

Telstra Corporation

Review Report

**To the Human Rights and
Equal Opportunity Commission of Telstra's
Second Disability Action Plan**

1999 – 2001

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Executive Summary

Telstra lodged its first Disability Action Plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) in December 1996. The first Action Plan covered the three-year period 1996-1998.

Telstra's Second Disability Action Plan (the second Plan) was submitted to the HREOC in 1999. It covered the three-year period 1999 – 2001. The second Plan consisted of a mission statement and eight strategies, under which Telstra made a total of 57 measurable commitments that it would strive to achieve in the three-year period of the plan.

The objective of this Report is to provide the HREOC with the results of an independent review of Telstra's implementation of the second Plan. The review was conducted during the final week of March 2002.

Telstra appointed independent consultant Halliday's Business Insights to conduct this review. The consultant reviewed the status of each action point Telstra committed to in the second Plan. The results of this review were based on discussions with Telstra employees, and the sighting of primary evidence to indicate action taken against each item in the second Plan.

The consultant did not undertake a review of the effectiveness of the second Plan as part of the review, rather the purpose was to provide a quantitative scorecard assessment of actions carried out.

However, consumer feedback was sought in an additional, related study, the *External Stakeholder Research*, conducted by the consultant in January 2002, and is referenced in this report. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of Telstra's second Plan and also, importantly, to seek input from a broad consumer audience into the planning of Telstra's Third Disability Action Plan (the third Plan). Feedback from the research was encouraging:

"While acknowledging there is still much to do, external stakeholders have recognised Telstra's achievements over the past three years and are keen to continue to consult regularly with Telstra to achieve more equitable outcomes for people with a disability."

The review of the second Plan indicates that 100% of actions within the plan were either Complete or In Progress. This is an improvement over the results of Telstra's First Disability Action Plan review, where 91% of actions were either Complete or In Progress.

Telstra's second Plan included three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Improved customer satisfaction; Improved customer awareness of Telstra's services for customers with a disability; and Improved feedback from disability stakeholders on Telstra's services for people with a disability.

Telstra is encouraged by the results of the performance of the second Plan against these KPIs. This is evidenced by positive market research with users of Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline and Directory Assistance Helpline, as well as initiatives such as improved billing options; more accessible information – including alternative formats and the establishment of the Centre for Accessibility to improve online access; and wide-ranging sponsorship and promotional activities that support Telstra's disability programs.

Although it has been actively developing and promoting products and services for people with a disability for more than 20 years, Telstra recognises that ensuring all its customers have access to modern telecommunications is an ongoing challenge. As Telstra develops its third Plan (2002 – 2004) it will continue to focus on the eight key strategies developed in the second Plan. Online communication will be a particular focus, as the very nature of web-based communication presents access issues, especially for people who are blind or have vision impairment. Telstra will continue to consult widely, relying on the guidance of peak disability groups and other advocates as it develops and implements its third Plan.

1 Introduction

This Report summarises Telstra's progress on the eight strategies detailed in Telstra's Second Disability Action Plan (the second Plan) for the three years 1999-2001.

The strategies were as follows:

1. Enhance disability awareness amongst Telstra management and staff
2. Ensure ongoing community consultation
3. Improve accessibility to information for people with a disability
4. Improve accessibility to Telstra's products and services
 - Payphones
 - Directory Assistance
 - Mobile Communication Services including actions addressing
 - Issues relating to hearing-impaired consumers
 - Issues relating to Deaf and speech-impaired consumers
 - Billing
5. Improve accessibility to Telstra's complaint management process for customers with a disability
6. Improve accessibility for the 'online' consumer with a disability
7. Improve accessibility of Telstra's facilities
8. Maintain Telstra's commitment to the elimination of discrimination in the workplace in accordance with EEO policy.

This Report has been prepared by Telstra's Disability Services Unit with input from members of Telstra's Disability Forum and feedback from an independent *External Stakeholder Research* study completed in January 2002. It also includes the results of a quantitative assessment of the second Plan conducted in March 2002.

The Report has been prepared for the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, HREOC. It has also been made available to members of Telstra's Disability Forum and to other interested persons.

Telstra's second Plan, as with the first Plan, has been a dynamic document, and the progress of implementing actions has been monitored and reported regularly to consumer representatives at Telstra's Disability Forums.

This Report demonstrates Telstra's ongoing commitment to people with a disability – both in terms of its internal policies and processes, and external product and service development. Telstra aims to build on the success of its previous six years of disability action planning, and to continue to improve services for people with a disability.

2 Background

Although Telstra has long been involved in providing services to people with a disability, its commitment was formalised in 1996 with the submission of its first Disability Action Plan (1996-1998) to the HREOC. The Disability Action Plan enables Telstra's Business Units to overcome and avoid discriminatory practices.

In December 1999 Telstra submitted a report on implementing its first Disability Action Plan to the HREOC. The report summarised the progress Telstra had made in relation to the nine strategies detailed in the first Plan.

With the adoption of its second Plan (1999 – 2001) Telstra sought to build upon past achievements and to increase disability awareness throughout its management and staff.

In its second Plan, Telstra indicated that a comprehensive assessment, which reviewed all strategies, would take place at the conclusion of the Plan. That review commenced in December 2001 and forms the basis of this Report.

2.1 Process of Second Review

Since the launch of its second Plan, Telstra has established internal processes to record the progress of all initiatives outlined in the plan. Telstra's Disability Services Unit has maintained a central file for each of the eight strategies outlined in the second Plan. These files contain primary evidence to indicate actions taken against each item in the plan. This process enabled an independent consultant to assess each file and provide a scorecard of Telstra's progress towards implementing actions within the Plan.

Telstra appointed Ms Susan Halliday, a consultant with Halliday's Business Insights and former Acting Disability Discrimination Commissioner, to undertake an assessment of its performance (refer Appendix One). This review was conducted in person at Telstra offices (242 Exhibition Street, Melbourne) during the last week of March 2002 by reference to physical and verbal evidence provided by Telstra's Disability Services Unit. Telstra's first Plan was also independently reviewed to provide a quantitative scorecard allowing comparisons between the two plans.

Telstra's second Plan comprised eight strategies. The review of the second Plan consisted of an individual assessment of the 57 actions falling under these eight strategies. Each of the 57 actions was rated using one of the following classifications:

- **Complete**
 - The action was completed during the given period 1999-2001, or in the case of on-going actions, the action in question was sufficiently fulfilled during the 1999-2001 period.
- **Extensive Progress**
 - Over two thirds of the work associated with the action in question had been completed.
- **In Progress**
 - Work associated with the action in question was underway.
- **Not Actioned**
 - Work associated with the action had not yet commenced.

2.2 Consumer Feedback

To complement the quantitative review, a comprehensive *External Stakeholder Research* study involving in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was also undertaken. The purpose of this study was to obtain a qualitative perspective on the effectiveness of the second Plan and to seek broad consumer input into the preparation of the third Plan.

The *External Stakeholder Research* was conducted by Halliday's Business Insights in January and February 2002. It comprised three significant components:

- In-depth interviews with 13 representatives from Telstra's Disability Forum including representatives from the following organisations:
 - *Australian Association of the Deaf*
 - *Blind Citizens Australia*
 - *Communication Aid Users Society*
 - *Australian Federation of Disability Organisations*
 - *Physical Disability Council of Australia*
 - *Telecommunications Disability Project (TEDICORE)*
 - *Women with Disabilities (Aust.)*
 - *National Ethnic Disability Alliance*
 - *Deafness Forum*
 - *National Indigenous Disability Network*
 - *Better Hearing Australia.*
- Two focus groups consisting of 'grass roots' practitioners, advocates, carers, public servants and representatives from non-government organisations and local disability groups.
- Eight in-depth, face to face interviews with members of the public including carers, advocates and people with a disability. The focus of this component of the study was to explore issues not satisfactorily covered by previous plans. Emphasis was placed on the following issues:
 - *Intellectual disability*
 - *Potential dual disadvantage associated with having a disability and coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background*
 - *The role of carers in the above two sectors and*
 - *Issues faced by some older Australians experiencing functional disability.*

Telstra's Disability Forum representatives came from various state and regional areas. Other respondents came from rural, regional and metropolitan communities in Victoria. The participants and the people they represented, varied in age, gender, employment status, educational and cultural background, as well as economic position.

The feedback from all groups was extensive and covered a diverse range of issues. Among the many positive messages relating to Telstra's activities was a wealth of constructive criticism. Disability Forum members, in particular, felt they could be frank and honest because

"Telstra was prepared to listen and consider ideas and suggestions that Members believed would allow further progress."

The report said

“While keen to develop a quasi log of claims for the future, there was the foundation of a sound rapport, that for some extended to a level of trust. A significant number believed, that in good faith the organisation was becoming more pro-active and was pursuing equitable outcomes for people with disabilities, for the right reasons.”

The report also indicated that among advocates, medical practitioners, carers, representatives of non-government organisations, state and local government workers, members of peak bodies and other community workers, there was a need to better understand Telstra’s services and the support Telstra provides in the disability area to assist these people in their work. This feedback provides some direction for the development of future targeted awareness campaigns.

3 Implementation of Strategies under Telstra's Second Disability Action Plan 1999-2001

This section reports on the implementation of the eight strategies. It outlines the aim of each strategy, the review result (Complete, Extensive Progress, In Progress or Not Actioned) and a summary by Telstra of the status of each action item. The results of the independent scorecard review by Halliday's Business Insights are summarised in the following table:

Strategy	Commitments/Actions				
	Complete	Extensive Progress (over 2/3 complete)	In Progress	Not Actioned	TOTAL
1. Enhance disability awareness amongst management and staff	5	0	0	0	5
2. Ensure on-going community consultation	2	0	0	0	2
3. Improve accessibility to information for people with a disability	7	1	0	0	8
4. Improve accessibility to products and services					
• payphones	4	0	1	0	5
• directory assistance	5	0	0	0	5
• mobile telephone services	7	2	0	0	9
• billing	1	0	0	0	1
5. Improve accessibility to Telstra's complaint management process for customers with a disability	5	0	0	0	5
6. Improve accessibility for the on-line customer with a disability	4	0	0	0	4
7. Improve accessibility of Telstra's facilities	4	2	1	0	7
8. Maintain Telstra's commitment to the elimination of discrimination in the workplace in accordance with EEO policy	4	2	0	0	6
TOTAL COMMITMENTS	48	7	2	0	57
TOTAL %	84%	12%	4%	0%	100%

The review of Telstra's Second Disability Action Plan indicates that 100% of actions within the plan were either Complete or In Progress. This is an improvement over the results of the review of Telstra's First Disability Action Plan where 91% of actions were either Complete or In Progress.

Strategy 1: Enhance disability awareness amongst Telstra management and staff

The aim of this strategy was to ensure that information would continue to be provided to all Telstra managers and staff to assist in improving staff awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act and issues affecting people with a disability.

Telstra is one of Australia's largest employers and the following actions were undertaken to improve staff awareness of Telstra's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999, as well as general disability awareness. Staff Awareness remains an important ongoing activity and initiatives will continue to be implemented as part of the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
<p>1.1 Develop an intranet resource site for Disability Services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist staff in Telstra in their dealings with people with a disability • Provide basic information about disabilities • Provide information about Telstra's obligations under the DDA and the Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999 • Provide online access to Telstra's Disability Action Plan 	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra now has a comprehensive Disability Services intranet site providing detailed information to assist staff in their interactions with customers with a disability. • The site includes information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra Disability Services • News Flash (current events and sponsorships by Telstra's Disability Unit) • Disability Action Plan • Disability Forum • Research and Trends in Disability • Disability Resources including fact sheets and information about alternative formats and equipment for customers with a disability
<p>1.2 Distribute information in a variety of media through staff communications channels</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular articles have been placed in a wide range of staff communication channels across all Telstra Business Units. Topic areas have included disability action plan initiatives, staff awareness, new products and services for customers with a disability, employee profile, programs for employees with a disability and general disability interest areas.
<p>1.3 Rotate chairing of Telstra's Disability Forum to enhance disability awareness at a senior management level</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each forum held has been chaired by a senior Telstra manager representing a range of different Telstra business areas. This has generally been well received by Forum members. Feedback from the senior Telstra managers involved has been positive with this initiative being viewed as a beneficial learning experience for them.

Action	Status	Comments
<p>1.4 Organise information workshops for Telstra management, product managers and developers and/or involve individual managers in consultative forums</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular workshops have been conducted to improve disability awareness among Telstra managers. For example, a series of Disability Awareness presentations were conducted in major capital and regional cities in May/June 2001 to complaint management/regional managers and supervisors. Staff from Telstra's Centre for Accessibility have conducted regular seminars and workshops with product managers, developers and web-page designers. • At each Disability Forum Telstra managers are invited to present to the forum and discuss topical issues. Individual managers have been represented from the following areas: Telstra Payphone Services, Telstra CountryWide®, Information and Technology, Telstra Research, Consumer Relations, Telstra Mobiles, Telstra Retail - Voice Recognition, Directory Assistance, Broadband and Online Services.
<p>1.5 Assist training staff to develop training programs or resources, particularly for front-of-house staff</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2001 Telstra launched an online Disability Awareness Program. This is a self-paced course designed for all managers and staff to raise awareness of disability issues and to assist in interactions with people with a disability. It is also part of Telstra's induction curriculum. • All staff will be required to complete the course. Priority areas being targeted in the first six months of launch include front-of-house staff, Telstra Shop staff and complaints handling staff. • Other learning materials, including fact sheets and presentation packs, have also been developed for specific target audiences. Where appropriate, staff, including Disability Enquiry Hotline staff, have undertaken external disability awareness workshops and programs.

Strategy 2: Ensure ongoing community consultation

This strategy focused on Telstra continuing to gather information from a range of sources external to Telstra, ensuring ongoing consultation with representatives of the disability community.

Telstra consults with consumer groups and peak organisations via its Disability Forums conducted twice a year. The forums provide an opportunity for consumers to provide input into Telstra's Disability Services and also extends staff awareness, with senior Telstra managers hosting the forums on a rotating basis. This strategy will continue under the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
2.1 In consultation with consumer groups, ensure that the Telstra Disability Forum meets twice annually with peak disability groups	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra held the first of its new Disability Forum consultation meetings in March 1999 and these continue to be held twice a year. Representatives from a broad cross-section of national peak disability organisations participate, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Australian Association of the Deaf</i> <i>Blind Citizens Australia</i> <i>Communication Aid Users Society</i> <i>Australian Federation of Disability Organisations</i> <i>Physical Disability Council of Australia</i> <i>Telecommunications Disability Project (TEDICORE)</i> <i>Women with Disabilities (Aust.)</i> <i>National Ethnic Disability Alliance</i> <i>Deafness Forum</i> <i>National Indigenous Disability Network</i> <i>Better Hearing Australia</i> This forum is an integral part of Telstra's formal consultation program with consumers and provides a practical and efficient link for dialogue between Telstra's individual business units and our customers with a disability.
2.2 Engage with disability representatives on Telstra's consultative forums and respond to issues raised	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular interaction has taken place with members of Telstra's consultative forums on a range of issues. These have included discussions about voice recognition technology, mobile phones and hearing aids/cochlear implants, information in alternative formats and other accessibility issues. As required, consultation has also taken place with representatives from disability organisations not currently represented on Telstra's Disability Forums including Deaf-Blind Association, National Council on Intellectual Disability and OT Australia.

Strategy 3: Improve accessibility to information for people with a disability

The aims of this strategy were to explore alternatives for accessing information for people with a print disability; to improve access for online consumers; and to improve access to information about Telstra's products and services for people with a disability.

This strategy commits Telstra to developing and implementing a broad range of media to improve access to information about Telstra's products and services for people with a disability. Large print, audiotapes, computer disks (floppy and CD) and videotapes were some of the communications tools used to convey messages under the second Plan. This strategy will continue under the third Plan with added emphasis on increasing access to online communications for people with a disability.

Action	Status	Comments
3.1 Explore alternative media for people with a print disability	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August 2000 Telstra sponsored a three-month pilot radio program on RPH (Radio for the Print Handicapped), broadcast nationally to RPH listeners. The aim was to broaden Telstra's ability to reach older people, those with low literacy and people with impaired vision, with key messages about Telstra's products and services. Topics included: Telstra and Disability, Telstra's Products and Services Catalogue, Telstra's Directory Assistance products, telstra.com and Telstra's sponsorship of the Paralympics.
3.2 Develop new promotional material on Telstra's Disability Services, including a comprehensive catalogue of products and services for people with disabilities and the aged	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In August 2000 Telstra launched its catalogue "Telstra Products and Services: A Catalogue For Older People and People with a Disability". It was developed to provide a comprehensive guide to the products and services that can meet the diverse needs of older people and people with a disability. The catalogue is also supplied in CD format upon request. Since its launch 35,000 hard copies of the catalogue have been distributed. Telstra has also developed an online version of this catalogue, available at www.telstra.com.au/disability A wide range of brochures about Telstra's products and services for people with a disability are also available.
3.3 Make available the Customer Service Charter in alternative formats	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra's Customer Charter is provided in large print, audio tape and computer disk (floppy) versions. It is also available online at www.telstra.com.au/charter
3.4 Produce a video for the Deaf community to improve awareness of Telstra's Disability Equipment Program	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A video titled "No Worries, No Hassles" was launched at the World Deaf Congress in September 1999. The video explains the processes for applying to Telstra for equipment through its Disability Equipment Program. The video is captioned and presented in AUSLAN.
3.5 Review individual requests for information in alternative formats	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of resources in alternative formats are available for customers including brochure, computer disk (floppy and CD), audiotape, videotape, large print and Braille. All Telstra TV advertisements are captioned. Individual requests for information in alternative formats are reviewed and actioned as required.

Action	Status	Comments
3.6 Review and improve the accessibility of the Telstra website	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra is committed to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the content and functionality of its Web presence is accessible by the widest possible number of people in the community, including those using assistive technologies such as screen readers. • To improve the accessibility of its website Telstra has developed Corporate Accessibility Standards. These online standards have been based on the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0”. New projects located in Telstra’s Web presence and/or built on behalf of Telstra are required to comply with these standards. Methods for determining compliance with the W3C guidelines are set out in the Telstra Accessibility Compliance Criteria – Guidelines and Tips. • As at November 2001, Telstra’s web presence comprised over 100,000 pages spread across more than 100 servers so the adoption of these standards marks the beginning of an extensive compliance process. • Strategy Six provides more detailed information about this project.
3.7 Display disability-related brochures in Telstra Shops	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability brochures including ‘Telstra’s Services for People with Disabilities’ and ‘Telstra’s Disability Equipment Program’ have been included in the Information Bays in Telstra Shops. In those Telstra Shops without an Information Bay the brochures are on display in a prominent location.
3.8 Establish a programmed “service hotline” from Telstra Shop phones to Disability Enquiry Hotline	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was implemented in December 1999.

Strategy 4.1 Improve accessibility to Telstra's products and services: Payphones

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its payphones for people with a disability.

As at October 2001, Telstra operated approximately 36,000 public payphones. There are also approximately 40,000 payphones operated by entities other than Telstra that are connected to a payphone access line provided by Telstra.

Telstra's Universal Service Obligation (USO) requires it to make payphone services reasonably accessible throughout Australia, including in non-metropolitan and rural areas. Approximately half of Telstra's public payphones are in these areas. Telstra also operates TTY payphones for Deaf and speech-impaired consumers. As at the end of 2001, approximately 160 were operating throughout Australia.

Telstra has upgraded most of its public payphones to accept both coins and Telstra Smart Phonecards. The new payphone has an in-built hearing aid coupling device, a volume-control feature, language selection, large visual display and is generally accessible by wheelchair.

Key initiatives have been implemented under the second Plan and will continue to be implemented within the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
4.1.1 Undertake further research into accessibility of payphones for people with a physical impairment. A reference group, including external consumer representatives and access experts, to be established as a steering group for the duration of the research project.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major research program on Payphone Physical Access was commenced under the guidance of an independent steering committee in October 2000. The results of the study were presented at Telstra's Disability Forum in March 2001. • Ongoing consultation will continue on the outcomes of the Payphone Physical Access research and the outcomes of the research will be submitted to Standards Australia for the development of a new standard on payphone mounting heights. • As part of a major retro-fit project 32,617 payphones have been visited and in each case the installation team had endeavoured to install the highest operable component – coin entry – within the 55mm range from 1335 – 1390mm. This height was based on previous research with people with a disability and was endorsed by a subsequent 2001 research study.
4.1.2 Undertake a survey of TTY users to better understand usage and siting requirements of TTY payphones and incorporate findings into Telstra siting processes	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey was completed in December 1999 and the findings presented to Telstra's Disability Forum in March 2000. • Telstra's Payphone Services will continue to liaise with the Australian Association for the Deaf to improve siting guidelines and usage.

Action	Status	Comments
4.1.3 Increase the number of TTY payphones installed nationally by responding to consumer requests and implementing findings from siting survey	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional 37 public access TTY devices were installed in 2000-2001. The total number increased 11% from June 2000 to end December 2001.
4.1.4 Progressively remove or replace steps in some payphone installations to improve wheelchair access	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each year there has been an increase in the number of booths with the top of the base flush with the surrounding pavement. This is an ongoing program. Telstra has fitted 3,791 door-widening kits to selected sites that have standard full-length booths to enable easier access by wheelchairs.
4.1.5 Generate awareness of accessibility issues amongst private payphone operators who are Telstra's customers by promoting appropriate siting practices	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra Payphone Services consults with suppliers of payphone terminals into the Telstra Dealer channel. It also provides information on appropriate siting practices, including customer feedback on disability issues. Payphone Provisioning Managers communicate to site owners that the site owners have an obligation under the DDA, and provide information on improving the access to private payphones in the siting overview guidelines.

Strategy 4.2 Improve accessibility to Telstra's products and services: Directory Assistance

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its Directory Assistance services by people with a disability.

Telstra's Directory Assistance (DA) Helpline has been operating since 1988. It aims to assist Telstra customers with a disability to access directory information, where they are unable to use the existing Directory Assistance service, and they are unable to hold, read or use Telstra's printed telephone directories. Key initiatives have been implemented and will continue to be implemented within the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
4.2.1 Introduce a new five-digit number for the DA Helpline to replace the ten-digit number available to registered users	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was introduced in October 1999. From November 2000 the Directory Assistance Helpline included free connection to a Yellow Pages® Consumer Adviser. This free service provides specific information found only in the Yellow Pages® directory.
4.2.2 Introduce the option of sending an audiocassette, rather than a letter, to newly registered users of the DA Helpline who are vision impaired	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was introduced in October 1999.
4.2.3 Distribute a fact sheet on the DA Helpline to community and consumer organisations	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Fact Sheet was produced and distributed in November 2000. It is available on request.
4.2.4 Improve the registration process to the DA Helpline by establishing an email address	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was introduced and the information included in Telstra's catalogue of products and services for people with a disability.
4.2.5 Provide appropriate awareness training for DA Helpline staff to ensure a high standard of customer service for Telstra customers who are registered users	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and Procedures including information briefs were developed for DA Helpline Staff. A research study was commissioned in June 2001 to assess the levels of customer satisfaction. The results were extremely positive (97% of Directory Assistance Helpline users rated the service as Excellent or Very Good, a result significantly higher than other call centres). Based on these results it was decided that the online Disability Awareness learning module had provided DA Helpline Staff with adequate awareness training at this time.

**Strategy 4.3 Improve accessibility to Telstra’s products and services:
Mobile Telecommunications Services – issues relating to hearing-impaired consumers**

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its digital Mobile Telecommunications Services by people with a hearing impairment.

A key component of the second Plan was to examine the compatibility of mobile phones and hearing aids/cochlear implants and provide the appropriate information to staff and customers to assist in the purchase of mobile telephone products. Initiatives will continue in the third Plan.

Under its carrier licence conditions, Telstra was required to close all metropolitan Advanced Mobile Phone System (AMPS) mobile base stations and 130 of its non-metropolitan AMPS mobile base stations by 31 December 1999. The remaining non-metropolitan base stations were required to close by 31 December 2000. As reported in an Australian Hearing study, digital mobile phones can cause an audible buzz in some hearing aids due to the nature of the signal, and level of interference immunity of the hearing aid. This was unlike AMPS mobile phones, which caused no reported audible disturbance.

Telstra’s new Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) mobile network replaced the analogue network when it is closed down, and is intended to provide reasonably equivalent coverage to Telstra’s AMPS and Global System for Mobile (GSM) mobile networks.

Action	Status	Comments
4.3.1 Commission Australian Hearing to examine the compatibility of CDMA phones with hearing aids: Phase 1 – laboratory bench testing Phase 2 – objective measurements of hearing aid immunity	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase One was completed in September 1999 and the report published online. • Telstra sponsored the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) to conduct further hearing aid interference research from CDMA handsets. Ongoing testing has been completed by NAL who have submitted information to Telstra. • Improvement in the development of hearing aids has also meant newer models are much less susceptible to interference from CDMA phones than previously.
4.3.2 With the assistance of the Cochlear Institute, examine the compatibility of CDMA phones for people with cochlear ear implants	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra has liaised with the Cochlear Institute and the Australian Hearing Association to undertake testing of mobile phones and hearing aids and cochlear implants. As a result of this work the brochure “Mobile Phones and Hearing Aids/Cochlear Implants” was revised in April 2001.
4.3.3 Provide information to staff in Telstra shops and Telstra dealers on the issue of mobiles and hearing aids	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra’s brochure “Mobile Phones and Hearing Aids” was distributed to all Telstra Shops and Dealers. • Faxstream® messages were distributed to all Mobilenet dealers and retailers with information about mobile phones and hearing aids (November 2000).

Action	Status	Comments
<p>4.3.4 Provide information to hearing-impaired consumers to assist them in purchasing a mobile phone through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure “Mobile Phones & Hearing Aids” available in shops and through MobileNet™ Customer Service 018 018 111 (now 125 111) • Information available on the MobileNet™ (now called Telstra Mobile) website • Information to relevant consumer groups. 	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telstra’s brochure “Mobile Phones and Hearing Aids” was revised and updated in September 1999, March 2000 and April 2001. • Comprehensive information is available from the Telstra website at www.telstra.com.au/disability • At each revision copies were distributed to consumer and disability organisations on Telstra’s Consumer Affairs database including organisations representing customers who are deaf or hearing impaired.
<p>4.3.5 Participate in the HREOC inquiry into mobile phones and hearing aid interference and consider the findings in the HREOC report.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of the HREOC inquiry into mobile phones and hearing aids the Telstra Hearing Aid Scheme was established to assist Telstra customers who had experienced difficulty when using their GSM mobile phone. This scheme was available from 26 April 2001 to 31 August 2001. • The scheme was promoted by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – a Telstra media release – a brochure that was widely distributed – information on Telstra’s web site – information to Telstra Shops and dealers – a community education campaign. • Under the scheme, Telstra provided a range of offers for eligible customers.

**Strategy 4.4 Improve accessibility to Telstra’s products and services:
Mobile Telecommunications Services – issues relating to Deaf and speech-impaired consumers**

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its Mobile Telecommunications Services for people who are Deaf or speech impaired.

Emphasis was placed on improving the connectivity of SMS text messages between mobile carriers. Initiatives will continue in the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
4.4.1 Examine overseas developments in mobile textphones which allow connectivity between mobiles and TTYs	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra Research and Telstra Mobile have monitored overseas activities. Telstra has sourced information from a number of overseas companies.
4.4.2 Work with other carriers to enable the nation’s GSM customers to send SMS (Short Message Service) text messages to users on other networks using their mobile phones	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra has worked with other carriers to enable SMS text messages to be sent between different carrier networks. Along with GSM users, since September 2001 Telstra CDMA users can now send messages between all mobile networks.
4.4.3 Promote awareness amongst deaf and speech impaired mobile users about data transmission services	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information has been provided in Telstra’s Products and Services Catalogue for Older People and People with a Disability. A draft fact sheet has been developed. It will be finalised and distributed to relevant disability organisations and Telstra retail channels.
4.4.4 Appoint a dedicated Aged and Disability Segment Manager	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra Mobiles appointed a Segment Manager with responsibility for disability issues in 1999.

**Strategy 4.5 Improve accessibility to Telstra’s products and services:
Billing**

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its billing services by people with a disability.

In 1998, under its first Disability Action Plan, Telstra launched a Braille bill for customers who are blind. Telstra now provides a range of billing options including Braille, large print bill and accessible online billing. These initiatives will continue to be reviewed under the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
4.5.1 Develop and launch a large print bill for people with vision impairment	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 1999 Telstra launched the Big Print Bill for people with vision impairment. It contains exactly the same information as a standard Telstra phone bill but is printed on A3 sized paper and features large type to make it easier to read. The bill is provided free of charge as part of Telstra’s billing options. • Information about the Big Print Bill have been included in Telstra’s Products and Services Catalogue for Older People and People with a Disability and advertisements were placed in a variety of magazines. • Telstra provides a Braille bill for customers who are blind. • Telstra also provides Online Billing which is 'W3CA' compliant. The accessibility of this service has recently been improved with the removal of the need for digitally encrypted ID to access. Now only a password is required.

Strategy 5 Improve accessibility to Telstra's complaint management process for customers with a disability

Under this strategy Telstra sought to identify the causes of disability related complaints and minimise their future occurrence, as well as improve access to Telstra's complaint handling process.

Telstra's aim is to resolve all problems or complaints to a customer's satisfaction at the local level, quickly and effectively.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the management or resolution of a complaint, it may be escalated (to a supervisor or manager) for an internal review at the customer's request. Telstra has a formal process in place to ensure that complaints are addressed at the highest level necessary. If a complaint is not resolved to a customer's satisfaction by this process, customers can contact the Customer Referral Centre on FREECALL™ 1800 011 333 (voice only) or FREECALL™ 1800 033 433 (TTY). Telstra has appointed complaint management "process owners" in each Business Unit. Telstra's complaint registration system allows disability-related data to be sourced and analysed.

Key initiatives have been implemented and will continue to be reviewed and improved under the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
5.1 Regular analysis of disability-related complaints data; identify causes and develop strategies to address complaint patterns	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra Disability Services unit has regularly undertaken analysis of disability-related complaints data. Comprehensive independent external studies were undertaken in January 2000 and again in March 2001. Since mid-2001 Telstra's Disability Services group can access directly, Telstra's Complaint Management Database (CICERO) for the purposes of analysing complaint data. Research findings indicate that levels of customer satisfaction for customers with a disability are higher than for other customers. While this is positive, analysis of complaints data also highlighted the need for disability awareness training for staff. Telstra's on-line Disability Awareness training course was developed to address this.
5.2 Targeted briefings of Telstra's complaint management "process owners" to report on complaint analysis reports and generate increased disability awareness	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In May/June 2001 managers and supervisors in Telstra's regional complaints groups in all states attended Disability Awareness presentations. Complaints handling staff are a priority target audience in the roll out of the online Disability Awareness Program.
5.3 Install a dedicated TTY complaints number within the Customer Referral Centre	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed May 2000 FREECALL™ 1800 033 433
5.4 Review information in TTY telephone directory to improve awareness of TTY complaint numbers in Telstra	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since mid-2000 detailed information about customer complaint numbers has been provided in Telstra's Telephone Typewriter Directory™. Information within Telstra's Telephone Typewriter Directory™ is reviewed annually and updated as required.
5.5 Provide information on Telstra's complaint handling process in the proposed catalogue of services for people with disabilities	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about Telstra's complaint handling process has been included in Telstra's catalogue of products and services for people with a disability.

Strategy 6 Improve accessibility for the “online” consumer with a disability

Under this strategy Telstra sought to improve access to its online products by people with a disability.

The Australian Internet population is expected to grow from about 9 million people in 2001 to well over 12 million people by the end of 2006¹.

Telstra recognises that equity of access to online services for all Australians and the social policy objective to ensure that all Australians benefit from the new communications revolution are priorities.

This strategy will be a major component of Telstra’s activities under its third Plan. Telstra’s Centre for Accessibility, publicly launched in September 2001, will assist in evaluating and improving access to the Telstra website.

Action	Status	Comments
6.1 Develop and promote guidelines to assist Telstra eCommerce Business Partners to make websites more accessible	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet Standards and Policies that provide information for developing content for Telstra’s Web Sites have been placed on www.telstra.com.au. These include guidelines for Best Practice including Universal Service Guidelines. In August 2000 all registered users of the Telstra Web Standards web site were informed of the new standard.
6.2 Undertake a project, Building accessible web sites for people with visual impairment, to enable the development of Telstra web-based products and services that are accessible to people with visual impairment. This project will build on the initial study of web accessibility standards for people with visual impairment undertaken in 1997-1998.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project gave rise to the establishment of Telstra’s Centre for Accessibility in May 2001. Telstra’s Centre for Accessibility will evaluate and improve the online accessibility of Telstra’s products and services, with the initial major focus being to achieve online access for blind users of Telstra’s website.
6.3 Increase general awareness of disability amongst Big Pond™ technical support staff	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Learning Brief was developed and distributed to Telstra’s BigPond™ technical staff in May 2001. Telstra’s online Disability Awareness Program contains information for Big Pond™ technical staff to assist in their interactions with customers who communicate online or use assistive technologies.
6.4 Brief Telstra Disability Enquiry Hotline staff on Big Pond™ offerings and Telstra easymail™ to ensure appropriate referrals for customers who wish to get online	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra’s Disability Enquiry Hotline staff have access to a detailed product, service and pricing information guide on Telstra’s intranet site via “e-source”.

¹ Source IDC, Internet Commerce Market Model v8.1, 2002

Strategy 7 Improve accessibility of Telstra's facilities

Under this strategy Telstra commits to ongoing access improvements by identifying and addressing access barriers for customers and staff.

An audit of all buildings and facilities commenced in 1996 with key strategic buildings being targeted for assessment. Works programs have been completed for each State covering those buildings that have high profile/high public usage.

A Telstra Access Advisory Panel has been operating since 1996, that acts in an advisory role on matters relating to physical access to, within, and from Telstra's corporate accommodation buildings, as well as a wide range of other disability issues. Telstra's corporate access policy was formulated in consultation with the Panel. This policy provides Telstra with guidelines on providing an accessible work environment and accessible retail outlets.

In September 2001 Telstra awarded a five-year contract to a major facility and property management service to manage Telstra's property portfolio. This organisation has been fully briefed on Telstra's commitments under its Disability Action Plan and will liaise with Telstra to continue to progress implementation of the plan. Key initiatives continue to be implemented and progress will continue as part of Telstra's third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
7.1 Examine leased and owned commercial buildings to assess accessibility and compliance with the DDA	Extensive progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra occupies approx 1.3 million square metres of commercial property. As of November 2001, 70% of that property had been audited to identify any non-compliance items in respect to DDA. Audit proforma documents are progressively updated to reflect changes to industry regulations.
7.2 When negotiating new leases or existing leases, establish responsibility between the parties for any required rectification works	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever Telstra negotiates new or existing leases, the responsibility for any works is clearly established.
7.3 Review building and construction office fitout practices and procedures to ensure all new accommodation works meet access standards	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra's revised Accommodation Standards policy requires all Telstra owned and leased premises to comply with the Australian Standard for Design for Access and Mobility (AS1428.2). Where it is not practicable to apply AS1428.2, the Telstra Access Advisory Panel is consulted to achieve an agreed solution. Tailored disability awareness training has been delivered to Telstra's Principal Contractor responsible for building design/construction.
7.4 Review existing corporate building signage to develop a consistent signage standard which accommodates people with disabilities, particularly vision impairment	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of existing building signage is under way with prototypes produced for internal directory signage. Further prototypes are required, with input to be sought from Telstra's Access Advisory Panel.
7.5 Improve access for people with disabilities to and within Telstra occupied heritage/classified buildings	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The small number of issues raised were addressed immediately.

Action	Status	Comments
7.6 Encourage local councils/shopping centre management to ensure adequate accessible parking spaces are available near Telstra sites, particularly retail outlets	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All councils and most shopping centres where Telstra sites are located have in place affirmative action plans in relation to accessible parking.
7.7 Implementation of Works Program to provide ongoing modification of existing buildings to accommodate Telstra employees with a disability	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% of Telstra's commercial property has been examined for accessibility and compliance, with 48% of this property having rectification work undertaken. Each State has a works program, with priority given to buildings that accommodate employees with a disability.

Strategy 8 Maintain Telstra’s commitment to the elimination of discrimination in the workplace in accordance with its EEO policy

Under this strategy, Telstra sought to maintain its commitment to eliminating discrimination in the workplace for its employees with a disability.

Issues of diversity, equity and flexibility are key components for the future of Telstra.

The intent of Telstra’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy is to provide an employment environment which realises the principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action for designated groups.

Telstra constantly strives to attract and retain the best employees and to ensure the greatest diversity within its workforce. EEO goals and objectives are established at the corporate level within Telstra. Business Units develop individual annual EEO Management Plans within the framework of the corporate goals and objectives.

Telstra monitors the representation of specific groups. EEO information is subject to voluntary disclosure in respect of details such as disability and race.

Key initiatives have been implemented and will continue to be implemented within the third Plan.

Action	Status	Comments
8.1 Ensure all Telstra employment policies and practices are non-discriminatory. As part of the development process, consider the impact on staff with a disability and make adjustments where identified as non-compliant	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All employment policies/procedures are updated to ensure they are non-discriminatory. Each Telstra business group has EEO integrated into its Human Resources Strategic Plan to produce a diverse workforce reflective of Telstra’s customer base.
8.2 Include DDA awareness information in all relevant employment policies and procedures, where not currently addressed.	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DDA information has been provided on Telstra’s Human Resources intranet site that specifically refers to the DDA, Telstra’s Disability Employment Program and glossary of EEO terms. There has been a significant increase in Telstra’s EEO/diversity education and awareness activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training for EEO contact officers and line managers re disability issues; - training for all property management staff re disability awareness and access; - internal publicity campaign on Telstra’s EEO policy; and - internal celebration of the 2001 International Day of People with a Disability including the launch of an online Disability Awareness Program for all staff.
8.3 Maintain, and if required, update EEO Disability statement.	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telstra’s Human Resources intranet site for EEO includes “Telstra’s Disability Employment Program”. An update is not required.
8.4 Ensure employment information is provided to employees in a form that is accessible	Extensive Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Telstra Intranet must comply with the corporate accessibility standard. Some training material has been produced in Braille.

Action	Status	Comments
<p>8.5 Facilitate further employment of people with a disability within Telstra.</p> <p>Provide information pertaining to jobs to the 'one point of contact' in each state/territory for distribution to disability specific employment agencies including Competitive Employment & Training Services and Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service offices.</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of Graduates have been employed under Telstra's EEO Scholarship Program, which continues to offer scholarships to people with a disability. • Telstra's Paralympic Employment Program (PEP) assists qualified athletes to pursue a career while training and competing at world class level. Ten PEP athletes (Telstra's recruitment target) competed at 2000 Paralympic Games, and Telstra has agreed to employ up to 30 Paralympic athletes by the end of 2002. • Employment of people with a disability facilitated further, by adjustments made to Telstra work practices and/or physical environment eg alignment of systems and training programs for vision-impaired employees and job sharing to assist return-to-work programs. • External recruitment managers have been advised of their responsibility to ensure that disability-specific employment agencies are provided with information about jobs at Telstra. • Links have been established with these agencies in each state/territory to provide 'one point of contact'.
<p>8.6 Provide opportunities for people with a disability to participate in work training/ work experience and other activities to develop skills and abilities</p>	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1999, 43 people with a disability participated in work training and work experience programs within Telstra. • Several regional information sessions were conducted to assist those working with people with a disability to secure employment. Information has been provided on recruitment processes, interview formats, resume preparation and specific jobs within Telstra. • The "Outstanding Individual Achievement Award" at the 2001 inaugural EEO Network Leadership in Diversity Awards, was awarded to Telstra's EEO Disability Consultant in recognition of her excellent work on behalf of Telstra, in partnering with community groups to achieve improved employment outcomes for people with a disability.

4. Progress Against the Key Performance Indicators

Telstra's second Plan identified three performance criteria or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), against which performance could be measured at the conclusion of the plan. These were:

- Improved customer satisfaction
- Improved customer awareness of Telstra's services for customers with a disability
- Improved feedback from disability stakeholders on Telstra's services for people with a disability.

This section examines Telstra's performance against these indicators.

4.1 Improved customer satisfaction

Telstra's commitment to improving customer satisfaction for services to customers with a disability is demonstrated in a number of ways, including:

Disability Enquiry Hotline

Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline staff provide specialist advice to customers with a disability about Telstra's Disability Equipment Program and other Telstra products and services that may provide solutions to their telecommunications needs. The hotline handles approximately 80,000 voice, TTY and electronic contacts per year.

- *Market Research undertaken in July 2002 with 200 users indicated that 89% of users rated the service as 'above average'. This is a consistent result with the 2001 survey in which 89% of users rated Telstra as Good, Very Good or Excellent*
- *Almost three-quarters of customers interviewed (71%) agreed that the product met their needs and expectations*
- *Four out of five customers (81%) agreed that the product was delivered within the agreed timeframe. "Overall Telstra's service, both in general and in relation to the Disability Enquiry Hotline service specifically, was rated very highly."*

Disability and Aged Care Research, Research International, July 2002

Disability Equipment Program

Telstra's Disability Equipment Program provides specialised telephone equipment to eligible customers to facilitate access to the standard telephone service. Over the period of the second Plan, Telstra has increased awareness of this program through the development and distribution of the "Telstra Products and Services: A catalogue for older people and people with a disability", and a series of supporting brochures. The catalogue information is now also available online at www.telstra.com.au/disability.

Directory Assistance Helpline

Telstra's Directory Assistance Helpline is an operator assisted service that aims to assist Telstra customers with a disability to access directory information where they are unable to use the existing standard Directory Assistance service, and they are unable to hold, read or use Telstra's printed telephone directories.

- *In a survey conducted in June 2001, 97% of Directory Assistance Helpline users rated the service as Excellent or Very Good.*

Billing Options

Telstra aims to ensure its billing service is accessible for all customers. Telstra customers who are blind or have vision impairment have the option of receiving a Telstra bill in either a Braille or large print format. Telstra's online billing product is also accessible for people who use screen readers. Telstra also provides Single Bills that combine home, business, mobile and BigPond™ services in one simple, itemised account. Summary Bills are also offered, providing a simplified bill with summary information only.

- *Telstra provides an average of 116 Braille Bills per month*
- *Telstra provides an average of 348 A3 Big Print Bills per month.*

Accessible Information

Telstra continues to examine, as a matter of priority, a range of options in relation to providing information to its customers in accessible formats. On request, Telstra provides information and resource material about Telstra initiatives and products and services for people with a disability in a range of alternative formats. These include Braille, audiotape, large print, computer disk (floppy and/or CD) and accessible online information via telstra.com.

Information in alternative formats is available through Telstra sales consultants, the Disability Enquiry Hotline and Aged and Disability Centres located in each capital city. Contact details for the Disability Enquiry Hotline (voice, TTY and email) are published in a number of forms, including disability related brochures on display in Telstra Shops, in targeted sector-specific advertisements and online at www.telstra.com.au/disability.

Telstra established the Centre for Accessibility in May 2001. The Centre's short-term focus was to improve online access for customers who are blind. A broader, longer-term objective is to improve access to Telstra's website for all users with a disability, and this will be a component of the third Plan.

Following the success of a pilot program in 2000, Telstra is also planning to use the services of Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPH) as an additional means of making information available to people who may not be able to access printed information.

All Telstra TV advertisements are captioned to ensure accessibility to Deaf and hearing-impaired people.

Disability Complaint Management

Telstra's Disability Services Unit commissioned a series of reports to investigate disability-related complaints in September 1999 and again in July 2000. Findings from these studies indicated that customers with a disability appear to experience the same issues with service provision, restoration, provision of information, charging etc. as the broader Telstra customer base.

It was evident that some Telstra staff were not aware of the policies, products and services that Telstra provides for people with a disability. This has been addressed within the second Plan through the introduction of an online Disability Awareness Program. This program was designed for all managers and staff to raise awareness of disability issues, disability programs and policies and to assist with interactions with people with a disability. Participation in the program will be monitored as part of the third Plan.

Disability related complaints are now recorded in Telstra's complaint management database, CICERO, and are identified by a range of classifications including source, perceived problem, product and cause. These show a low level of complaints which is supported by recent research conducted among people with a disability and their carers who had recent contact with Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline (DEH). (Refer to S4.1, Disability Enquiry Hotline)

An emerging trend over the past 12 months has been an increase in the number of complaints by people with an intellectual disability, particularly relating to mobile phone contracts. This is an area that will be addressed in the third Plan.

Telstra is encouraged by the above results and believes they show that the performance indicator "improved customer satisfaction" was met under the Second Disability Action Plan.

4.2 Improved customer awareness of Telstra's services for customers with a disability

Improved Awareness Measures

Telstra has regularly undertaken research to assess the level of awareness among customers about Telstra's products and services for people with a disability. A study undertaken in May 2001 indicated that 66% of respondents were aware that Telstra provides specialised products and services, such as special telephones, for people with disabilities. A similar study in June 2002 indicated that 72% of respondents were aware that Telstra provided specialised products and services. Over the course of the second Plan the average level of awareness was 70% with a slightly higher level of awareness being recorded among non-metropolitan respondents².

While the quantitative result above is very positive, qualitative results from the *External Stakeholder Study* undertaken in January 2002 indicate that among advocates, medical practitioners, carers, representatives of non-government organisations, state and local government workers, members of peak bodies and other community workers, there was a need to better understand Telstra's services and the support Telstra provides in the disability area to assist these people in their work. This feedback provides some direction for the development of future targeted awareness campaigns.

Telstra plans to include appropriate commitments in its third Plan to improve disseminating information about services for people with a disability to the broader, mainstream customer base.

Promotional Activity

Telstra's Disability Services Unit continues to undertake significant corporate wide and external sponsorship and advertising initiatives to publicise and promote products and services for people with a disability.

In conjunction with information provided to peak disability organisations and Telstra senior management, via the regular Telstra Disability Forum, Telstra has published a comprehensive catalogue of products and services for older people and people with a disability. To date, approximately 35,000 printed catalogues and approximately 350 CD versions of the catalogue have been distributed via front-of-house staff; the Disability Enquiry Hotline; government agencies; and as part of sponsorship and business alliance events. An online version of the catalogue is accessible at www.telstra.com.au/disability

Since the commencement of the second Plan in 1999, the following promotional collateral has been produced and distributed to Telstra's customer base:

- Brochure: Telstra's Services for People with a Disability (50,000 copies)
- Brochure: Telstra's Disability Equipment Program (200,000 copies)
- Brochure: Telstra's Disability Equipment Program – TTYs and computer modems (10,000 copies)
- Brochure: Telstra's Cochlear Program Telephone Adaptor (5,000 copies)
- Brochure: Mobile Phones and Hearing Aids/Cochlear Implants
- Video – "No Worries, No Hassles" (2,200 copies)
- Promotional Bookmark – Disability Enquiry Hotline numbers (40,000 copies)
- Promotional material that include Telstra Disability Services details including fridge magnets, balloons, mini-magnifiers etc (20,000 each).

Throughout the term of the second Plan, Telstra's state-capital based Aged and Disability Centre Managers have conducted an ongoing program of presentations, seminars and displays of disability equipment and information at metropolitan and regional conferences and fairs, to disability and carer organisations, health professionals and the general community.

Additional initiatives undertaken by Telstra over the period of the second Plan, to promote the availability of products and services for customers with a disability, include the following:

² Consumer Market Track TCW, Consumer Market Track Retail (Colmar Brunton)

Advertising and Advertorials:

- LINK magazine – 5 issues per year
- Better Hearing Australia
- Telephone Typewriter Directory™ – published annually
- Blind Citizens Australia News
- Radio for the Print Handicapped
- Have-A-Go News
- TAD Journal
- QuadWrangle
- Aware Journal
- Jewish News
- Arthritis Today
- Northern Daily Advertiser.

Infomed Distribution:

In 2000 – 2001 Telstra also distributed the brochure “Telstra’s Disability Equipment Program” and “Telstra’s Service for People with a Disability” via ‘Infomed’, a distribution service for patient information brochures ie. in doctors’ waiting rooms.

Sponsorships

During the period of the second Plan, Telstra has provided sponsorship support to each of the major disability sectors – hearing, sight, speech and mobility. Sponsorships maintain a focus on disseminating information about Telstra’s disability initiatives. Telstra’s sponsorship program has grown throughout the three year period of the plan with sponsorships and business liaison activities involving a range of organisations as part of events such as the:

1999

- World Deaf Congress
- Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) Convention
- Link Magazine.

2000

- Australian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability (ASSID) Conference
- International Federation of Hard of Hearing Congress
- Fifth Voice Symposium
- WA – Seniors Week
- World Blind Union
- TEDICORE (Telecommunications Disability Project)
- 2000 Supertext Awards
- Link Magazine.

2001

- Techfest (Assistive Technology Expo)
- Blind Citizens of Australia (BCA) National Convention
- People with Disabilities Media Awards
- 2001 Supertext Awards
- Occupational Therapist (OT) Australia Conference
- Sophia Borick Photographic Exhibition of People with Disabilities
- Prime Minister’s Employer of the Year Awards
- Deaf-Blind Association
- Royal Blind Society
- Link Magazine.

During the term of its Second Disability Action Plan Telstra has significantly improved and increased its range of promotional and sponsorship activities as part of its commitment to ensure an “improved awareness of Telstra’s services for customers with a disability”.

4.3 Improved feedback from disability stakeholders on Telstra's services for people with a disability

Telstra's Disability Forum is an integral part of Telstra's formal consultation program with consumers. It provides a practical and efficient link for dialogue between Telstra's Business Units and customers with a disability. Telstra's relationship with the peak disability organisations represented on the Forum has been positive, and has provided sufficient trust and respect to allow collaboration on a number of important, and sometimes sensitive, issues and programs.

Representatives from across a broad cross-section of national peak disability organisations participate in Telstra's Disability Forum. The Forum has met twice each year over the term of the second Plan. During this period, Telstra has incorporated a number of initiatives at the suggestion of members to improve the format of the forum. Membership of the Disability Forum has been broadened over the past three years to include representation from the National Ethnic Disability Alliance, National Indigenous Disability Network and Better Hearing Australia. A representative from the National Council on Intellectual Disability will join the Forum in October 2002. Carers Australia has expressed a desire to participate from 2003. The length of the meetings has also been extended, and now includes a dedicated consumer discussion session the evening prior to the Forum.

Stakeholder Feedback Measures

At the end of Telstra's first Plan, feedback was sought from Disability Forum members by way of a questionnaire. Feedback was limited and not all forum members completed the survey. An important objective of the *External Stakeholder Study* conducted in January 2002 by Halliday's Business Insights was to ensure feedback from Disability Forum members was included. All members were therefore interviewed at length, either face to face or by telephone. Members took part in these interviews enthusiastically and a wealth of information was obtained.

The study revealed that the relationship between Telstra and Forum Members had matured and there was now

"... the foundation of a sound rapport, that for some extended to a level of trust" .

A significant number of Forum Members believed that

"...in good faith Telstra was becoming more proactive and pursuing equitable outcomes for people with disabilities, for the right reasons."

The report also said:

"Potentially Telstra's harshest critics, Forum Members participated as well informed, politically astute lobbyists with a list of yet-to-be achieved objectives in hand. It is within this context that they badged Telstra the Australian corporate in the lead with respect to disability."

Halliday's Business Insights summarised the feedback from Forum Members by noting:

"This is a rare situation for a large corporate organisation – and clearly this unique position needs to be fostered rather than exploited, or allowed to lapse. One thing that was particularly clear was that Forum Members were energised and keen to keep things moving on the disability front."

While acknowledging there is still much to do, external stakeholders have recognised Telstra's achievements over the past three years and are keen to continue to consult regularly with Telstra to achieve more equitable outcomes for people with a disability.

5. Future Direction

While Telstra is proud of its achievements as a corporate leader in the area of disability planning and initiatives, it acknowledges that its efforts are incremental and there is still much to do to ensure all people, including people with a disability, have equal access to its products, services and information.

As Telstra develops its third Plan (2002-2004), it will continue to focus on the eight key strategies developed in its second Plan:

- Enhance disability awareness amongst Telstra management and staff
- Ensure ongoing community consultation
- Improve access to information for people with a disability
- Improve access to Telstra's products and services
- Improve access to Telstra's complaint management process for customers with a disability
- Improve access for the "online" customer with a disability
- Improve access to Telstra's facilities
- Maintain Telstra's commitment to eliminating discrimination in the workplace.

As a living document, Telstra's third Plan will continue to take into account the fast-changing nature of telecommunication products and how they are transforming the lives of all consumers.

Online communication will be a particular focus, as the very nature of web-based communication presents access issues, especially for people who are blind or have a visual impairment.

Telstra will continue to consult widely with peak disability groups as it develops and implements its third Plan.

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Web: www.telstra.com.au/disability

For information about Telstra's products and services for people with a disability contact:

Disability Enquiry Hotline

Telephone: 1800 068 424
TTY: 1800 808 981
Email: DisabilityEnquiryHotline@team.telstra.com

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Appendix One: Letter from Halliday's Business Insights

Susan Halliday
Halliday's Business Insights Pty Ltd
ABN 84080960005

Mr Bert Ciavarra
Manager, Disability Services
Telstra Corporation
Corporate Relations
Locked Bag 4960
Melbourne Vic 8060

11 October 2002

Dear Bert

**Review Report to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity
Commission of Telstra's Second Disability
Action Plan (1999 – 2001)**

Further to our recent discussions I would like to confirm that I have reviewed the draft Review Report to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) of Telstra's Second Disability Action Plan. I agree to the inclusion in the Report in Section Three, of the review summary scorecard that I prepared.

As you are aware, this review was conducted during the last week of March 2002, by myself. This review summary scorecard did not include a qualitative assessment, rather, as agreed at the outset of the project, it was to be based on a review of documentation compiled and presented by Telstra, to demonstrate compliance with the Action Plan. As long as the documentation appeared prima facie to address the specific compliance requirements, it was accepted on face value as complying.

I have also reviewed the draft HREOC report to check the references made to material from the additional *External Stakeholder Study*, which I also conducted. I am happy for the extracts from this study to be included in your report to the HREOC.

Yours sincerely,

Susan Halliday
Managing Director
Halliday's Business Insights Pty., Ltd

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