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It is with heavy hearts that we say *au revoir* to André Demers. After years of service as the Chair of EwDN and a tremendous resource at ESDC, André has moved on to Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) where he will continue his work to improve accessbility and inclusivity for persons with disabilities. Thank you for your tireless advocacy and effort within the department, André. In the interim, Jennifer Leenhouts will assume the mantle of Chair, and Elizabeth Dussault will take on the position of Co-Chair.

* The EwDN successfully petitioned for changes to the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) to measure issues relevant to persons with disabilities, specifically harassment and discrimination based on disability status and/or accommodations. Questions on these topics will be added to the survey, and existing questions on discrimination and harassment will include disability and accommodation-related answer choices. You will be able to see these changes in the 2019 PSES survey released in the summer.
* In early 2019, the EwDN cooperated with the Service Canada College@ESDC to test two separate learning technology products in the form of games to determine the user experience of employees with accessibility needs. We were happy to help the department move forward in providing access to barrier-free training and systems to all employees. One of the key deliverables that Service Canada College@ESDC is working on in conjunction with the IITB Accessibility team is a course called **Accessibility 101**.
* IITB is proceeding with its plan to align with the Accessible Canada Act by making over 260 internal applications and a significant number of off the shelf software products accessible by 2023! EwDN has ensured that we will be consulting with IITB to facilitate this process in the coming months.

**Employees with Disabilities Network Newsletter - Spring 2019**

**A Fond Farewell**

**Recent Achievements**

We are excited to see that the newest vision statement for the Federal Public Service is "**Beyond 2020 - Agile, Inclusive, Equipped**."

The new vision statement prioritizes the accessibility principles of inclusivity and properly equipped to get the job done. ESDC will be striving to create the ideal work environment to align with the Beyond 2020 vision statement, and the EwDN will be participating at every step of the way. The Chair and Co-chair are working directly with the Clerk of the Privy Counsel, providing feedback on the Beyond 2020 workbook and testing with our executive to formulate next steps for consultation. The Executive felt that **Inclusive** was the key and **Equipped** would definitely make us more **Agile**!

As you may be aware, the Accessible Canada Act (aka Bill C-81) has been in development since 2016, and it is expected to be proclaimed into law this summer. Once enacted, this legislation will benefit all Canadians, especially Canadians with disabilities, by helping create a barrier-free Canada. Key areas identified through consultation with Canadians include programs and service delivery, employment, the built environment, information and communications technology, procurement, and transportation.

ESDC working groups have been established to align our internal procedures, systems, products, and asset requirements with the new legislation, and EwDN leadership will keep you informed on progress in these areas. We have ensured that the EwDN will be in the forefront in the consultantion and testing phases of the legislation implementation, as has been signalled by leadership on the different facets required to make this complex legislation come to life.

**Beyond 2020 Vision Statement**

ESDC is working towards a new vision for barrier-free, agile, and inclusive talent management, one that empowers employees and supports evidence-based decision-making. EwDN participated in a series of focus groups in 2018-19 to determine issues experienced by PWD with the current talent management program. An assessment and summary of the consultations is being done with the intent to develop a plan to create new methods to harness the talent within ESDC.

**Talent Management Makeover**

**Get Ready - the Accessible Canada Act is Almost Here!**

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**News from the Office of Public Service Accessibility**

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**The DTA Passport Project**: One of the primary projects of the Office of Public Service Accessibility is the development of a Public Service Employee DTA Passport system to allow staff with DTAs to have their requirements (for example, functional limitations and accommodation requirement details), registered centrally so that they don't need to repeatedly prove their accommodation needs in the event that they change jobs or managers.

EwDN has been invited to participate in a design workshop on May 21, 2019 with TBS to develop a prototype or a standalone Public Service Employee DTA Passport system, and to outline next steps including how to engage employees with disabilities and managers to finalize the product and facilitate its implementation. The second phase of the project will consist in the development of an online platform to facilitate portability of the Passport across public service organizations.

**The DTA Working Group**: The ESDC Duty to Accommodate Working Group has the mandate to modernize current DTA processes, and EwDN representatives have been active participants in this process from the lens of our DTA Passport project. The EwDN Co-chairs are vocal advocates for PWD within the group, and have advocated for DTA processes that are streamlined, employee-centric, and consistently applied across the country. EwDN has also championed the idea that accessibility and user-universality should be key determinants in procurement, facility-planning, hiring, and other operational processes in order to bring the department into alignment with the Accessible Canada Act.

Do you have feedback on how to improve the current DTA procedures? Let us know about it by using our email contact information below.

**Duty to Accommodate Updates**

The Office of Public Service Accessibility is conducting a study of workplace accommodation practices in the Federal Public Service from the perspectives of employees and supervisors. The study aims to establish baseline information against which progress can be gauged. The first phase, gathering information from employees who have requested an accommodation within the last three years, just completed. EwDN will keep network members updated on important developments.

DM Yazmine Laroche has been holding town halls in sites across Canada to get feedback from employees on how to make our public service the most accessible and inclusive in the world. These meetings were opportunities to let DM Laroche hear your visions for the future. Did you go? Let us know by using our contact info below!



**Did You Know? National AccessAbility Week is May 26th to June 1st**



In the last six months the EwDN Chair, Co-Chair, and Champion have all been consulted on a number of different issues regarding DTA, invisible disabilities, and accessibility challenges. We are here to be your advocate and to provide you with support that you need at a personal and an organizational level.

Questions? Comments? Want to join the Network? Let us know! We would love to hear from you. Send an email here and have your say! Also check out our [iService page](http://iservice.prv/eng/hr/employment_equity/key_links/EDN.shtml) for more information about us.

**Providing Support and Contact Us!**

Stress affects us all in one way or another, which can sometimes lead to issues with mental health. Unfortunately, the majority of people in danger of developing mental health issues do not consult health professionals due to the continuing stigma around mental health. In response to employee feedback, the Webinar "Testimonials from Your Peers" was held on May 9th to encourage staff who are experiencing mental health issues to seek out assistance.

If you are struggling with a mental health issue, please don’t do it alone. Reach out to family, friends, or colleagues. You can also contact the Employee Assistance Program (1-800-268-7708) any time if you or someone you know needs help.

AccessAbility Week 2019 is the last week in May, and it promises to be action-packed! Each day of the week has its own theme:

Monday May 27th – Government leading by example

Tuesday May 28th – Employment

Wednesday May 29th – Youth

Thursday May 30th – Communications/Technology

Friday May 31st – The built environment

For listings of the AccessAbility Week events that are planned in your area, check out [the NAAW intranet page](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/campaigns/national-accessability-week/activities-events.html) for more information.

**Mental Health Webinar - “Testimonials from Your Peers”**