Telstra's FY21 Accessibility Action Plan

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A message from our CEO

As we enter the 2020's there has never been a more important time for organisations to think deeply about their role and place in society and their responsibilities to the communities in which they operate. Business leaders are expected to navigate their organisations through enormous change and challenge, to leverage the benefits of technology innovation to bring further advancement, and to do these things in a kinder, more inclusive way. A way in which we take greater accountability for our impact on others.

An important part of meeting this challenge is making sure nobody is left behind and in this Accessibility Action Plan you will find a wide range of actions to ensure that we are bringing everyone along on our accessibility journey.

Telstra's accessibility journey began nearly 40 years ago with the introduction of specialised products that assisted people with disabilities to use a standard telephone service. Since then, accessibility has expanded into all areas of our business, from products and digital services for our customers to new recruitment practices and workplace adjustments for our employees.

As a company that employs tens of thousands and serves millions of Australians, we can only hope to do so responsibly by reflecting and representing the full human diversity of each of those as individuals, including the nearly 20 per cent of Australians living with disability.

To demonstrate our commitment Telstra recently joined The Valuable 500, a global campaign bringing together hundreds of business leaders in solidarity to ensure that disability inclusion and accessibility are incorporated into the agendas of some of the world's largest and most successful companies. As part of the campaign, I am committing Telstra to the achievement of the actions outlined in this Action Plan and sharing that commitment with the business and the world.

By continuing to improve the experiences of all our customers and employees, we are playing an important role in creating and supporting an inclusive and non-discriminatory society. Our commitment at Telstra is to never lose sight of the fact that "how" we do things is just as important as "why" we do them, and ultimately we do that by being led by our purpose and values in the way we go about our work.

I look forward to sharing our progress with you in the future.

Andrew Penn
Chief Executive Officer, Telstra

Now, at the beginning of a new decade, the world and our industry face new challenges.

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us all of the vital importance of connection and communication. The ability to work and learn from home has become extremely important and underlines the importance of digital inclusion in modern society.

The need for greater flexibility in strategy and planning has also been highlighted as we have moved into an Agile working environment. This new way of working has also encouraged us to apply greater rigour and specificity to our goals. Given the pace of change in today's world, we have taken some time to reflect on past strategies, both what has worked and what has not, and to identify where we can better integrate accessibility across our business if we are to fulfil Telstra's purpose of building a connected future so *everyone* can thrive.

Progress against our previous plan

In March 2017, we launched our previous Accessibility and Inclusion Plan, covering the period 2017–2019, in which we undertook commitments grouped into three strategic pillars.

Improve customer experience

We aimed to deliver inclusive customer experiences by making sure that our premises, products and information were accessible and easy to use, and our services met the needs of our diverse customer base. We also strove to consider accessibility when we sourced and created software applications, digital services, content and online experiences.

Create a fully inclusive workplace

To help ensure we delivered brilliant customer experiences, we fostered a diverse workforce – one that lives and breathes a culture of inclusion. We supported this pillar by raising awareness, building accessibility know-how, providing employment for people with diverse abilities – including through our supply chain – and ensuring that our employees with disability have the technology and support they need.

Innovate for the future

We wanted to support a better future for people with disability and help build a more inclusive society. We did this by pushing the boundaries of technology to shape solutions for the future and by partnering with others to innovate and create new products and services.

Key achievements of our previous plan

- Best practice for digital accessibility embedded into our Brand guidelines, including colours, logos, typography and external emails

- Telstra Smart Home app underwent a successful accessibility audit

- Over 10 per cent of graduates recruited for FY19 identified as living with a disability

- More than 1200 employees participated in accessibility and inclusion training

- More than 500 people from Australian Disability Enterprises employed across six states

- With Transpire, expanded **www.appsforall.com.au** to promote resources for accessible app development

- Through the Telstra Foundation, supported disability and accessibility organisations and programs via the Tech4Good Challenge and the Remarkable accelerator

Our aspiration and commitment

Our aspiration for accessibility at Telstra is to enable all Australians to enjoy a more connected and accessible future. This is core to who we are. We are committed to doing business responsibly, helping to make accessibility ubiquitous and business as usual in all areas, from customer support and product development to procurement and human resources. Rather than approach accessibility as a silo or an afterthought, we know that thinking about accessibility must become embedded into everything we do. We also know this will require significant time, attention and dedication, and that's why we're shaking up our approach to our Accessibility Action Plan.

As Telstra has begun to move faster and become more agile, we recognise that we need the ability to be more responsive to changing needs and new priorities. A three-year strategy and planning document no longer seems the most efficient or effective route to improving accessibility for our customers and employees. Instead, we're establishing a more frequent annual reporting rhythm to review and refresh our objectives and strategic direction.

In 2020, we began reaffirming our commitment by:

- **updating our internal Disability & Accessibility Policy**, which applies to all employees and contractors of Telstra, to ensure our premises, information, products and services are inclusive and accessible;

- **working with accessibility experts** to complete a gap analysis and provide recommendations for improving accessibility at Telstra; and

- **forming a new Accessibility Steering Committee** made up of representatives from several key business functions, to better inform our goals and objectives for the coming year.

In crafting this FY21 Accessibility Action Plan, we engaged with key stakeholders to pinpoint where we can have the greatest impact. Consequently, certain areas such as Digital and Human Resource practices are a particular focus for our priorities in this year's Action Plan.

Our new approach allows us to align to our core strengths and priorities for the current financial year and plant the seeds for further targeted improvements across the business in subsequent years.

The FY21 Action Plan encapsulates our priority activities during FY21; however, we will remain open to changing priorities and ensure we take a nimble and open-minded approach to delivering accessibility to our customers.

We also acknowledge there will always be much more that can be accomplished to improve accessibility, but we believe that by first focusing on building capacity in key areas, we are establishing powerful momentum to carry Telstra into the future.

It is within this new framework that we are excited to share our priorities to benefit Our Customers, Our Candidates and Our Colleagues.

Our accessibility journey

We've been a leader for many years in addressing disability issues and in ensuring our products, services and information are accessible to customers.

Ensuring people with a disability have access to the standard telephone service and new telecommunication innovations requires ongoing commitments. The historical timeline below tracks major achievements from the introduction of disability equipment in 1981 to the present.

1981

Specialised products introduced to assist people with a disability to use the standard telephone

1988

Telstra Disabilities Program Unit established

Aged and Disability Centres established in each State and Territory

1992

Federal *Disability Discrimination Act* passed by Parliament

1993

Telstra Payphone Access Policy introduced

1996

First Disability Action Plan

Telstra Disability Enquiry Hotline established

Telstra Staff Disability Awareness Program established

Telstra's Disability Equipment Program (DEP) expanded to include Teletypewriters (TTY)

Braille Bill option introduced for Telstra customers

1999

Second Disability Action Plan

Telstra Disability Forum established

Catalogue of products and services for older people and people with a disability released

Launch of online Disability Awareness learning program for Telstra staff

Launch of Telstra's Centre for Accessibility

2002

Third Disability Action Plan

TTY Payphone locations and Telstra product catalogue published online

New standard rental phone with accessible features, Braille TTY and Large Visual Display TTY introduced

Disability Awareness online training became mandatory for Telstra employees

Cordless phone with large buttons added to the DEP

Telstra was principal sponsor of the 20th Deaflympic Games, held in Melbourne

Big Button Multipurpose home phone added to the DEP

2007

Fourth Disability Action Plan

3G mobile network allowed people with hearing aids and cochlear implants to use a mobile phone without an assistive device in almost all situations

Telstra EasyTouch® Discovery mobile handset launched, designed with direct input from older people and people with a disability

*Photo taken prior to the introduction of physical distancing requirements

2010
Fifth Disability Action Plan

Telstra EasyCall pre-paid mobile phone with accessible features launched

Telstra supported the introduction of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) through submissions, sponsorship of the National Disability & Carer Congress, and the "Every Australian Counts" campaign

Telstra Supported Workforce Program introduced

2013
Sixth Disability Action Plan

Telstra and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) co-hosted M-Enabling Australasia, highlighting mobile service innovations for people with disability

CAPTCHAs removed from all pages on telstra.com

BigPond movies introduced an Open Captions Genre for selected movies

2017
Accessibility & Inclusion Plan

Online resource and reference for accessible native application development, www.appsforall.com.au, developed by Telstra in conjunction with Transpire

TelstrAbility employee representative group (ERG) founded, comprising employees with disability and allies

2020
Accessibility Action Plan

Our customers

At Telstra, we pride ourselves on the experiences we create for our customers, so it's no surprise that we want to eliminate customer pain points through radically simplifying our product offerings and creating digital experiences. This is the very first pillar of our T22 strategy. Each of the accessibility actions we've prioritised for the benefit of our customers align with our company-wide objectives.

In particular, we understand that digital accessibility is vital if we're to ensure that increased digitisation and new digital platforms do not create additional pain or complexity for our customers. This is why a strong focus this year is on tackling digital accessibility, helping to bridge the digital divide for customers with disability.

Priorities	Actions	Owners	Key measures of success
Improved digital accessibility	Implement internal procedures to uplift the accessibility of digital content and documentation	Telstra Digital	• Increase in number of spot and major audits performed, and certifications obtained, against the WCAG 2.1 A/AA standards
	Build accessibility into the foundational building blocks of our digital assets	Telstra Digital	• Application of AA accessibility standards to all patterns developed within the Telstra Design System
	Implement an ongoing usability testing program of digital products and assets with people with disability	Telstra Digital Customer Experience (CX) Chapter	• Establishment of pilot program
Improved product accessibility	Establish standards or benchmarks for introduction of new devices to our product catalogue	Product & Technology	• Delivery of internal guidelines outlining product accessibility requirements
	Create an accessibility framework for product development and management to raise awareness and embed accessibility through product development and procurement processes	Product & Technology Procurement Strategy Operations	• Completion of training by 80 per cent of impacted stakeholders, including all Product Managers in charge of new product introduction • Implementation of new processes in procurement, including New Product Introduction Forums and checkpoints

Ambition	Actions	Owner	Key measures of success
A more inclusive customer experience	Establish a consistent approach to incorporate people with disability into user research	Telstra Digital CX Chapter	• Creation of customer segment profile and integration into customer research
	Improve representation of people with disability in brand assets and imagery	Brand	• New brand images with authentic and inclusive depictions of disability
	Engage in deeper stakeholder relationships	Sustainability	• Stakeholder Forum established to provide feedback on Telstra accessibility initiatives
	Develop internal processes for delivering key customer communications in Auslan	Sustainability Communications	• Established rules for classification or categorisation of "key" Telstra messaging
	Create bespoke disability awareness training content	Sustainability Learning	• Production of new educational material specifically relevant to Telstra front-line staff, such as engaging with the National Relay Service or the Disability Enquiry Hotline • Addition or incorporation of bespoke material into existing Disability Awareness course

Did you know?

New guidelines for Telstra's print and online content include:
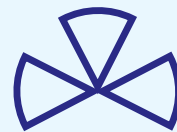
10,000
Employees
accessed the brand guidelines and assets housed in our 'Brand Hub' in 2019

Diversity & inclusion in our brand guidelines
Our guidelines say that "Our photography should feature a broad range of people, reflecting our varied customer and employee base" and "Our photography must truly represent the variety of geographical locations where our brand lives."

Fewer colours
and strict use of darker tones guided by WCAG standards

7 word headlines
Maximum words in headlines to promote comprehension of our message

16 point type size
Minimum text size across our new Telstra.com digital design system

A brand for everyone

In June 2018, when Telstra announced that we were going back to basics with a focus on simpler products and more streamlined operations, it provided a timely opportunity to take a long, deep look at the accessibility of our brand.

A year later, the launch of our personalised, contract-free mobile plans has provided a platform for a sweeping 'brand refresh' – casting off the old focus on "magical" technology, and replacing it with a solid, down-to-Earth commitment to deliver something for everyone.

For the team who manage brand identity at our Chief Brand Office, this has meant so much more than bolder advertisements and clearer communications. It has meant a compelling new approach that promises to make Telstra a genuinely inclusive company.

"The thought that we might have been excluding some of our customers from some of our content in the past was very disappointing," admits Senior Brand Specialist Krista Stringer. "As a market leader, we need to make sure that all our customers – whoever they are, whatever they need – feel part of our brand. It feels great that we're finally beginning to get this right."

The results can be seen across all of Telstra's print, digital and advertising channels, where bold colours are matched by strict rules encouraging shorter texts, simpler language, stronger contrasts, and gradients that promote 'readability'.

> **"As a market leader, we need to make sure that all our customers – whoever they are, whatever they need – feel part of our brand. It feels great that we're finally beginning to get this right."**
>
> – Krista Stringer, Senior Brand Specialist

Our Brand Office is also working closely with Telstra Digital, where a dedicated team of web developers and designers is upgrading the Telstra.com website to conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards.

"There are some obvious differences in some of our channels – for example, in the increasing diversity of actors appearing in our TV ads and imagery," says Krista. "But there's so much more going on behind the scenes, which is contributing in a significant way to making us as inclusive as we say we are."

Our candidates

At Telstra, we know that the best outcomes come from seeking different perspectives and really listening. We also know that the best way to ensure different perspectives is to attract talent with a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds. This is why we were proud to attain Disability Confident Recruiter status from the Australian Network on Disability (AND) in December 2019.

Two of our FY21 priorities reflect this understanding of the need to engage with diverse candidates, including those with disability. Through these commitments, we acknowledge the crucial importance of ongoing improvements, and finding new ways to make our recruitment and application processes more accessible and inclusive.

Priorities	Actions	Owners	Key measures of success
An accessible and inclusive recruitment process	Retain Disability Confident Recruiter (DCR) status through the Australian Network on Disability	Global Business Services (GBS) – People Services	• Completion of all Year 2 activities on the DCR check list
	Ensure the Telstra Careers website meets WCAG 2.1 A/AA accessibility standards	GBS – Recruitment GBS – Employer Brand & Marketing	• Increase in completion of accessibility spot checks and audits of Telstra Careers website platform, and new page builds
	Raise awareness of recruitment and employee disability support via Telstra Careers websites and social channels	GBS – Recruitment	• Increase in number of Telstra Careers web pages and volume of content highlighting available support
Greater diversity of skills and experience amongst our candidates	Provide targeted employment opportunities for people with disability	Transformation, Communications & People	• Delivery of a neurodiversity recruitment pilot program • Target 10 per cent of graduate intake to include people who identify as living with disability
	Recruit more talent with digital accessibility expertise	Telstra Digital	• Increase in number of the Digital team with demonstrated accessibility expertise

Certifying an inclusive future

We believe it's people who give purpose to our technology and it starts with the people who work for us and with us.

In 2017, as part of our previous Accessibility & Inclusion Plan, we made a commitment to adopt the most rigorous accessibility standards across all our recruitment and workforce practices – to ensure there would be no accessibility barriers for anyone who wants a job at Telstra.

We worked in close partnership with the Australian Network on Disability to complete their Disability Confident Recruiter (DCR) program, which covers a range of barrier-free recruitment and HR practices, including supported interviews, accessible buildings, flexible assessments, WCAG-accredited websites, and more. "Basically, if a candidate has an accessibility request, we will try to accommodate it; we want to ensure the process is equitable," says Carolyn McDonnell, Program Consultant, Diversity & Inclusion.

The DCR program has given Telstra's recruitment team the knowledge and resources to carry the accessibility message throughout the business, making it easier than ever for employees to get the support they need, whether that be through workplace adjustments, flexible ways of working, or more inclusive training. "It's helped us start a lot of conversations we needed to have," says Carolyn. "Whether your need arises on your first day or 10 years into your career, things like flexibility and workplace adjustments simply have to be part of our everyday conversation."

This empowerment is good news for Telstra's managers, who now have more support to seek out employees who will broaden the insight, empathy and experience of their teams. It's also good news for jobseekers, who will be able to request adjustments during any stage of their recruitment and employment – as well as being allocated a Health Management Consultant to

support them with any appropriate assessments and modifications they need to be successful in their roles.

And of course, it's great news for our customers, who will find that their favourite technology company is one of the country's most equitable, compassionate and representative employers – with a workforce that genuinely matches the incredible diversity of the Australian community.

Did you know?

Disability Confident Recruiter status
granted to Telstra Careers Centre in December 2019

10%
of Telstra's recent graduate intake
identified as living with a disability

150 interns with a disability
hosted by Telstra through the AND's Stepping Into Internship program – the largest number for any hosting organisation involved in the program since 2014

Our colleagues

As part of Telstra's T22 strategy, we are striving to greatly simplify our ways of working to empower our people and serve our customers, and to simplify and improve our employees' experiences. This is especially relevant to employees with disability, who may historically have encountered barriers or obstacles to being truly included.

The following actions are intended to address the needs of our colleagues, both by making the employee experience more accessible and by providing sets of tools to empower employees to better understand and apply accessibility principles in their work.

Priorities	Actions	Owners	Key measures of success
A more accessible and inclusive employee experience	Raise awareness of available support for candidates and employees with disability, including awareness of the centralised process and budget for workplace assessments and adjustments	Transformation, Communications & People	• Increase in number of Workplace Adjustment (WA) requests and visits to website pages and Ask HR articles
	Improve the effectiveness of the end-to-end onboarding process for graduates and interns with disability using a Human Centred Design approach	Transformation, Communications & People	• Delivery of new welcome pack to all new graduates and interns • Positive rating for WA as measured by employee feedback in Telstra's Occupational Health & Safety System
	Develop product compliance guidelines for sourcing of software and hardware	Telstra Digital Procurement Operations	• Delivery of prioritisation criteria for selection of suppliers, considering accessibility and inclusion practices
	Consult with staff to identify site-specific accessibility pain points and target appropriate solutions	Property Strategy & Operations	• Delivery of consultation sessions with the TelstrAbility ERG and employees with disability
	Update Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) procedures for people with disability	Health, Safety, Wellbeing, Environment & Protective Security	• Increase in internal communications sent and in PEEPs processed via Donesafe

*Photo taken prior to the introduction of physical distancing requirements

Ambition	Actions	Owner	Key measures of success
Tools to support greater accessibility in the workplace	Deliver Governance and ICT accessibility Framework	Telstra Digital	• Increase in number of core digital asset teams using the new Governance and ICT framework
	Empower teams to self-assess their digital assets against a clear set of criteria, including delivery of Ta11y monitoring tool	Telstra Digital Risk	• Increase in frequency and quality of defect and compliance reporting
	Provide a range of formal and informal accessibility training for all digital practitioners	Telstra Digital	• Increase in number of Telstra Digital staff completing formal and informal accessibility training
	Develop a consistent digital accessibility automation testing plan	Telstra Digital	• Increase in the number of teams using our approved automation tools
	Upskill site-specific Accessibility Champions to better embed accessibility into the premises experience	Property Strategy & Operations	• Delivery of additional training to designated Accessibility Champions
Leverage accessibility best practice	Engage with industry professionals to learn from and contribute to discussions of accessible procurement practices	Procurement Operations	• Participation in Australian Network on Disability Accessible Procurement Taskforce
	Complete Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index to establish baseline metrics against which to measure progress	Sustainability	• Completion of Index report showing a comparative understanding of accessibility at Telstra in relation to other Australian corporations

Creating confidence, changing lives

When Steve Ryan, Telstra's National Property Maintenance Manager, employed his first supported worker in western Victoria in February 2011, it launched a program that has seen thousands of people with disability gain work across Australia – often with life-changing consequences.

Today, Telstra's Supported Workforce Program partners with 11 Australian Disability Enterprises to provide part-time or contract work to 522 employees at more than 5,500 network sites across six states.

"Some people still talk about this as charity work," says Steve. "But I can tell you that since we started employing these teams, complaints from the local community have dropped significantly – and the standard of work has kept going up."

The expansion of the program has seen the initial scope of cleaning and gardening services grow to include floor waxing, packaging, signwriting, graffiti removal, and a variety of repair jobs. "In regional areas, they're now installing slip and trip treads, painting yellow lines and doing other health and safety tasks, which is saving us significant funds across the business," says Steve.

"Telstra has changed the landscape for us," says Jim Dinuccio, who runs Clean Force Property Services, which has 46 employees working at 670 Telstra sites in Victoria and Tasmania. "Having a partner that has such a large volume of work and gets involved and cares how individual employees are going – that makes such a difference."

Telstra's Supported Workforce Program began in 2011 with Scope, which today has 18 workers in regular employment at Telstra sites in Victoria – with another 110 doing sub-contract work through local disability enterprises.

"Telstra was our first partner in cleaning and grounds maintenance, which gave us a platform to build a significant employment program," says Scope's Contract Services Manager, Warrick Coad. "This work provides an incredible confidence boost for people to change their lives for the better."

This year, two of Scope's Telstra employees have been able to move on to non-supported employment. "One man who'd had mental health issues was able to build up the confidence to apply for full-time work in a hospital," says Warrick. "He's thriving in his new job. This is the kind of story you just can't tell in numbers."

Did you know?

72%
of scheduled cleaning and grounds maintenance at Telstra network sites in 2019 was covered by

Australian Disability Enterprises

500+
supported workers
undertaking cleaning and grounds maintenance at over 5,000 Telstra network sites

Governance

Our Accessibility Steering Committee provides leadership on Telstra's accessibility ambitions, determines key priority decision points and elevates to management decisions on accessibility-related matters for the organisation. This includes making recommendations to senior leadership on key accessibility focus areas (such as employee training and capacity building, or accessibility of consumer products) and ensuring accessibility receives the appropriate level of attention in leadership discussions when required.

We will report publicly on progress made against the actions in this plan in subsequent Accessibility Action Plans. Our Accessibility Action Plan is available on our Telstra website at **telstra.com/disability.**

If you would like to be provided with the Plan in an alternative format, please email us at **AccessibilityAndInclusion@team.telstra.com.**

Feedback

We encourage organisations and individuals to provide feedback on this Plan and other Telstra accessibility matters by emailing us at **AccessibilityAndInclusion@team.telstra.com**

Disability Equipment Program

For more information visit telstra.com/disability

Disability Enquiry Hotline

For information on our disability products and services, contact our Hotline:

1800 068 424 (Voice)

133 677 (Teletypewriter)
Or email: disability@online.telstra.com.au