on the RDA SA website.

RDA SA DISABILITY ACTION PLAN GOALS

The following goals form the basis of the RDA SA Disability Action Plan 2008-2011:

- **Goal 1:** to improve the quality of services provided by identifying and eliminating discriminatory behaviour
- **Goal 2:** to ensure all our policies and programs meet the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- **Goal 3:** to ensure accessible built environment and facilities
- **Goal 4:** to ensure all volunteers and staff understand the principles of Disability Discrimination Act compliance
- **Goal 5:** to ensure accessibility of information
- **Goal 6:** to engender awareness of rights and needs of people with disabilities
- **Goal 7:** to undertake ongoing consultation with people with disabilities and representative organisations on issues relating to people with a disability

Riding for the Disabled Association SA Inc (RDA SA)

Disability Action Plan 2008- 11

Goal 1: work strategically and collaboratively to improve the quality of our services by identifying and where possible eliminating any discriminatory behaviour.

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Form a focus group to identify possible forms of discrimination within the organisation (via consultation with riders)	Oct 08	Morning/afternoon tea Post on website	State manager Invites Aug 2008 Done
Ensure all centres and disability groups are included in focus group discussions	Oct 08	As above	State manager Invites Aug 2008
Ensure complaints handling information is widely distributed.	Oct 08	Within budget	State manager DONE MAY 2007
Ensure that organisation members (riders, coaches, volunteers and caregivers) know about the complaints information	Oct 08	Within budget	State manager MAY 2007 and autumn newsletters

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Monitoring and elimination of ongoing discriminatory issues	April and October each year	Within budget	State manager
Inform members of organisation about complaints information on a regular basis.	Autumn newsletter each year	Within budget	State manager

Goal 2: ensure policies and programs achieve the objects of the DDA 1992

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Ensure website information is available in a format suitable for those using assistive devices and by geographically dispersed people.	Nov 2008	IT website hosts to add a 'skip navigation' link	State manager DONE Sept 08

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Identify gaps in information resources	ASAP	Within budget	State manager
Develop 'inclusive practice' policy for education within the organisation	June 2009	Within budget	State manager

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Ensure up to date information technology applications are applied to website and resources as it becomes available	EVERY 3 MONTHS: Run thru validator.w3.org or jigsaw.w3.org to ensure it conforms to web standard and correct any errors found.	Within budget	State manager
Ensure complaints information is widely advertised and viewed as a positive tool to improve service delivery		Within budget	State manager

Goal 3: ensure accessibility of all RDA SA premises and facilities.

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Develop accessibility guidelines following the recommendations of the Australian Network for Universal Housing Design and the Discrimination Act 1992.	Nov 2008	Within budget	State manager
Develop access protocols, assessment criteria and audit process for all RDA SA premises	Nov 2008	Within budget	State manager

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Wheelchair accessible toilets at all RDA SA premises	As financially feasible	Within budget	State manager and management committees
Ensure signage is appropriate for the disability sectors being serviced at a given centre	March 2009	Within budget	State manager and centre committees
Develop a staged works program to progressively upgrade nominated premises.	As required	Within budget	State Manager and management committees
Any of the above not yet achieved			

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Provide shaded areas for the use of riders with a disability during riding sessions		Within budget	State manager and centre management committees
Develop pathways suitable for use by wheelchairs in all weather conditions		Within budget	State manager and centre management committees

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Keep up to date with recommendations of The Australian Network for Universal Housing Design and the Discrimination Act 1992.		Within budget	State manager

Goal 4: ensure all volunteers and staff understand the principles of DDA compliance

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Promote and encourage an understanding and awareness of Disability Discrimination Act 1992 via newsletter article	Spring or summer newsletter 2008/9	Within budget	State manager
Consult with disability advisory bodies, disability sector peak bodies and other key stakeholders re. best training methods		Within budget	State manager

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Offer training to all volunteers/staff	State Coach workshop 2009	Within budget	State Office

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Offer training to all volunteers/staff	State Coach workshop 2010	Within budget	State Office

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Continued training to address issue of volunteer turnover	Annual workshops	Within budget	Coaching co-ordinator

Goal 5: ensure that information disseminated by RDA SA, such as policies and forms, is available in an equitable manner to people with disabilities.

2008-2009

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Involve people with disabilities in the development of information styles required	ASAP	Within budget	State manager
Make information available on the website accessible by people who use assistive devices or are geographically dispersed.	ASAP	Within budget	State manager

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Develop style manual for terminology and appropriate methods of communication			

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Ensure all publications, reports and information complies with the above range of styles		Within budget	State manager
Ensure information published on the website complies with above guidelines		Within budget	State manager

Goal 6: promote increased awareness about the rights and needs of people with disabilities whilst involved with RDA SA

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Continue current training, including attendance at other disability organisation sessions.		Within budget	Coaching co-ordinator

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Disability workshop			

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Ensure coaches and volunteers receive adequate training at RDA SA run disability workshops.		Within coaching budget	Coaching co-ordinator

Goal 7: ensure ongoing consultation with representatives of the disabled community on issues relating to people with a disability

2008-09

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Maintain and establish new partnerships with other disability service providers.		Within budget	State Manager

2009-10

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Invite representatives from the disabled community to open days			State Manager

2010-11

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility

Ongoing Commitments

Strategies	Timeline	Resources	Responsibility
Maintain partnerships with other disability service providers		Within budget	State manager