Introduction

The Flinders’ Disability Action Plan (DAP) was introduced in 1996, with the six Cost Centres first reporting on implementation progress in 1999. The Federal Disability Discrimination Commissioner credited that report with a certificate in recognition of the commitment and progress Flinders has made to improve access for people with disabilities.

The six Cost Centres provided further reports to the Vice Chancellor’s Committee (VCC) in January 2002, September 2004 and March 2006. In February 2008, Yunggorendi joined the Cost Centres in reporting. Each of these reports has highlighted enhancements since the last report, and identified areas for improvement.

Responsibility

The Vice Chancellor is the responsible officer for the implementation and evaluation of the DAP. He has delegated the responsibilities for carrying out the actions identified in the DAP to the Heads of the six Cost Centres and Yunggorendi.

Each of the Cost Centres have designated officers to implement the DAP. Faculties have Disability Academic Advisers (FDAAs) to provide expert advice on matters relating to reasonable accommodations. Students are responsible for identifying themselves to all relevant faculty staff, providing copies of their Access Plan to those staff and discussing with them the recommendations made by the Disability Advisor (DA). Students refer faculty staff to the DA if there are questions about the recommendations.

The Library has a nominated officer responsible for the provision of specialised services that enable students and staff with a disability to access library and information resources and facilities for their study, teaching and research. The nominated officer also provides and maintains adaptive technologies for students on behalf of the University, and accommodates many students who require alternative locations for examinations.

Central Administration continues to provide and support the positions of Disability Advisor as the main points of contact for and coordination of specific services across the University that enable students with disabilities to participate in university study. The second DA position, created in October 2007 at 0.4, was increased to 0.5 in 2008. The DAs also provide advice and assistance to Faculty staff including information about Access Plans and various ways to improve access and participation. The DA completes an Access Plan based on the treating specialist’s recommendations, files the signed original and provides copies to the student.

These nominated officers together with other representatives from a variety of areas within the University form the Disability Committee, a forum for raising disability issues and for reviewing the DAP. The Disability Committee is a standing committee of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee, which is an expert standing committee of Academic Senate.
The Disability Committee met eight times over the period covered by this report, making decisions in relation to prioritising funds to various projects and reviewing actions taking place in the different areas of the University. Committee meetings also provide an opportunity for the Faculty Disability Academic Advisors and other staff with roles supporting disability to discuss emerging issues, gain information about initiatives in other parts of the university, and to develop communication channels between each other. This is particularly important in relation to services like the Library and IT.

Evaluation

University-wide information and consultation

Following on from the consideration of the Fifth Implementation Report by the Vice-Chancellor’s Committee and Academic Senate in 2008, the Manager Equal Opportunity and Diversity visited each Cost Centre and Yunggorendi in mid-2009. Discussions focussed on reviewing the progress of actions taken since the 2006-7 report and considering input for the 2008-9 report. Another purpose of these meetings is to give Cost Centres an opportunity to discuss any issues that they are having difficulty progressing, particularly where issues require liaison with other areas of the University e.g. Building and Property Division.

Most frequently reported disabilities
medical, psychiatric, learning, vision, mobility, hearing and acquired brain injury

Most frequently requested accommodations

- **Examination accommodations**: - variations to format, conditions during or location of exams eg additional time, use of computers, rest breaks, separate or group room, timing, alternative format. The Library offers examination accommodation and pre-training of equipment to students with disabilities. Training is also provided to invigilators working in the alternative examinations venues to enable them to respond appropriately to situations that might arise for students with disabilities.

- **Assessment accommodations**: - additional time, alternative format, flexible attendance requirements

- **Lecture assistance** - audio or video recording of lecture to improve note-taking capacity; material (lecture notes, overheads, slides) in different formats provided prior to the lecture or online

- **Library** - extra time for short-loan books; individual service delivery plans – (retrieval of items from shelves, photocopying or the creation of customised work-stations); adaptive technology provision / training

- **Specialised services** - note-taking, photocopying, typing, printing, reading for exams, interpreting, audio-tape production, research assistant, personal care, and equipment (tape recorders, electronic spell-check, software upgrade, specialised furniture)

Update on actions in relation to the 2006-07 report

Access issues:
A review of the Disability Access Barrier Report Card system is planned to be undertaken by the Disability Advisor and Buildings and Property Division.

Issues raised in the 2007-8 Access Audit have been prioritised and continue to be addressed. Some doors have been replaced and some resting stations created, for example, but other actions are still to come.

The University’s Capital Plan includes funding of $75,000 each year over the next 10 years for improvements in accessibility at the Bedford Park Campus. In 2010 the carry over of the 2008/09 budget provides $150,000 for accessibility projects planned as follows:

- Sports Centre main entrance
- Sturt, South and North Ridge main and secondary entrances
- Upgrade to Student Centre main entrance and public area
- Signage to main entrances and way-finding, including Braille and tactile indication to main rooms
- Hearing augmentation to reception and main teaching areas
- Provision of a new loop bus capable of carrying wheelchair users

Flinders Learning Online (FLO):

Issues raised in the 2007-8 report have been addressed, but further improvement by funding licences for the latest screen reading software for students has been suggested by the Faculty of Health Sciences. The Disability Advisor will discuss this with the Faculty and investigate this possibility.

Staff with Disabilities:

Cost Centres report that staff are approaching FDAAs and Human Resources advisors and that suitable accommodations are being provided or developed.

**Continuing actions and processes**

The Disability Advisors are the University’s primary resource for students with disabilities, working with them to develop individual Access Plans that provide reasonable adjustments to enable their studies. However the Disability Advisor role is also responsible for numerous other activities e.g.:

- Ongoing monitoring of Flinders University policies and procedures in relation to students with disabilities
- Workshops for staff in various Schools, Committees and Advisory Groups on the University’s legislative obligations in regard to students with disabilities, and what constitutes “reasonable adjustments to assessment and teaching”
- Training staff in the use of ‘Text Help Read & Write’ software
- Liaising with Faculty staff (academic and administrative) in relation to implementing Access Plans
- Training sessions within Flinders Foundations of University Teaching program and new staff Inductions

Activities are also undertaken outside the University in association with the Disability Advisors of the other South Australian universities or the National Disability Coordination Officers or Regional Disability Liaison Officer, including “Come and try tertiary study” days for high school students with disabilities and a major project to develop a checklist to assist Faculties determine the ‘inherent requirements’ of courses and topics.

The electronic provision of Library resources is of particular value to users with disabilities since resources are then available 24/7 and remotely, which lessens the need for travel to the Library. It also enables them to be used with screen reading software and screen enlargement software without the need to scan them, which is more accurate and quicker for users with disabilities. The Library has continued to increase its electronic information
resources during 2008 and 2009, with 89% of subscribed journals now available electronically and over 3,500 eBooks. In addition, all items in the Reading Collection are now made available as an eReading if copyright allows.

Faculties report that the Disability Action Plan continues to be strategically implemented at the operational level. One of the most encouraging actions over the last couple of years is the creation in 2007 of a senior working group within the Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology (EHLT). This enables the Faculty Disability Academic Advisers (the Faculty now has two) to be supported by other staff in the Faculty with a particular commitment to supporting people with disabilities. The Manager Equal Opportunity and Diversity has been greatly encouraged by the group’s enthusiasm and the way they ask questions and follow up actions. One example is the question asked about displaying posters around disability, which drew attention to the University’s lack of bright posters with a positive message. The outcome was that posters have now been designed, printed and laminated for use across the University, with positive feedback already received from people noticing them in different places.

Although the Statement of Assessment Methods is the main method Faculties use to let students know about the availability of accommodations for students with disabilities, several Faculties have raised the possibility of enhancing or reinforcing the message in this statement. For example, the FDAAs in the Faculty of EHLT have developed a set of standard presentation materials for use by all lecturers during initial lectures or other initial teaching sessions. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences has developed Faculty web pages on disability, which reinforces the Statement of Assessment Methods. Consideration could be given to a standard slide for all lecturers in all Faculties to use in their initial lectures.

Computer labs and audio-visual and computer support staff are important resources for students with disabilities, and Faculties report that these staff assist students to access up-to-date assistive hardware and software and are very receptive to suggestions that may assist. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences report that their e-learning team also provide support to staff members on an individual basis to find solutions to meet individual student’s needs.

Faculties are reporting that Faculty Disability Academic Advisors (FDAAs) are receiving a variety of queries from both staff and students in relation to reasonable adjustments, alternative assessments and materials in alternative formats. It is pleasing that Faculties are making sure that the role of FDAAs is being communicated widely to their staff and clearly staff are making better use of this valuable resource. For example the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Science report that their FDAA received several calls from topic convenors wishing to discuss appropriate alternative assessments for an examination. That Faculty also reports that the FDAA has been sought out in relation to assisting staff with a disability to access technology that would assist in career development.

Flexible delivery of teaching is an important mechanism that can allow teaching to be more inclusive of students with disabilities, and Faculties report they use a range of teaching approaches and there is an increasing trend toward making materials available in a range of formats, in association with support from the DA. The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, for example, reports that it has a very high number of topics with lectures available online and that the School of Social and Policy Studies provides an optional version of topics that are available entirely online, with participation in online forums for discussion.
In the School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2009, two students with a hearing impairment were accommodated by the provision of electronic stethoscopes. Each student also required a different type of stethoscope due to their different levels of auditory reception.

The Faculty of Health Sciences also reports that guidelines for practica are spelled out clearly and that students are encouraged to negotiate with their Topic Coordinator to ensure that they are able to meet practicum requirements.

New and future initiatives

The Library continued to improve its support through Adaptive Technology Rooms in each Library, purchasing new computers and purchasing new and upgrading existing software (Dragon Naturally Speaking, Zoomtext, Jaws). Plans have been developed for a new Adaptive Technology room to be established in 2010.

Better access to the entrance of the library and the café is currently under construction with an upper level walkway connecting the Matthew Flinders Theatre, Library and Red Vines café. A Collaborative Learning Hub in the Sturt Library also provides more open space with improved access for users with a disability.

The Faculty of EHLT is considering a pilot project to conduct focus groups across the Faculty to improve its understanding of the needs of staff and students for disability support and services. The DA is very encouraged by this idea and has confirmed a willingness to be part of the project.

EHLT has also raised the possibility of requiring supervisors to complete a staff development course to ensure understanding of and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Although the University’s current online training (Fair Treatment @ Work) includes a component in relation to disability, a more specific course focused on supervisor responsibilities would be a great enhancement to the University’s online training courses. The Manager Equal Opportunity and Diversity will investigate resources available to assist in developing such a course during 2010. EHLT has offered to participate in a trial or pilot program.

Issues raised for consideration for future action

- Investigate the possibility of specifically considering inclusiveness of students with disabilities (e.g. through varied learning experiences and assessment methods) as part of course and topic reviews. In particular, whether it would be possible to include this in the University’s list of specific questions.
- Several instances over the reporting period highlighted the importance of liaising with the DA around developments and changes to websites and buildings. It is recognised that initial communication took place, but responsible areas need to continue to keep lines of communication open throughout the whole period of development and/or construction.
- Several Faculties drew attention to the lack of formal processes to ensure staff awareness of the requirements relating to students with disabilities. Since this responsibility rests with academic supervisors, it has been suggested that reviewing academics’ approaches to the support of students with disabilities as part of the annual academic performance review would be a useful strategy. It would enable the
importance of these issues to be stressed and provide an opportunity for supervisors to provide suggestions and for academics to clarify procedural issues. Both Faculties who raised this recognised it would need to be a University-wide initiative.

- The School of Nursing and Midwifery advise that all their Electronic learning material is edited to comply with the AVCC Guidelines on Information Access for Students with Print Disabilities. It recommends that a useful step would be to make this a Faculty-wide standard, but both the Manager Equal Opportunity and Diversity and the Disability Advisor suggest that this could be a University-wide standard.
- The Faculty of Health Sciences has raised the possibility of the University considering an "affirmative action" approach in relation to employing people with disabilities. In the next reporting period it is planned that a discussion around ideas of how to increase the number of people with disabilities employed take place.

Commendations

- Central Administration has increased the fraction of the second Disability Advisor from 0.4 in October 2007 to 0.5 in 2008. Also, Paula Williams received a staff award in recognition of her outstanding service in the position of Disability Advisor.

- The Faculty of Science and Engineering has been involved in the Accessibility Wayfinding Project, sponsored by the Disability Advisor. Staff in the School of Computer Science, Engineering and Mathematics have been working with the Disability Advisor to develop an online tool to assist individuals with access difficulties navigate throughout the campus. The tool will assist them to plan a path to best suit their needs by providing a complete visual tour online of the suggested route.

- The Faculty of Social Sciences developed transition programs to support the needs of students new to university studies. Although not only for students with a disability, the mentoring and peer supported learning groups or drop-in centres for one-on-one academic help and advice provided a way for students with a disability to be counselled about the wider support available for them within the university.

- The School of Nursing and Midwifery in the Faculty of Health Sciences has created a role of Clinical coach. Students with a wide variety of clinically based learning issues can be referred to the coach, and although these are not limited to disability-related issues, the Clinical coach position enables one-on-one assistance for these students. For example a student with a fine motor tremor worked with the coach to develop strategies to minimise the effect of the tremor on the student’s clinical performance.

- The Library continues to go that extra mile in electronic resources and programmes and it is particularly worth noting the facilities provided for students who need to use Dragon Naturally Speaking, Zoomtext and Jaws to complete exams. The demand for this facility has meant that three rooms were used in both Semesters 1 and 2 in 2009 compared to one in previous years. The Library also provides facilities for students who need to use a computer to complete an exam and the demand has now increased to the point that planning has become necessary to identify other possible venues. In addition, the Library has commended Lexis Nexis, John Wiley, Oxford University Press, McGraw Hill, Sage and Cengage Learning for providing, without charge, electronic copies of textbooks for students with a print disability.

- The Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology senior working group continues to operate and has been strengthened with the addition of another FDAA. The Faculty is
now considering providing Executive Officer support for the FDAAs and the working group on a continuing basis.

- Yunggorendi provides new Indigenous students with an Orientation program in February each year, and invites the Disability Advisor to speak at this. Yunggorendi Academic advisors are available to assist students with a disability on an individual basis, and to advocate on their behalf if necessary.

Lisa O’Neill
Manager Equal Opportunity and Diversity
March 2010

Appendix 1: Examples of accommodations
Appendix 2: Statistical information
Examples of accommodations being offered

TEACHING & LEARNING

Course Information
- The SATAC Guide, Undergraduate and Post Graduate Course Guides all contain information about how to access support for disabilities. The information describes the process, details of support available and the relevant contact person for further details.
- Course information is available in a variety of formats and is reviewed annually. The usual recommended format is by accessing the web. Course, topic and timetable information can be updated at any stage.
- Since 2002 every Statement of Assessment Method (SAM) must include a reference to the Disability policy and Disability Advisor.

Teaching
- Many lectures are now video taped and made available through WebCT or from the Reserve collection in the Library
- Use of audio-visual recordings to capture the slides, diagrams and other visual aides shown on the screen during lectures, while only the lecturer’s voice is recorded
- Increased number of topics that have a standard minimum web presence including detail about topic requirements, assessment methods, lecturer contact details and reading lists
- Provision of teaching materials in large font / alternative formats / hard copy that can be enlarged by photocopier or viewed with the assistance of magnifiers
- Accommodations with tutorial times/staff consultation times
- Using good practice communication skills in tutorials / lectures to assist hearing impaired

Assessment
- extensions for assignments / practicals
- modification of exam content, format and location but consistent with the topic aim and requirements such as
  - 3 hour exam in two periods of 1.5 hours;
  - special exam paper in one hourly sections;
  - a summary of weekly tutorial work that assessed the student’s ‘broad’ knowledge of the topic content;
  - large font / electronic exam papers;
  - take home assessment;
  - oral/taped answers to tests/exams;
  - prepared essay topic and writing up under exam conditions;
  - separate location with an invigilator known to the student
- changed format of assessment items in laboratories, fieldwork

ACCESS & SUPPORT SERVICES
- specialised paper to suit visual impairments
- extra time on short loans in the Library,
- the Library maintains a webpage detailing services for students with disabilities
  www.lib.flinders.edu.au/Services/disabled.html and this links to the Disability Page
maintained by Health and Counselling
www.flinders.edu.au/healthcounsel/disability_serv.htm

- Library staff, particularly those with service delivery roles, have been made aware of how students should make initial approaches to the Library to arrange for services to meet their needs.
- assistance with use of adaptive technology or retrieval services in the Library
- web page design support to ensure accessibility by students using assistive technology. The Flexible Education Unit has guidelines for designing web sites for people with disabilities on the Faculty’s site at http://www.socsci.flinders.edu.au/flexed/access.php
- room bookings made available which best suit the circumstances (wheelchair access / easy access because of crutches) rooms booked close to a lift or walkway; arrangements made with maintenance or security to open doors at specified times.
- reserving seats for hearing-impaired students
- arranging peer tutoring / notetakers / assistance with terminology
- providing research materials / books; posting teaching material to student in hospital
- providing / receiving teaching materials / assignments by email
- loan of lap-top computer to meet the requirements of a field camp
- microphone stethoscope for use in nursing for a hearing impaired student
- office space with tailored work-station for PhD student with physical disability
- wide screen monitors (21 inch) installed for staff and students with visual impairments.
- variety of assistive technology programs available on many machines (Magnifier, Narrator and On-Screen Keyboard, speech recognition systems, speech synthesizers, refreshable Braille displays, talking word processors and large-print word processors)
- use of a ‘smart card’ which fits any computer and automatically provides the required screen resolution and adaptive programs thereby not being restricted to a specific computer, or lab environment.
- laboratory refurbishments with push button opening door, wide door, a ramp accessible from the car park, and the layout of benches inside the lab to allow space for a wheelchair or crutches.
- upgrade of plaza including raising the pavement, installing tactiles and new stairs
- redesign of library entrance, with upper level walkway connecting to Matthew Flinders Theatre, Library and Red Vines café, a wide entrance gate to provide easier access for wheelchairs and gophers and a new service desk in the Central Library which includes a section designed for wheelchair access

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The review and planning process for general staff and academic performance review for academic staff provide ways in which the needs of staff with disabilities can be identified and work can be undertaken to address their needs, including but not restricted to arranging work-place modifications, or reviewing arrangements already in place.

Examples of support provided to individual staff members:
- arrangements made for customised access / egress particularly during emergency situations
- alternative room for a staff member with claustrophobia
- assistance for a staff member who needs books and teaching materials delivered to lecture rooms and to tidy office / reshelve books
- the Library provides a service to deliver research materials to a staff member with mobility problems
- Staff with asthma have been provided with wall mounted bar heaters, avoiding the use of reverse cycle air-conditioning
- Help has been provided with packing boxes and moving offices for staff with bad backs
• Computer support officers have installed and set up computer equipment in the home of a Faculty academic staff member who has serious mobility and access needs.
• Briefing sessions during induction
• Changing the structure of a teaching course by decreasing numbers of students and teaching two one-hour lectures and a one-hour seminar instead of a two-hour seminar
### Appendix 2

#### Statistical Information – Student data

1. **Statistics**

The following tables are taken from information provided at enrolment from 2000 – 2008.

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2a. **Funded services and equipment (domestic students)**

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</table>

There has been an increase in the number of students with disabilities requesting services of approximately 18% from 2006 to 2008. The following information is based on the 1,037 contacts made by 407 students during 2007 and 1,340 contacts made by 461 students in 2008 (figures have been averaged and rounded):

1. Mode of contact is primarily via email (35%), appointment (31%) and telephone (29%)
2. Most students self-refer to the Disability Service (60%); some are referred by Faculty staff (12%); and others by student services (8%). The Disability Advisor initiated 15% of contacts.
3. Students reported their main disability as medical (33%), psychiatric (35%), learning (11%), vision (9%), hearing (5%), acquired brain injury (3%) and mobility (6%). Vision and mobility impairments have increased since 2006, and hearing impairments have decreased. We currently have no students with profound hearing impairments, and there is a corresponding dramatic decrease in annual expenditure figures.

4. Secondary disabilities were reported as medical (14% - an increase from 5% in 2006), psychiatric (7%) and learning (4%).

5. Where follow up or consultation was required 15% was with Faculty staff, 12% with Health, Counselling and Disability Services or one of the other student services, and 3% with an external service.

6. The outcomes of the contact: Access Plan or letter of support – 25%
   - Access Plan or letter of support – 25%
   - Referral to the Faculty – 12%
   - Referral to an external service – 14%
   - Referral to a student service – 13%

7. There was a 6% reduction in the number of students who did not declare their disability at enrolment. It is hoped that this trend will continue due to determined efforts to advertise the confidentiality of the service.

8. The number of males contacting the service has decreased from 32% in 2006 to 12% in 2008, while the number of females has increased from 68% to 88%.

9. In 2006, there were five students who contacted the service more than 10 times. This increased to 12 in 2007, and 18 in 2008, which indicates the increasing complexity of needs.

4. **Number of students with alternative exam arrangements**
   (Semester 2) 2005 - 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main venue</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group room</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual room</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>199</td>
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</table>

5. **Numbers of new Access Plans 2005 - 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>EHLT</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Health Sc (Other)</td>
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<td>Science &amp; Eng</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>206</td>
<td>223</td>
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</table>

Statistical Information – Staff data
6. Number of University staff (contracted and permanent as at November 2009) who identified as having a disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No of staff</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Condition</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Impairment</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Impairment</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
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</table>