

Inclusive Victoria

State disability plan
2022–2026



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Minister's foreword

Every Victorian deserves to have access to employment, services and infrastructure that meets their needs and improves their lives.

The new state disability plan is an opportunity to renew our commitment to doing just that.

Produced during a global pandemic, it captures the evolving questions around what we all need from our community – important things like inclusion, connection, opportunity, recognition and purpose.

And like all the best plans for the future, it is directly shaped by the lived experience of Victorians with disability.

But it's not enough to just have a plan – changing lives requires action and the Andrews Government will back the vision set out in this document and ensure communities see long-lasting change for people with disability.

I can't introduce this plan without talking about the coronavirus pandemic and what it has meant for people with disability.

For many, it has been a time of isolation and uncertainty.

But it has also been a time in which you came forward to advocate on matters critical to you and your community.

Armed with your advice and advocacy, we were able to improve our response to the pandemic, and bring to life initiatives like the Disability Liaison Officer program in hospitals.

I also want to recognise the achievements of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council in bringing the perspectives of the disability community to bear on our work during the pandemic – your advice and guidance has been deeply appreciated.

Our goal – and our promise – is to continue to break down the barriers that limit people with disability from fully participating in all aspects of our community.

Because Victorians with disability deserve no less.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Anthony Carbines'.

The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Aboriginal* people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waterways on which we live.

We honour and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise all Aboriginal peoples and their strength and resilience despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession. Aboriginal peoples represent the world's oldest living culture. We celebrate and respect this continuing culture.

We recognise that we have a long way to go in understanding and addressing the intersections of ableism, racism and the ongoing effects of dispossession and colonisation. We are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to see what additional actions the Victorian Government needs to take to address inequality for Aboriginal people with disability.

We also acknowledge the significant role that Aboriginal families and communities play as carers for people with disability in Victoria.

Treaty and truth in Victoria

We acknowledge the impact of colonisation to this day and seek ways to rectify past wrongs, including through truth-telling and the development of treaty.

We are deeply committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting Victoria's treaty and truth-telling processes. We acknowledge that treaty will have wide-ranging impacts for the way we work with Aboriginal Victorians. We seek to create respectful and collaborative partnerships and develop policies and programs that respect Aboriginal self-determination and align with treaty aspirations.

We acknowledge that Victoria's treaty process will provide a framework for the transfer of decision-making power and resources to support self-determining Aboriginal communities to take control of matters that affect their lives. We commit to working proactively to support this work in line with the aspirations of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

* We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. While the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are commonly used by Aboriginal people to describe Aboriginal people in southeast Australia, we have used the term 'Aboriginal' to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria



Our language

Language is a powerful tool for changing community attitudes, promoting inclusion and fostering disability pride. Throughout history, people with disability have fought for changes to language that reflect their human rights. We know language is always changing, and we recognise that words are powerful and have different meaning for different people. We recognise that people with disability have different preferences regarding how they describe their disability.

We also acknowledge that there is no universal conceptualisation of disability, which is perceived in culturally specific ways.

Person-first and identity-first language

We have chosen at this point in time to continue using person-first language in the state disability plan. Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, ‘person with disability’. Person-first language was first used to emphasise a person’s right to an identity beyond their disability and as a way of addressing ableism. We know person-first language continues to be an important part of many people’s identity, particularly for many people with cognitive disability and self advocates.

We also know that many people with disability prefer to use what is known as ‘identity-first’ language. Identity-first language puts a person’s disability identity before the person – for example, ‘disabled person’. We recognise that many people with disability prefer to use identity-first language because they see their disability as a key part of their identity. They use identity-first language to show their connection to the disability community, demonstrate disability pride and emphasise that it is society that is disabling (in line with the ‘social model’ of disability).

We recognise that identity-first language is important to the many people with disability who have advocated for the use of this language.

In the **Victorian autism plan**, which sits under the state disability plan, we were guided by the many autistic and neurodiverse Victorians who told us they had a strong preference for identity-first language. We know that many autistic people do not see autism as a disability but rather as a different way of seeing and interacting with the world.

Further to this, we know that many people in the Deaf community do not identify as people with disability but see themselves as a culturally and linguistically distinct group.

People's different preferences about how language is used reflects the different ways people consider their identity, their experience of disability and the attitudes of their community. We commit to continuing to explore community preferences and the best way to use language to promote inclusion as part of a new priority area in this plan called 'pride and recognition'.

We acknowledge people's personal preferences and individual right to choose how their identity and experiences are described. Within the plan you will see quotes that use 'person with disability' or 'disabled person'. This was done to respect the preferences of the person we were quoting, as well as highlighting the different preferences for how language is used.

“ I prefer person first language. As a person with an intellectual disability, I have spent my entire life fighting to be included in both the community and the workforce. I have felt the pain of isolation as I was segregated in my schooling, TAFE, and have had to fight to find my rightful place alongside those without a disability in the workplace. Disability does not define me; it has only served to segregate me. I wish to be seen as a person first. I am more than just my disability. I'm proud of my achievements.

Caitlin Syer (she/her) – VDAC member

“ I personally prefer identity first language. For me, saying "I am a disabled person" is saying that I belong to a community of people who are excluded and marginalised because our bodies and minds are different from the socially prescribed "norm". Disabled is also a term of pride for me; it proclaims that I accept and value my disability and don't feel ashamed or wish to minimise it anymore. The term "disabled person" comes from the social model of disability which says I'm disabled by an inaccessible environment and by attitudes or assumptions about disability, not by my body and mind being different. The term "disabled" asks us to think about disability as a social issue of identity, rights and access. It puts disability front and centre proudly, boldly and unapologetically.

Jax Jacki Brown (they/them) – VDAC member

The social model of disability

This plan uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities definition of disability, which describes people with disability as people who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory differences that, when interacting with inaccessible communities and environments, prevent full and equal community participation.¹ This is often called the social model of disability. The social model of disability is an important way of perceiving inequality because it views disability as stemming from communities, services and spaces that are not accessible or inclusive. In the social model of disability, it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability.²

Ableism

Ableism is discrimination or prejudice towards people with disability. It can be described as the systemic and interpersonal exclusion and oppression of people with disability.³ By using the word ableism throughout this plan, we intend to draw attention to the breadth and seriousness of this specific form of discrimination, exclusion and oppression.

Ableism interacts with other forms of discrimination, such as gender inequality, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and ageism. This creates multiple and intersecting forms of systemic discrimination for Aboriginal people, women, LGBTIQ+ people, multicultural people, older people and young people.



Message from the Victorian Disability Advisory Council



The Victorian Disability Advisory Council is a group of community leaders with disability.

In our role advising the minister and the Victorian Government, we share the stories and experiences of people with disability to shape policy and influence change. We work to make sure the needs of people with disability are not forgotten.

The past two years have been very difficult for people with disability in Victoria. As a council, we have worked hard to support inclusive responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We have worked across Victorian government departments, providing advice on accessible information and the supports needed to get through the pandemic. We have also focused on improving the accessibility and responsiveness of health services, embedding universal design into infrastructure projects, and addressing barriers to employment.

We have taken your concerns about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to the Commonwealth Government and made some great gains. Throughout, we worked to amplify the voices of people with disability and champion the principles of co-design for all new projects and reform activities. We are proud of the work we have done but know there is still much to do.

We welcome the launch of this new state disability plan. In the next four years we want to continue to influence long-term change.

In the consultations to develop this plan we have heard about your challenges and your concerns. We were grateful that you were so open with us. We want to make things better and fairer for Victorians with disability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted inequality and the impacts of discrimination on the lives of people with disability. We don't yet know what participation and inclusion can look like in this radically altered world, or how climate change will influence our future. We need to work together and listen to each other to tackle these profound changes.

Victorians with disability are resilient and proud, but we still face ableism. We still face segregation and exclusion. The new state disability plan will have an ongoing focus on changing attitudes through social change campaigns and community and workforce education. The plan will look at ways we can celebrate our identity. The new priority area of 'pride and recognition' aims to promote initiatives that support people with disability to express all parts of their identity authentically and celebrate who they are. A new priority focus on the 'right to expression of sexuality and gender identity' aims to build the supports for freely enjoying sex, sexual identity and parenthood.

Victorians face barriers in accessing all parts of community life. Within this plan we hope to take action to remove these barriers – including those relating to transport, housing, education and employment. We hope that the plan will work to remove barriers for all people with disability, inclusive of culture, language, faith, geographic location, socioeconomic status, gender, age, ability, sexuality or gender identity.

We want to see this state disability plan work to ensure the experiences of people with disability are heard in all parts of the Victorian Government. We want to see all Victorians listening to and learning from people with disability. We also want to see action.

It is our sincere hope that this state disability plan takes us further forward on our journey to realising true and lasting equality. We look forward to working with you to get there.

Dr George Taleporos
Chair
Victorian Disability Advisory Council

About the plan

Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026) is Victoria's plan for making things fairer for people with disability. The plan is a key way for the Victorian Government to be accountable for making all parts of the community inclusive and accessible for everyone. This is the fourth state disability plan.

The **Disability Act 2006** (Vic) requires us to develop a new state disability plan every four years. The plan sets out actions that will help the Victorian Government meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is also our implementation plan for achieving outcomes under **Australia's disability strategy (2021–2031)**.



Who we spoke to

This plan was developed in consultation with people with disability, disabled people's organisations, self advocacy groups, peak bodies, advocacy agencies and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council.

In developing **Inclusive Victoria** we asked people across Victoria with a range of experiences to tell us what the Victorian Government needs to do to improve the lives of people with disability.

These conversations started in 2019.

In total we:

- facilitated three face-to-face forums, including one in regional Victoria
- held 11 online public forums
- had 29 targeted meetings with peak bodies and disability organisations
- worked with partner agencies⁴ to engage with six underserviced groups and communities
- reviewed 75 written submissions.

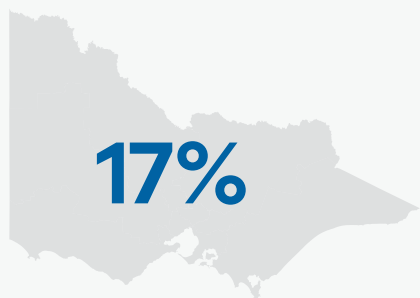
You can see a full list of organisations that contributed to the plan at Appendix 1.

We worked closely with the Victorian Disability Advisory Council on developing the plan including its community engagement, priority areas/ actions, monitoring and accountability. Council members also ran and participated in consultation forums.

The actions in **Inclusive Victoria** reflect the commitments all Victorian government departments are taking to build a fairer, inclusive community. Inclusive Victoria also sets out how government will do this by committing to six systemic reforms that will support a stronger focus on coordinated approaches to inclusion and accountability.

An outcomes framework supports this plan. The framework lists measures and indicators developed with people with disability and against which we will measure and report on whether the outcomes people with disability have told us are important are being achieved.

About people with disability



17% of Victorians are people with disability⁵



Only just over **10%** of the 1.1 million Victorians with disability are eligible for an **NDIS plan**



77% of people with disability have a **physical disability⁶**



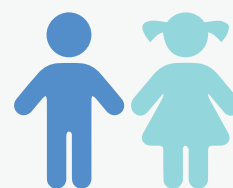
32% of people with disability sometimes or always **need support** with daily self-care, mobility or communication activities⁷



24% of **Aboriginal** people have disability, which is twice the rate of the general population⁸



39% of **LGBTIQA+** people **aged 14 to 21** identify as having disability or long-term health condition⁹



7.7% of **children under 15** have disability¹⁰

Victorian people with disability are diverse in their culture, language, sexuality, gender identity, age, ability, socioeconomic status and life experiences. They are parents, children and young people and live in all parts of the state. Some people's disability is hidden, while other people's disability is visible. Their experiences and the way they perceive the concept of disability differ.

The contributions that people with disability make to the community are significant and valuable. People with disability have the right to expect the same opportunities as people without disability and live lives of their own choosing.

People with disability are often excluded. They experience segregation and ableism in all areas of community life. They face multiple barriers to inclusion and full and equal participation. These barriers affect all parts of a person's daily life.

Outcomes from the previous state disability plan

Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020 made significant progress in working towards a vision of a fairer and more inclusive state. There are many achievements to be proud of and a lot of work that we can build on in this plan.

Key achievements from the past five years include:

- releasing the **Victorian autism plan**
- launching the Amaze 'Change your Reactions' autism awareness campaign
- strengthening of the National Construction Code to include accessibility standards
- mandating the **Liveable housing design guidelines** silver standard as the minimum accessibility requirement in Victoria for new social housing constructed through the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build
- applying universal design principles to all new transport projects
- investing more than \$20 million in school building improvements
- building 25 new Changing Places toilets
- upgrading major stadiums and creating sensory rooms at Marvel Stadium, Kardinia Park Stadium and Melbourne Park
- improving the accessibility of Victorian parks through accessible information, equipment and programs
- releasing **Every opportunity: Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018–2020** and the **Victorian disability advocacy futures plan 2018–2020**
- investing nearly \$1.6 billion to support students with disability through a Disability Inclusion package
- establishing the Disability Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted progress on parts of **Absolutely everyone**. However, the COVID-19 response delivered some significant improvements. We developed more accessible emergency communications. We established disability liaison officers to improve access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination and to other health services. We will continue to build on these initiatives in the current plan.

Improvements in outcomes for people with disability during the life of **Absolutely everyone** include:



The proportion of people in Victoria with disability reporting they had experienced **discrimination** due to disability decreased from 13.5% in 2015 to **9.3%** in 2018.¹¹

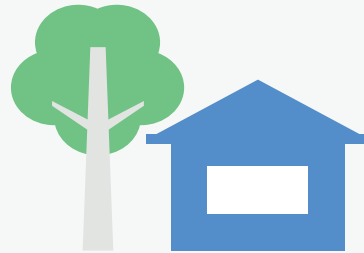


The proportion of people in Victoria with disability employed in **high skill jobs** increased from 49.2% in 2016 to **54.4%** in 2018.¹²

Despite these achievements, the **Absolutely everyone** outcomes framework data shows we have not made enough progress towards the vision of an inclusive Victoria. People with disability in Victoria:



Face difficulty **accessing public transport**. Only **65%** of metropolitan bus stops and **56%** of regional bus stops are wheelchair-accessible.¹³



Have experienced worsening access to **affordable housing**. The percentage of people with disability who are in the lowest 40% of the income distribution whose housing costs exceed 30% of their household income increased from 11% in 2016 to 13.2% in 2018. (This is compared with an improvement for people without disability from 5.4 to 4.9%).¹⁴

3x

Are almost three times more likely to experience **family violence**.¹⁵



Are **excluded from the workforce**. Fewer than five out of 10 Victorians with disability are employed (49%) compared with nearly eight in 10 (77%) people without disability.¹⁷



Are 15% less likely to feel like they **have a say** within the general community on important issues.¹⁸

2x

Are more than twice as likely to experience **sexual violence**.¹⁶

This data highlights the ongoing impact of ableism and exclusion. **Absolutely everyone** made considerable progress in improving access and inclusion, but the evidence from the outcomes framework indicators shows that it has not been enough. For this reason, this plan puts forward an ambitious set of reforms that all Victorian government departments have committed to.



Where the plan fits

Inclusive Victoria fits within a number of legal frameworks and policies. These exist at the international, national, state and local levels and aim to ensure the rights of people with disability are upheld and protected (Figure 1).

Figure 1: International, national and local context of Inclusive Victoria



Disability action plans

The Disability Act requires public authorities, state government departments and local governments to prepare disability action plans. These plans need to describe how the agency will address access and inclusion barriers for people with disability, as both service users and employees. Disability action plans should align to the outcomes framework of the state disability plan so it is clear how they contribute to achieving statewide outcomes. The Victorian Government is currently considering the role of disability action plans as part of its review of Victoria's Disability Act.

Human rights

Human rights are important to all people. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines the rights of people with disability and sets an international standard for all countries to aspire to.

In agreeing to the Convention, all levels of government agreed to work towards all people with disability enjoying equal human rights and freedoms.

The human rights model of disability focuses on the equal rights that all people have. This model presents disability inclusion as a vision we should all aspire to. The human rights model recognises an individual's experience of disability as being unique to them and as contributing to their sense of identity.¹⁹ The human rights model also acknowledges intersecting and overlapping forms of discrimination and how these contribute to a person's experiences.

Inclusive Victoria recognises that both the human rights and social models are interconnected. They are useful tools for understanding and addressing barriers to community inclusion. We recognise that ways of understanding disability are always changing. We acknowledge that disability is perceived in culturally specific ways and cannot be separated from the legacies of intergenerational trauma and complex disadvantage. We will continue to be guided by people with disability about how these changes can improve our work.

What is in the plan

The structure of this state disability plan is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Inclusive Victoria – structure

Vision	An inclusive, accessible and safe Victoria that upholds the rights of people with disability, celebrates our diversity and pride, and expands our opportunities to belong and control our lives			
Systemic reforms	Co-design with people with disability Aboriginal self-determination Intersectional approaches Accessible communications and universal design Disability-confident and inclusive workforces Effective data and outcomes reporting			
Strengthened disability inclusion legislative architecture				
Review of the Disability Act 2006				
Pillars and priority areas	Inclusive communities	Health, housing and wellbeing	Fairness and safety	Opportunity and pride
	Changing attitudes Transport Digital inclusion Assistance animals Sport and recreation Parks and tourism	Health Mental health Housing Supporting a high-quality NDIS Children and families	Safety in emergencies Disability advocacy Preventing abuse and neglect Family and sexual violence Justice system Right to expression of sexuality and gender identity	Education Employment and economic participation Voice and leadership Creative industries Pride and recognition
Outcomes	Connection Inclusion Accessibility Mobility	Housing Health Wellbeing	Respect Safety	Education and skills Employment Economic independence Influence and recognition Opportunity

Systemic reform – commitments, actions and accountability

Six systemic reforms

6

reforms

Co-design with people with disability

Aboriginal self-determination

Intersectional approaches

Accessible communications and universal design

Disability confident and inclusive workforces

Effective data and outcomes reporting

Building genuine inclusion means changing the way we do things.

It means having people with disability at the table when we design policies, programs and services. It means working with Aboriginal people with disability and listening to what works best for them and their communities. It means recognising the way ableism intersects with other forms of structural discrimination and understanding what that means for the way we design and deliver services. It means building accessibility into everything we do. It means skilling up our workforces to understand the social and human rights models of disability and what that means for how they do their jobs. And it means getting better at measuring progress and sharing what we've achieved.

All Victorian government departments acknowledge that changing the way we do things requires greater effort and a genuine commitment to reform. Through the plan, we have committed to implementing six systemic reform directions. Across the Victorian Government, all departments have agreed that over the next four years they will embed the six systemic reforms in their policies, programs and services, as outlined in the commitments below.

These reforms underpin all the priority area actions in the plan, but there are also some specific actions and accountabilities under the systemic reform commitments. Actions that relate to reform directions and have a whole-of-government or multi-agency focus, or broad systemic applicability, have been included here. Departments will report on how they are implementing these six reform commitments and actions as part of their state disability plan reporting requirements.

A new Disability Act

The six systemic reforms will position the Victorian Government to respond to a stronger disability inclusion legislative framework to be delivered through the current review of the Disability Act. The review seeks to modernise Victoria's legislated disability inclusion framework to support the vision of a barrier-free Victoria. This includes looking at changes to strengthen Victoria's ongoing role in promoting the human rights, inclusion and participation of people with disability, drawing on other Victorian, interstate and international models as part of the review.

Systemic reforms combined with a strong disability inclusion legislative framework will lay the groundwork for achieving transformative equality for people with disability.



Co-design with people with disability

In keeping with the principle of **nothing about us without us**, partnering with people with disability in policy, program and service design and delivery will support increased inclusion and more informed decision making and investment.

We will increase collaboration and co-design with people with disability on government policies, programs and services. This will include:

- identifying opportunities to increase knowledge and application of best practice co-design principles with people with disability across government, including people with cognitive disability
- increasing representation of people with disability across government boards and advisory groups – this will include a focus on increasing the diversity of representation of people with disability
- a particular focus on embedding co-design approaches in the first two years of the plan across: emergency preparedness, response and recovery; mental health reforms; children and families services; creative industries; and pride and recognition initiatives.

Aboriginal self-determination

We recognise that Aboriginal self-determination encompasses a spectrum of rights that are necessary for Aboriginal Victorians to achieve economic, social and cultural equity, based on their own values and culture. Aboriginal people with disability hold the knowledge and expertise about what is best for themselves, their families and their communities.

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to drive action and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people with disability underpinned by principles of Aboriginal-led collective action, Aboriginal self-determination and systemic change.

This will include:

- coordinating whole-of-government effort to align disability inclusion reforms with Treaty, the Victorian Government's commitments under the **National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Victorian Aboriginal affairs framework 2018–2023, the Victorian self-determination reform framework, the Korin Korin Balit Djak systems transformation strategy** (the Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan 2017–2027) and the five objectives in **Wungurilwil Gappagduir – Aboriginal children and families agreement**
- continuing our commitment to work closely and in good faith with Aboriginal stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal people with disability have power, control and decision-making and are able to co-design policies, programs and services that affect them
- Aboriginal representation on the Victorian Disability Advisory Council and related government working groups, as well as engagement with any self-determined representative body for Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Victorians established through Treaty – this will ensure the voices of Aboriginal people with disability and Aboriginal self-determination principles are central to the government's disability inclusion reforms
- further developing the capacity for the Aboriginal community-controlled sector to deliver disability support services and strengthening the Aboriginal disability workforce.

Intersectional approaches

Applying an intersectional lens to policy, program and service delivery means we recognise and address the ways in which systems, structures and attitudes can lead to multiple and overlapping forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage.

“ There is nothing that targets or looks after my mob in regional areas who are trans and gender diverse. Suicide rates are higher, disconnection, marginalisation. They're alone, they're isolated, they can't get access to services, they can't get access to trans health and hormone therapy.

– Consultation participant

We will act to address the intersection of ableism with other forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage across all our policies, programs and services. This will include:

- building capacity and a framework to support intersectional approaches to policy and program development across government
- embedding Aboriginal cultural safety, cultural responsiveness and LGBTIQ+ inclusion in disability capability initiatives
- a particular focus in the first two years of the plan on working with people with disability to implement the new Victorian gender equality strategy, the **Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)**, **Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women**, Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy, our youth strategy and mental health reforms.

Accessible communications and universal design

Universal design principles such as 'equitable and flexible use' aim to ensure policies, programs and services are accessible to as many people as possible, inclusive of age, ability, gender identity, culture, language and any other social characteristics.

We will work across government to embed universal design principles in all elements of the design and delivery of infrastructure. This will include:

- adopting universal design principles in the first two years of the plan in parks, sport and recreation, and health infrastructure
- continuing to build a network of fully accessible public toilets across Victoria to support people with disability to take part in their local community and access recreational venues, as well as embedding their construction in major infrastructure and transport projects (this includes funding local government and not-for-profit agencies to build 18 more Changing Places facilities across Victoria in 2021–22)
- publicly releasing the whole-of-government **Universal design policy** and sharing examples of good practice with community, industry and local government.

Equitable access to key information in formats that are accessible is critical to ensuring the inclusion, participation and safety of people with disability.

We will build capacity across government to provide inclusive, accessible and targeted communications for people with disability. This will include:

- developing whole-of-government strategies and approaches to ensure we are meeting the communication needs of people with disability – we will do this through co-design with people with disability and building accessible communications awareness and expertise within the Victorian public service
- a particular focus in the first two years of the plan on improving accessible communications in emergency management and planning.

Disability-confident and inclusive workforces

Lack of knowledge and understanding of disability among mainstream workforces can be a significant barrier to inclusion and access. Government can play an important role in shifting broader community attitudes by ensuring public sector workforces are disability-confident and inclusive.

“ Educate staff and support workers about what disability looks like in our community and culture. Educate about First Nations perspectives on disability.

– Consultation participant

We will build the diversity of key workforces and capability around inclusive service delivery. This includes building awareness about the social model of disability, intersectional approaches and Aboriginal cultural safety. This will include:

- continuing to implement **Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–2025**, led by the Victorian Secretaries Board, to build more diverse and inclusive workforces
- building a shared understanding across government of what constitutes disability confidence in specific workforces and prioritising workforces for piloting disability-led approaches to awareness and inclusion training
- leveraging the work of specialist disability roles such as: disability liaison officers in health services and in children and family services; specialist disability practitioners; principal disability practice advisors; and family violence and disability practice leader roles – this will help build disability inclusion capacity in other settings and workforces
- building the system capability and awareness of Aboriginal culture and history, which increases the ability to deliver culturally safe services to Aboriginal people with disability
- a particular focus in the first two years of the plan on the following workforces: health, children and family services; family violence and sexual assault services; housing; justice; and education. Specific actions in relation to these workforces are identified in the next section of the plan.

Effective data and outcomes reporting

Consistent collection of data relevant to disability allows us to better target policy and program development and be more accountable for outcomes.

We will improve the collection and use of data about people with disability across government to better inform evidence-based policy and programs and strengthened outcomes reporting.

This will include:

- identifying data gaps across service systems and leveraging initiatives such as the National Disability Data Asset and the National Disability Research Partnership to strengthen the evidence base
- undertaking data development to enable reporting on all indicators and measures to support reporting against the state disability plan outcomes framework, the **Victorian autism plan** and **Australia's disability strategy 2021–2031** as well as work to address Aboriginal data sovereignty and incorporation of Aboriginal-defined evidence and measures of success
- working with people with disability to identify new outcomes framework indicators and measures as appropriate
- implementing best-practice disability data collection analysis and reporting across government, including associated workforce guidance to support data collection
- requiring all government departments to report on how they are embedding the six systemic reform commitments across all their activities (this will be captured in the midway state disability plan report and other accountability mechanisms further described in the 'How we will know the plan is working' section)
- a particular focus in the first two years of the plan on improving data collection in health, mental health, emergency management, disability advocacy and employment.



**Inclusive
communities**

**Fairness
and safety**

Victoria

**Opportunity
and pride**

**Health, housing
and wellbeing**

Commitments over the next four years

The following section contains 22 priority areas. Unlike the systemic reforms, priority areas focus more on one service system or a specific issue, rather than cut across the whole of government. The priority areas are organised under four pillars:

Inclusive communities

Health, housing and wellbeing

Fairness and safety

Opportunity and pride

The 22 priority areas have been identified based on:

- extensive consultation with people with disability, disabled people's organisations, self advocacy groups, peak bodies and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council across 2020 and 2021
- lessons from the pandemic, which amplified the barriers, inequalities and discrimination people with disability experience every day
- strong evidence for what works best to improve outcomes.

For each priority area, we provide a statement about what we will do over the next four years. We are calling these 'commitments', and they are being included so everyone knows what the goals are for each priority area.

We also include a set of actions that will drive change to achieve the commitment.

1

1. Inclusive communities

'I feel included'

There are barriers to equal participation in society that need to be addressed for everyone to feel included. We need equal access to transport and infrastructure and need information in accessible formats. Most importantly, we need to shift community attitudes to be included and participate in society.

VDAC message



Outcomes under this pillar

Outcome	How we will know we've made progress
Connection	People with disability report increased social connections
Inclusion	<p>People with disability report increased activity in the community</p> <p>An increase in positive community attitudes towards people with disability</p> <p>People with disability report increased connections to culture and community</p> <p>Local neighbourhoods are more inclusive</p>
Accessibility	<p>Public transport are more accessible</p> <p>More accessible or adapted footpaths and crossings</p> <p>More spaces and places with universal design</p> <p>Increased access to transport</p>
Mobility	People with disability report greater mobility



Priority area commitments and actions

1.1 Community attitudes

We will work across government and the broader community to shift attitudes towards people with disability. We will do this by:

- 1.1.1 Identifying and sharing evidence-informed approaches to shifting community attitudes, building on previous work through The Attitude Foundation and the Amaze 'Change your Reactions' campaign.
- 1.1.2 Ensuring activities to change community attitudes, including efforts to build disability-confident and inclusive workforces, highlight the experiences of people with disability who are not well understood or considered, including people from underserved communities or with invisible disability.
- 1.1.3 Developing a social marketing behaviour change campaign to help prevent family violence against people with disability, to be rolled out as part of a series of family violence prevention campaigns.
- 1.1.4 Partnering with the youth sector and media outlets to tackle discrimination and increase the positive representation and visibility of young people in the media and public discussions. This includes young people with disability who are LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and/or from multicultural and multifaith communities.
- 1.1.5 Delivering a statewide education and awareness-raising campaign to celebrate and support LGBTIQ+ communities, including LGBTIQ+ people with disability.

1.2 Transport

We will create an inclusive and accessible transport network in partnership with Victorians with disability so they can travel easily when and where they need to go. We will do this by:

- 1.2.1 Appointing a Chief Accessibility Advocate for three years to oversee the development and implementation of policies, programs and strategies with key stakeholders to improve inclusion and access. The Chief Accessibility Advocate will monitor implementation of the Department of Transport's responsibilities to provide inclusive and accessible transport services.
- 1.2.2 Developing and publicly releasing an overarching transport accessibility strategy to identify the most significant barriers to universal accessibility in the transport system and prioritise responses that remove these barriers.

We will improve the accessibility of Melbourne's tram network. We will do this by:

- 1.2.3 Developing and publicly releasing a tram stop rollout strategy that streamlines the design and construction of accessible tram stops and prioritises the construction of tram stop upgrades across the network.
- 1.2.4 Investing in level-access tram stops and safety improvements including designing seven pairs of level-access tram stops to ensure people with disability can have accessible and reliable connections to the new Metro Tunnel stations.
- 1.2.5 Designing and manufacturing 100 Next Generation Trams to enable the retirement of older high-floor trams, making our public transport network more accessible for all Victorians (the Next Generation Trams will be co-designed with people with disability).

We will improve the whole-of-journey experience for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 1.2.6 Identifying gaps in accessibility and exploring other transport options, including new and emerging transport solutions through the **Accessible public transport in Victoria action plan 2020–2024**.
- 1.2.7 Continuing to expand the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program to other operators.
- 1.2.8 Considering mechanisms to enable Multi-Purpose Taxi Program users who are NDIS participants to continue accessing the lifting fee for wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

1.3 Digital inclusion

We will foster a more inclusive digital economy. We will do this by:

- 1.3.1 Improving digital access through the Connecting Victoria program that will invest in better mobile coverage and broadband across the state. Locations will be selected based on economic uplift, digital inclusion and community input to help identify where services are not meeting user needs. The first locations to receive upgrades or new infrastructure will be announced in early 2022, with more to follow across the state. Engagement for this program provides community members, including people with disability, an opportunity to indicate places where current digital connectivity is not meeting user needs with these locations to be considered for improvement.
- 1.3.2 Undertaking a research project that builds on the annual Australian Digital Inclusion Index report. This work will inform the government's understanding of the digital inclusion issues experienced by people across the state, including people with disability, people living in regional and rural areas, people from lower socio-economic communities and older people.
- 1.3.3 Exploring opportunities to increase digital inclusion, building on existing program offerings and learnings from the pandemic.

1.4 Assistance animals

We will continue working with the Commonwealth to develop and agree to a set of national guiding principles for assistance animal recognition and accreditation. We will do this by:

- 1.4.1 Actively representing and advocating for Victoria in the Commonwealth's Assistance Animals Working Group.
- 1.4.2 Advocating for the views and needs of Victorians when developing any standards to support the national guiding principles.

1.5 Sport and recreation

We will ensure all Victorians can participate in sport and active recreation initiatives that are high quality, inclusive and appropriate. We will do this by:

- 1.5.1 Supporting sport and active recreation outcomes for people with disability through program investments, inclusive participation opportunities and sustainable policies and business practices.
- 1.5.2 Applying universal design principles throughout sport and recreation infrastructure and program design and delivery.
- 1.5.3 Promoting attitudinal change through the Fair Play Code, which outlines the standards of behaviour expected for everyone involved in sport and recreation and provides guidance on the responsibilities for those involved.

1.6 Parks and tourism

We will create more inclusive parks and park management in which all Victorians have the opportunity to experience nature, enabling many health and wellbeing benefits. We will do this by:

- 1.6.1 Significantly increasing the number of parks designed in line with universal design principles. The principles will be applied in the planning and provision of park access, settings and facilities to ensure all parts of the users' experience are accessible and inclusive.
- 1.6.2 Ensuring park information and communications are provided in a range of accessible formats.
- 1.6.3 Advocating, educating, inspiring and collaborating with tourism stakeholders (including licensed tour operators and lease holders) to increase the range and quality of accessible tourism products and experiences in parks and waterways.
- 1.6.4 Identifying and implementing partnerships and opportunities that grow inclusive volunteering and employment in parks.
- 1.6.5 Increasing opportunities and partnerships for more inclusive nature-based and outdoor recreation programs that contribute to health and wellbeing.
- 1.6.6 Increasing opportunities and partnerships for more inclusive nature-based experiences through education and interpretation services.
- 1.6.7 Engaging with people with disability to find out what specific information is required about parks to support them to better prepare for, and respond to, an emergency while using parks or engaging in outdoor recreation activities.

We will continue to support and promote accessible tourism to businesses across Victoria. We will do this by:

- 1.6.8 Promoting accessible tourism opportunities to businesses across Victoria through industry forums, workshops and newsletters focusing on the business benefits and low-cost changes.
- 1.6.9 Supporting consumers to connect with accessible tourism businesses through showcasing via Visit Victoria and encouraging the regions to promote accessible and inclusive experiences.
- 1.6.10 Working with regions on their accessibility projects and identifying new opportunities for collaboration.



2

2. Health, housing and wellbeing

'I live well'

To live well, people need access to housing and health care that meets their individual needs. People with disability have poorer health outcomes than people without disability due to a range of systemic barriers. We want to see these barriers addressed to allow everyone to have their basic human rights met.

VDAC message



Outcomes under this pillar

Outcome	How we will know we've made progress
Housing	<p>More people with disability have access to affordable housing</p> <p>More people with disability have access to stable and secure housing</p> <p>More people with disability have access to suitable housing</p>
Health	<p>People with disability report improved physical health</p> <p>People with disability report an increase in healthy living</p> <p>People with disability report improved mental health</p>
Wellbeing	<p>People with disability report increased overall life satisfaction</p> <p>People with disability report increased resilience</p>



Priority area commitments and actions

2.1 Health

We will equip our hospitals and health services to provide people with disability appropriate support while receiving inpatient care. We will do this by:

- 2.1.1 Evaluating the Disability Liaison Officer program in health services to inform system improvements and workforce development opportunities.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a framework for health services to share their disability action plans with their community and report on outcomes annually.
- 2.1.3 Developing 'disability champion/lead' models in each health service partnership to promote/guide knowledge, professional development and capacity-building services.
- 2.1.4 Supporting health services to enhance referral pathways at key intake points to recognise and respond to the needs of people with disability.
- 2.1.5 Developing design guidelines and assessment tools to ensure autistic people can access inclusive hospital emergency departments that meet their needs.
- 2.1.6 Working within the Victorian Health Building Authority to implement the universal design policy and charter and build workforce capacity to deliver good practice. This includes a review of the **Australasian health facilities guidelines** to strengthen application of universal design principles in health facilities.

We will explore ways to ensure health care professionals, including hospital staff, GPs, paramedics and primary and community healthcare staff undertake professional development to better support people with disability.

We will do this by:

- 2.1.7 Looking for opportunities to develop e-learning and other training packages and courses that are co-designed with people with disability and which promote inclusion, foster a culture of respect and change attitudes towards people with disability.
- 2.1.8 Leveraging broader work around community attitude campaigns and Disability Liaison Officers in health services to include a focus on attitudes towards people with disability in health settings.
- 2.1.9 Working with relevant peak bodies to promote workforce development strategies.
- 2.1.10 Investigating opportunities for training to be included in pre-service qualifications.

We will work with people with disability to support better access to inclusive sexual and reproductive health services.

We will do this by:

- 2.1.11 Working to identify barriers to inclusive sexual and reproductive health and viral hepatitis health care for people with disability including LGBTIQ+ people with disability, recently arrived migrants with disability and other identified priority populations.
- 2.1.12 Identifying good practice in inclusive sexual and reproductive health services, including co-design and training delivery with people with disability, to ensure health professionals support people with disability to exercise their rights to make decisions for themselves.

2.2 Mental health

We will ensure the new mental health and wellbeing service system responds to the needs of people with disability.

We will work in partnership with people with disability to implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. We will do this by:

- 2.2.1 Convening a diverse communities working group to give expert advice and guidance on developing a diverse communities mental health and wellbeing framework and a blueprint for action.
- 2.2.2 Co-designing a diverse communities mental health and wellbeing framework that: delivers safe and inclusive mental health treatment, care and support; better integrates community organisations and mental health and wellbeing services; and promotes good mental health and wellbeing.
- 2.2.3 Building the capacity of specialist mental health services and the capability of the mental health workforce to engage and support people with disability and carers throughout the NDIS access, planning, plan implementation and review processes.

2.3 Housing

We will embed accessibility into the design of new homes.

We will do this by:

- 2.3.1 Collaborating with the building and construction industry and disability advocates to transition to the new minimum accessible housing standards that are planned to come into effect through the National Construction Code in 2022.

We will increase the supply of accessible social housing for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 2.3.2 Ensuring all new social housing dwellings delivered as part of the Big Housing Build will meet a minimum silver rating and incorporate key elements of the **Liveable Housing design guidelines** gold standards.
- 2.3.3 Ensuring five per cent of the social housing constructed by Homes Victoria have a high level of physical accessibility to meet the needs of Victorians with significant disability. Drop-off areas, paths, lifts and car parking will be included to make all homes easily accessible. Inside the home, kitchens, bathrooms and storage will also be accessible.

- 2.3.4 Ensuring that at least 50 per cent of remaining homes are designed as 'adaptable' in line with the **Apartment design guidelines for Victoria**.
- 2.3.5 Creating and designing outdoor spaces that provide access to all residents, including adequate spaces and functionality for people with disability. Accessible dwellings will also accommodate electric wheelchair and scooter access, storage and charging within the entry area.
- 2.3.6 Supporting the implementation of accessibility standards in social housing dwellings delivered under the Big Housing Build to ensure properties not constructed by Homes Victoria still prioritise good design and quality builds. We will do this through procurement and grant evaluation processes and by working with other jurisdictions and industry to support implementation of the standards.
- 2.3.7 Ensuring the needs of people with disability are recognised in the 10-year strategy for social and affordable housing that will be released in early 2022. This includes building on the commitments around specialist disability accommodation and universal design.
- 2.3.8 Aligning social housing approaches defined within **Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal person has a home – the Victorian Aboriginal housing and homelessness framework** that set the direction to increase housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, including Aboriginal people with disability.

We will support renters with disability. We will do this by:

- 2.3.9 Promoting compliance with new laws under the recently reviewed **Residential Tenancies Act 1997**, which state that:
- rental providers must not unreasonably refuse disability-related modifications under the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010** without good reason
 - renters no longer have to provide private information protected in the **Equal Opportunity Act** when applying for a rental property – this includes information about their disability, ethnicity or gender identity
 - rental agreement forms must include an information statement that educates applicants, rental providers and agents about unlawful discrimination.

As part of the Big Housing Build we will deliver 2,000 dwellings²⁰ as supported housing for people living with mental illness, including people with psychosocial disability, who need ongoing intensive treatment, care and support. We will do this by:

- 2.3.10 Allocating the \$38.51 million funded in the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget over four years to provide tailored wellbeing supports for people living with psychosocial disability housed through the 2,000 supported housing dwellings for people living with mental illness, with funding held in contingency subject to dwelling completion schedules.
- 2.3.11 Ensuring that supported homes for adults living with mental illness (including psychosocial disability) are:
- prioritised for adults living with mental illness who need ongoing intensive treatment, care and support, with area mental health and wellbeing services assisting with the selection process. This may include adults with psychosocial disability who have access to the NDIS
 - delivered in a range of housing configurations including standalone units, self-contained units with shared amenities and various forms of clustered independent units on a single-site property
 - appropriately located, provide for people living with mental illness and are co-designed by Homes Victoria, representatives appointed by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Division and people with lived experience of mental illness
 - accompanied by an appropriate level of integrated, multidisciplinary and individually tailored mental health and wellbeing treatment, care and support.

We will provide high-quality, safe and secure housing options for people requiring supported independent living considering the NDIS principles of choice and control. We will do this by:

- 2.3.12 Allocating \$30 million to upgrade and improve existing government-owned specialist disability accommodation (SDA) properties throughout Victoria.
- 2.3.13 Completing upgrades and improvements to 450 government-owned SDA properties.
- 2.3.14 Initiating an ambitious renewal, replacement and growth program to improve the range and quality of government-owned SDA in Victoria.

2.4 Supporting a high quality NDIS

We will work with people with disability to ensure the scheme is responsive, sustainable and delivers outcomes.

We will do this by:

- 2.4.1 Continuing to advocate to the Commonwealth Government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and by directly supporting opportunities for meaningful input from people with disability to any proposed changes to the NDIS.
- 2.4.2 Supporting the Victorian NDIS Community Advisory Council in its role to provide advice about the operation and implementation of the NDIS in Victoria.
- 2.4.3 Representing and advocating for the needs of Victorians with disability in all forums including the Disability Reform Ministers meetings and the Victorian Executive Steering Committee, as a joint funder of the NDIS.
- 2.4.4 Working with the NDIA on shared responsibility to support more coordinated and person-centred responses for people accessing support across and within service systems.
- 2.4.5 Pursuing research to identify barriers that result in some NDIS participants not making full use of their plan and to support disability policy through advanced research and analysis.
- 2.4.6 Continuing to work with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to ensure the NDIS continues to be based on lifetime insurance principles and provides equitable access for all eligible Victorians with disability.
- 2.4.7 Continuing to support groups of at-risk Victorians with disability who are ineligible for the NDIS.

We will work with the Commonwealth Government, the NDIA and the disability sector to build a disability workforce of the size and capability needed to meet the support needs of Victorians with disability, including NDIS participants. We will do this by:

- 2.4.8 Working across the Victorian Government to ensure that employment, jobs and skills initiatives result in positive outcomes for the disability workforce. This includes targeted recruitment campaigns to promote disability career opportunities, including encouraging more Aboriginal and multicultural workers into the disability sector.
- 2.4.9 Supporting skills and training authorities to design and deliver educational programs and resources tailored to the needs of disability workers and promote best practice and culturally responsive service delivery outcomes for people with disability.
- 2.4.10 Advocating to ensure NDIS pricing is adequate to provide disability employers and workers with the conditions needed to attract, train and retain a quality NDIS workforce, including in regional and rural areas.
- 2.4.11 Identifying service gaps and service system interface issues to inform strategies that will support development of a thriving disability workforce and market.

2.5 Children and families

We will strengthen the capacity of families with children with disability and parents with disability to improve the health, safety and development of their children through targeted and coordinated whole-of-family support. We will do this by:

- 2.5.1 Building the capacity of parents and families to help prevent children with disability support needs from requiring care outside of their family home. The types of support may include advocacy and advice, practical support and/or material aid, counselling, parent–child interaction and community connection and social inclusion. This includes providing culturally safe support to Aboriginal families and children.
- 2.5.2 Helping families to navigate the NDIS. We will help parents develop skills to advocate for NDIS plans that contain parenting and disability support that help maintain and improve family functioning and the sustainability of family-based care.

- 2.5.3 Building on the learnings from the funding of 34 specialist disability practitioner roles across 17 departmental areas to support vulnerable families with disability in order to build disability inclusion and NDIS capacity across the sector in future.
- 2.5.4 Building on the learnings from the Parents with Intellectual Disability program, which has provided flexible and tailored support to parents with intellectual disability with a child or children at risk of requiring care. The types of support have included intensive home-based and case management responses through a multidisciplinary team of dedicated family services, early parenting and disability practitioners. This includes providing culturally safe support to Aboriginal parents with intellectual disability.
- 2.5.6 Delivering disability practice advice teams, comprising two positions in each of four departmental operational divisions, who work with child protection practitioners to improve outcomes for children with disability who are subject to child protection involvement. This includes supporting assessments and decision making in relation to individual children in all phases of child protection involvement and capacity building across the workforce to ensure children receive optimal disability support through the NDIS. The teams also provide a strategic liaison role with the NDIA in relation to children with complex disability support needs involved with child protection.
- 2.5.7 Working with parents with disability and advocacy agencies to identify program and service improvements, including for those navigating the child protection system.
- 2.5.8 Bolstering the care services system to better support children with disability with a specialist approach that draws on improved partnerships with the NDIS.
- 2.5.9 Building the capacity of child protection practitioners in supporting families with children with disability with complex needs, including through a dedicated professional development package.

3

3. Fairness and safety

'I get a fair go'

Feeling safe is a basic human right. People with disability face disproportionate levels of violence and abuse, which is unacceptable. We must do more to ensure everyone is respected and can feel safe.

VDAC message



Outcomes under this pillar

Outcome	How we will know we've made progress
Respect	<p>People with disability experience less disability-related discrimination</p> <p>People with disability experience less unfair treatment</p>
Safety	<p>People with disability report increased community safety</p> <p>People with disability experience less interpersonal violence</p> <p>People with disability experience less bullying</p> <p>People with disability experience less abuse and neglect</p>



Priority area commitments and actions

3.1 Safety in emergencies

We will ensure people with disability and other highly exposed communities are supported to improve their capacity to prepare for climate-related events. We will do this by:

- 3.1.1 Preparing a needs assessment to understand additional support measures needed for at-risk communities across the built environment. We will do this in partnership with government agencies, social services and communities.
- 3.1.2 Improving accessible and culturally responsive information for at-risk communities. This will include enhancing government communication and outreach procedures to meet the needs of diverse communities.

We will work to ensure emergency preparation, response and recovery efforts are inclusive of people with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.1.3 Identifying pathways to increase the representation of people with disability, their families and experts in municipal, regional and state-level emergency management planning. We will do this by listening to people with disability, exploring professional development opportunities to broaden our knowledge and working with the Emergency Management Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Group to ensure better representation of people with disability across emergency management sector organisations.
- 3.1.4 Improving accessibility and representation of people with disability in public communications provided through Emergency Management Victoria. We will do this by working with people with disability to make communications more accessible and by ensuring representation is strengths-based and reflects the community. We will then share these practices with emergency management sector partners through forums including the Emergency Management Inclusion and Diversity Leadership Group.
- 3.1.5 Advocating for data sharing from the Commonwealth of aged care, Home and Community Care and NDIS client data.

3.2 Disability advocacy

We will work to ensure all Victorians can have equal rights and challenge discrimination through access to a thriving disability advocacy sector led by and for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.2.1 Working with the sector to finalise and implement a new outcomes framework for the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program. This framework will build a stronger evidence base and guide future program direction to maximise the impact and reach of the program.
- 3.2.2 Building the evidence base, knowledge and intersectional capacity of the Victorian disability advocacy sector to better support the needs of all people with disability.
- 3.2.3 Working with advocacy agencies to determine service gaps and identify improvements to ensure all eligible Victorians can access the NDIS.
- 3.2.4 Identifying opportunities through the new Victorian Disability Advocacy Program outcomes framework to highlight and strengthen the important work of self advocacy groups in speaking up for the rights of people with disability.
- 3.2.5 Working with advocacy agencies and self advocacy groups to explore ways to ensure more people with disability know about their rights and feel confident speaking up for themselves.
- 3.2.6 Strengthening peer support groups for people from diverse and underserved communities through the Disability Self Help Grants program.

3.3 Preventing abuse and neglect

We will develop the new Victorian social services regulations and standards to ensure all Victorians, including people with disability, have access to safer and more responsive social services. We will do this by:

- 3.3.1 Continuing to involve people with disability in designing the new Social Services Standards, which will set out compliance obligations under the new Social Services Regulator. The new scheme will replace existing regulatory obligations, including compliance with the Human Services Standards. This includes engaging with the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, disability advocacy agencies and disabled people's organisations.
- 3.3.2 Strengthening protections for people with disability accessing social services by developing options to improve social services complaints functions.

We will work with the NDIA and the Commonwealth Government to identify and address gaps in safeguards for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.3.3 Co-designing with people with disability an online accessible safeguards information hub about preventing violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability. This will include resources developed over the past four years with key stakeholders and be targeted towards people with disability, their families, carers and disability advocates.
- 3.3.4 Identifying opportunities to strengthen safeguards to better protect people with disability who are at risk of abuse or neglect. This includes undertaking the Adult Safeguarding Legislative Review to support the **National plan to respond to the abuse of older Australians (elder abuse) 2019–2023**.

We will build the workforce skills base and capacity to strengthen specialist behaviour support as a significant safeguard for people with disability who are subject to restrictive practices. We will do this by:

- 3.3.5 Strengthening the authorisation process for restrictive practices and ensuring Victoria continues to meet the national principles for restrictive practice authorisation.
- 3.3.6 Working with the Commonwealth, states and territories to improve the capacity and capability of behaviour support practitioners to ensure high-quality behaviour support plans are developed and implemented.

We will work across the Victorian Government to ensure consistent rights and protections for people living in disability supported accommodation. We will do this by:

- 3.3.7 Identifying and working to address gaps in legislative residential rights and protections for residents of, and people requiring, disability supported accommodation.
- 3.3.8 Working with the Commonwealth, states and territories towards nationally consistent residential rights and protections for people living in SDA across all jurisdictions.
- 3.3.9 Establishing a set of principles and functions to guide and modernise the role of community visitors within the context of the NDIS, as well as strengthening the role for state-based disability services through legislative reform.

3.4 Family and sexual violence

We will work in partnership with people with disability to prevent family and sexual violence through understanding and highlighting the drivers of family and sexual violence against adults and children with disability and, in particular, the high rates of gender-based violence and discrimination against women with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.4.1 Developing practice resources to support the disability sector and others in primary prevention of violence against adults and children with disability in the home, building on action research.
- 3.4.2 Strengthening the capability of the primary prevention, disability and social service workforces in disability-inclusive primary prevention activity through Women with Disabilities Victoria's Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program.

We will continue to implement the family and sexual violence reforms to strengthen access, inclusion and responsiveness of the family violence and sexual assault sectors. This will ensure all adults, young people and children with disability have equal access to services by breaking down systemic barriers in line with the **Everybody Matters: Inclusion and equity statement**. We will do this by:

- 3.4.3 Piloting the family violence and disability practice leader roles in The Orange Door areas between 2021 and 2023. Three initial pilots are underway, with additional practice leaders to be funded. These roles will build the capacity of family violence and sexual assault services to provide inclusive and culturally safe support to people with disability, including stronger linkages and referral pathways with disability services. Practice leader learnings will be documented and shared with specialist family violence services and sexual assault services statewide to inform systemic capacity building in delivering family violence and sexual assault services to improve outcomes for people with disability.
- 3.4.4 Ensuring all core and cluster refuge redevelopment specifications align with the standards referenced in the **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**.
- 3.4.5 Continuing to build professionals' understanding of different risk factors for people with disability experiencing or at risk of family violence as part of the rollout of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework.

- 3.4.6 Exploring the role of disability service providers in identifying and responding to family violence risk as part of implementing the MARAM framework.
- 3.4.7 Continuing to implement the Family Violence and Disability Crisis Response initiative.
- 3.4.8 Continuing to inform, shape and improve family violence and sexual assault policy and practice to include adults, children and young people with disability.

3.5 Justice system

We will work to make the criminal justice system, including corrections services, more accessible, safe and inclusive for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.5.1 Including people with disability in corrections policy and program design.
- 3.5.2 Driving integration across the corrections system (custodial and community) with other agencies including the Forensic Disability Program and the NDIA.
- 3.5.3 Embedding disability awareness and responsiveness in the corrections workforce.
- 3.5.4 Improving access to appropriate therapeutic options for women and young people with cognitive disability involved in the criminal justice system. This will include exploring dedicated forensic disability residential treatment and specialist accommodation services.
- 3.5.5 Fostering mechanisms to co-design and continually improve policies, programs and services with people with cognitive disability with lived experience of the criminal justice system through the Forensic Disability Program.
- 3.5.6 Working with people with disability and partner organisations to better understand the prevalence, characteristics, pathways and experiences of people with disability involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the criminal justice system through the Forensic Disability Program.
- 3.5.7 Convening the Disability Justice Operational Forum four times a year. The forum will provide a collaborative environment for Victorian and NDIS stakeholders working at the operational level to regularly meet with people with disability who have experience of the justice system to learn together, share resources and identify ways to consider the voice of lived experience in policy and service design.

We will work to ensure our justice systems are accessible, safe and inclusive for young people and children with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.5.8 Continuing the work of youth justice case managers and specialist disability advisors to ensure young people with disability have timely access to appropriate services and support including specialist disability services and other support services. This includes a position dedicated to supporting Aboriginal young people and children with disability.
- 3.5.9 Establishing the Disability Advice and Response Team (DART) within the Children's Court of Victoria. DART will provide on-the-spot advice to the court in relation to a young person's disability and the support they require, with the aim of diverting the young person out of the justice system at the earliest point. An Aboriginal DART worker will be available to the Koori Children's Court and at Marram-Ngala Ganbu (Koori Family Hearing Day).
- 3.5.10 Delivering the Just Voices project, which aims to strengthen the capability of frontline justice workforces, including within the adult and youth justice systems, to support people with disability by engaging people with lived experience of the justice system to co-design workforce development initiatives.

We will support people with cognitive disability to navigate the criminal justice process. We will do this by:

- 3.5.11 Providing the Intermediary Program, which assists adults with cognitive disability and children to communicate their evidence through the criminal justice process. The Intermediary Program helps police, lawyers and judges to plan their questioning so victims can understand, participate, feel more confident and provide better quality evidence. We will consult with people who use the program to undertake an impact evaluation and ensure their feedback informs future service development.
- 3.5.12 Developing accessible information for clients in the Forensic Disability Program in formats appropriate to their needs. This will support them to better understand their rights and responsibilities and to participate in decisions related to them including treatment and behaviour support plans.

We will work closely with Aboriginal communities to drive action and improve outcomes for Aboriginal people with disability interacting with the justice system. We will do this by:

- 3.5.13 Working with Aboriginal community partners to enhance responses to Aboriginal people with disability under the **Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement** through developing its next phase.
- 3.5.14 Embedding cultural safety in all aspects of the Forensic Disability Program's services and promoting opportunities for self-determination for Aboriginal residents. This will include access to support from the Aboriginal liaison officer and exploring options for Aboriginal community-controlled specialist forensic disability accommodation services for adults and young people.

We will increase police workforce capability to better serve people with disability. We will do this by:

- 3.5.15 Working in partnership with Scope Australia to provide police with the knowledge and skills to improve interactions with people with complex communication needs.
- 3.5.16 Updating and promoting the Voluntary Disclosure Process. This process allows people with disability to give police information about their support needs and about how police can best engage with them.
- 3.5.17 Establishing a network of police employees with knowledge and understanding of disability to champion good practice and services that respond to the needs of people with disability.
- 3.5.18 Working with people with disability to co-design initiatives under the Victoria Police disability action plan.
- 3.5.19 Working with victims services and the Office of the Public Advocate to increase policy awareness and use of intermediaries and independent third persons.

3.6 Right to expression of sexuality and gender identity

We will work with people with disability to support their right to fully express their sexuality and gender identity. We will do this by:

- 3.6.1 Working with people with disability, the disability sector, the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission to address barriers to expression of sexuality and gender identity in group homes and other settings.
- 3.6.2 Advocating to the Commonwealth and the NDIA and working with the disability sector to ensure people with disability can access sexual supports.

4

4. Opportunity and pride

'I contribute'

Everyone has the right to contribute, to have a voice and to engage in meaningful, paid employment. We want to see everyone have access to a range of employment opportunities and we want to see people promoted to leadership roles. For this to be possible, everyone needs access to mainstream education that is accessible, inclusive and linked to employment outcomes.

VDAC message



Outcomes under this pillar

Outcome	How we will know we've made progress
Education and skills	<p>Increased education achievement of students with disability</p> <p>Increased educational engagement of students with disability</p> <p>Increased wellbeing of students with disability</p> <p>Increased engagement of Victorian children with disability in state-funded kindergarten</p> <p>Increased wellbeing of Victorian children with disability at school entry</p>
Employment	<p>Increased employment</p> <p>Increased job quality</p> <p>Increased positive attitudes towards people with disability in the workplace</p> <p>Increased job flexibility and job design adjustment</p>
Economic independence	<p>Improved financial stability and economic independence</p>
Influence and recognition	<p>Increased involvement in civic activities</p> <p>Increased leadership opportunities</p>
Opportunity	<p>People with disability report increased opportunities to pursue and achieve aspirations</p>



Priority area commitments and actions

4.1 Education

We will continue to support funded kindergarten services to meaningfully include children with disability or developmental delay. We will do this by:

- 4.1.1 Continuing the ongoing provision of the Kindergarten Inclusion Support program including for funded three-year-old kindergarten enrolments.
- 4.1.2 Providing flexible opportunities through School Readiness Funding including professional learning options and capacity building for educators provided by allied health professionals such as psychologists and speech therapists.

We will continue to work with the sector to better understand the needs of children with disability or developmental delay in accessing and engaging in high-quality learning and to ensure support provided is as effective as possible. We will do this by:

- 4.1.3 Drawing on the experiences of families with young children with disability or developmental delay.
- 4.1.4 Exploring options to build the knowledge and capability of the educator workforce in Victorian funded kindergarten services in supporting learning for children with disability.
- 4.1.5 Further developing transition-to-school processes and support for children with disability.
- 4.1.6 Improving how we use data to understand and respond to factors affecting access and inclusion.

We will make inclusive education part of everyday practice in all schools and classrooms to improve the achievement, participation and wellbeing outcomes for students with disability. We will do this by:

- 4.1.7 Implementing the nearly \$1.6 billion disability inclusion reforms across Victorian government schools including introducing a tiered funding model to ensure equitable access to education for students with disability. This will include universal, school-level, formula-based and student-level funding.

- 4.1.8 Introducing the Disability Inclusion Profile, a new strengths-based process to determine a student's functional access needs and the adjustments required to enable access, participation and engagement at school. The Disability Inclusion Profile will determine personalised funding allocations for students with high support needs and provide trained facilitators to guide students, schools and families through the new approach.
- 4.1.9 Increasing access to specialist expertise, coaching, professional learning and support for government school staff, as well as Department of Education and Training regional and area-based staff. Initiatives include inclusion outreach coaching for mainstream schools, the Diverse Learners Hub and support for postgraduate study in inclusive education.
- 4.1.10 Continuing to support all Victorian government schools and participating Catholic and independent schools to implement and embed Respectful Relationships.

We will develop initiatives and resources to support schools to deliver career education and workplace learning activities that support students with disability to make informed pathway decisions. We will do this by:

- 4.1.11 Developing resources to support career education and career planning for students with disability.
- 4.1.12 Developing resources to support workplace learning for students with disability.
- 4.1.13 Piloting the Industry Engagement for Priority Cohorts initiative for students with disability in three areas. This initiative will provide opportunities for students with disability in mainstream and specialist schools to gain exposure to a wide variety of industries and career pathways. This will be done through a range of activities including mentoring by employers, workplace visits and bringing industry into the classroom.

We will ensure all learners have access to higher education, vocational education and training opportunities across Victoria including working to improve disability inclusion and support access and achievement for all learners. We will do this by:

- 4.1.14 Delivering a TAFE disability inclusion strategy to establish a high-level policy framework to give coherence to, and guide activity across, the TAFE network. The strategy will give visibility to disability issues and ensure they are considered and included in developing and implementing TAFE policy that affects people with disability.

- 4.1.15 Implementing recommendations from the 'TAFE as a disability inclusive workplace' and 'Improving access and achievement for students with disability' reviews, led by the TAFE Disability Inclusion Working Group.
- 4.1.16 Considering findings of the final report from the parliamentary inquiry into access to TAFE for learners with disability to further improve support available for TAFE students and to strengthen connections with Learn Locals for these students.
- 4.1.17 Continuing to offer and subsidise Auslan courses through the Skills First program.

4.2 Employment and economic participation

“It has been so hard for me to find a job, let alone a career. People with intellectual disabilities get overlooked and devalued. We need to create designated pathways, internships and more to create real jobs for everyone.” – VDAC member

We will improve employment outcomes for people with disability through Jobs Victoria services and leverage existing Victorian Government policies and programs to engage with government employers and intermediaries. We will do this by:

- 4.2.1 Supporting people looking for work, including people with disability, through Jobs Victoria services²¹ and creating jobs through the Jobs Victoria Fund.
- 4.2.2 Building work readiness and supporting participants to transition into meaningful employment through the Impact21 initiative, a job readiness program for adults with Down syndrome or intellectual disability.
- 4.2.3 Supporting an increase in direct government spend under the Social procurement framework to benefit people with disability by:
 - working with government purchasers to better support their understanding and awareness of the **Social procurement framework** and its objectives
 - providing advice and encouraging departments and agencies to include the 'Opportunities for Victorians with disability' objective as part of their approaches to market and in their social procurement strategies
 - supporting a clearer understanding of how to meet the **Social procurement framework's** 'Opportunities for Victorians with disability' objective by developing materials for industry

(suppliers) to promote and replicate examples of good practice, case studies and resources.

- 4.2.4 Exploring the capacity of the Microenterprise Program to deliver a dedicated stream for people with disability to support greater entrepreneurship and small business ownership.
- 4.2.5 Holding a series of roundtables or meetings with stakeholders from the social enterprise sector. These meetings will focus on employment opportunities and support for people with disability to identify resource and capability needs and to support their growth through implementing the new **Social enterprise strategy 2021–2025** and other opportunities including social procurement.
- 4.2.6 Providing appropriate supports and resources for businesses around employing people with disability and addressing employer attitudes or perceived barriers. We will leverage relationships with existing stakeholders that work directly with employers such as Jobbank and Social Traders.

We will continue to build a capable and diverse public sector that reflects the diversity of the Victorian community and benefits from the experience, skills and talents people with disability bring to the workplace. We will do this by:

- 4.2.7 Developing, promoting and sharing best practice employee life-cycle resources to support inclusive recruitment, employment and career progression of employees with disability.
- 4.2.8 Expanding opportunities for young people with disability in the Victorian public service through the Jobs Victoria Youth Employment Scheme.
- 4.2.9 Growing the Victorian Government graduate program disability pathway and scoping new pathways to employment for people with disability into the public sector.
- 4.2.10 Creating a mentoring program for public sector employees with disability.
- 4.2.11 Strengthening the collection of disability information and publishing progress towards the Victorian Government's disability employment target of 12 per cent by 2025.

We will support the rehabilitation and skills development of people with disability involved in the criminal justice system to enhance their economic, educational and social participation in the community. We will do this by:

- 4.2.12 Developing and expanding education and employment pathways for forensic disability clients targeted to their goals and aspirations through partnerships with vocational organisations.

4.3 Voice and leadership

“ ‘People with intellectual disability are often excluded from having a voice and say in important aspects of their life. As a young woman with intellectual disability, I want to make sure we are heard, we have a platform and we are listened to and included.’ – VDAC member

We will work across government and community to ensure people with disability are represented in leadership positions. We will do this by:

- 4.3.1 Building on earlier work to ensure people with disability, including those from diverse and underserved groups, are represented on Victorian public sector boards and committees.
- 4.3.2 Strengthening connections between the Victorian Disability Advisory Council and local government advisory committees to build coordinated efforts on emerging issues.
- 4.3.3 Developing more leaders with disability through an ongoing commitment to providing sponsorship for positions in leadership programs.

We will include young people, including young people with disability, in government decision making and increase opportunities for participation. We will do this by:

- 4.3.4 Working with the youth and community sectors to position the voices of diverse young people, including young people with disability, as key evidence in decision-making in policy, practice and governance across a range of tertiary and acute services.
- 4.3.5 Developing an evidence-based menu of youth engagement and youth-led action models including a focus on young people with disability. All government departments and local government will draw on this to enable effective youth participation and leadership in government decision making.
- 4.3.6 Establishing and expanding peer mentoring and support programs in rural and regional and outer suburban areas. This will focus on providing opportunities for young people from low-socioeconomic communities, Aboriginal young people, young people from refugee backgrounds, young people with disability, and young people with lived experience of unemployment, the care system and mental illness.

We will work with community to improve the engagement of people with disability in Victoria's democracy. We will do this by:

- 4.3.7 Forming a partnership with a training organisation to provide a leadership program for people with disability. The aim will be to support new and emerging leaders to promote active citizenship and participation in elections.
- 4.3.8 Supporting leadership graduates (from action 4.3.7) to apply for paid roles as Victorian Electoral Commission Democracy Ambassadors. The roles will provide education and share their knowledge about democracy, how to vote, understanding the value of voting and how democratic processes affect service delivery requirements for people with disability.
- 4.3.9 Delivering peer-led electoral education sessions across Victorian NDIS-approved services, specialist accommodation services and Australian disability enterprises.
- 4.3.10 Co-designing an electoral education resource with people with disability to inform people with disability about active citizenship, democracy and the support available when enrolling and voting.

4.4 Creative industries



'People without a disability often think that all people with a disability use a wheelchair. People with cognitive disabilities are often not included in public life; we need to see all different types of disability represented in media, TV, radio, etc.' – VDAC member

We will improve access to employment opportunities, promote participation and celebrate achievements in the creative industries for people with disability. We will do this by:

- 4.4.1 Improving access to employment opportunities and promoting access and participation in the creative industries for people with disability through the Creative State 25 strategy by:
 - involving people with disability in designing Creative Victoria programs
 - offering dedicated funding streams that allow for access requirements, assessed by peers with disability
 - piloting alternative models of support with peak disability arts organisations such as Arts Access Victoria

- improving access to cultural experiences through programs delivered by state-owned creative organisations such as audio-described, Auslan and autism-friendly cultural experiences and accessible digital content
 - continuing to support and explore inclusive approaches to recruitment and employment for people with disability
 - championing the content of people with disability through disability arts programs and events held by state-owned creative organisations
 - developing and applying universal design principles for use by creative facilities and for all future state cultural infrastructure developments to improve access to physical and digital spaces.
- 4.4.2 Reviewing the accessibility and inclusiveness of Creative Victoria’s business processes including communications, grant applications and assessments, events and recruitment.
- 4.4.3 Developing diversity and inclusion targets and standards for Creative Victoria programs and a measurement framework to monitor progress.
- 4.4.4 Encouraging and promoting cultural equity across government-funded creative organisations.

4.5 Pride and recognition

We will work with people with disability, including Aboriginal people and people from LGBTIQ+ and multicultural communities, to co-design disability pride and recognition approaches.

We will do this by:

- 4.5.1 Developing whole-of-government strategies to ensure awards and recognition initiatives are inclusive, accessible and actively target people with disability.
- 4.5.2 Engaging with people with disability to determine the best approach to fostering and promoting pride within the disability community including celebrating important days of recognition.
- 4.5.3 Working with people with disability to understand community preference and good practice in the language used to describe disability. We will promote people’s preferences across government and in the wider community as a tool to shift attitudes, foster inclusion and promote disability pride.
- 4.5.4 Acknowledging the contributions made by Aboriginal people with disability through formal recognition on the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll and women with disability through formal recognition on the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

How we will know the plan is working

The success of this plan will be measured by the impact it has on the lives of Victorians with disability. In the consultations for this plan, people told us that they want us to be more accountable and clearer in how we report on how the plan is going.

To make sure the plan is progressing and delivering improved outcomes for people, we will be tracking progress against the plan throughout its life. We will do this formally with a review and a report after the first two years. Departments will be required to report on how they are implementing the actions under each of the priority areas as well as the commitments from the six systemic reform areas as a part of their state disability plan reporting requirements.

We will add new actions at the end of the first two years to meet commitments. The report will include an update on progress against the outcomes framework indicators as the data becomes available. We will produce a final report on the plan at the start of 2026. We will table the midway review and the final report in parliament. The review of the Disability Act may mean there are some changes to the way inclusion planning and accountability for outcomes works over the life of this plan. This will form part of the midway refresh process.

Throughout the life of the plan we will talk to community about our progress on actions in the plan. State disability plan information, reports and updates will be published on the state disability plan website.

This midway report will be publicly available in a range of accessible formats.



To develop this report, we will be asking people to tell us how we are doing through online public forums. We will use this feedback to work out where we need to do more work and to hear from the community about new ideas and opportunities.

The Victorian Disability Advisory Council and other key stakeholders will work with the Office for Disability in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to help us monitor progress of the plan. The council will also provide advice on implementing actions from the plan.

We use the outcomes framework outlined in **Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020** to measure real-life improvements. We have refreshed the outcomes framework and added two new priority action areas: 'pride and recognition' and 'right to expression of sexuality and gender identity'. We will be adding new outcomes and indicators so we can measure progress against the outcomes framework. We will also review existing indicators to make sure they are still the right ones for measuring the plan's progress.

Aboriginal-defined outcomes, evidence and measures of success will be included in line with the **Korin Korin Balit Djak** shared measurement framework and system transformation reforms.

The outcomes reporting work will increasingly draw on the work of all Australian jurisdictions to develop a National Disability Data Asset.

Who is delivering the plan?

Every government department has helped to develop the state disability plan. This includes contributions from:

- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- Department of Health
- Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Transport
- Department of Treasury and Finance
- Creative Victoria
- Parks Victoria
- Respect Victoria
- Victoria Police
- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Victorian Public Sector Commission

The Office for Disability in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing will work with each of these departments and agencies to ensure all parts of government are held accountable for delivering on commitments and actions in the plan.

Thank you

We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their valued insights into developing this plan through attending workshops and online consultations and by contributing submissions.

We would like to particularly thank people with disability for sharing their personal experiences with us. We know that sharing your personal insights demanded your openness and courage. We are very grateful for your generosity. These stories go a long way to ensuring we make the important changes needed to transform our community.

We thank you all for your help and commitment.



Appendix 1: Full list of submissions and contributors

We received 60 submissions from disabled people's organisations, peak bodies, service providers and individuals. The following organisations submitted written responses to inform development of the plan:

- Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation
- Amaze
- AMES Australia
- Assistive Technology for All
- Association for Children with Disability
- Attitude Foundation
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Brotherhood of St Laurence
- Carers Victoria
- Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health
- Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
- Centre for Innovative Justice
- Changing Places Australia
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- City of Greater Bendigo
- City of Hume
- City of Moonee Valley
- City of Stonnington
- City of Whitehorse
- City of Whittlesea
- City of Yarra
- Dementia Australia
- Disability Resources Centre
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
- Domestic Violence Victoria
- Down Syndrome Victoria
- Gippsland Disability Advocacy
- Haven, Home, Safe
- Heart of Compassion Disability Services
- I CAN Network
- Injured Workers Support Network
- Jesuit Social Services
- Latrobe Health Advocate
- Limbs 4 Life
- Monash Health
- National Disability Services
- Noah's Ark Inc
- Office of the Public Advocate
- People with MS Victoria
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Scope
- Spiritual Health Association
- STAR Victoria
- Surf Coast Shire Council
- Transport Accident Commission
- Travellers Aid
- Uniting Vic.Tas
- Victoria ALIVE
- Victorian Advocacy League for People with Disability
- Victorian Children's Council
- Victorian Council of Social Service
- Victorian Disability Worker Commission
- Victorian Electoral Commission
- Victorian Healthcare Association
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Victorian Refugee Health Network
- Victorian Trades Hall
- Vision Australia
- Volunteering Victoria
- Women with Disabilities Victoria.

We held targeted meetings with the following organisations:

- Amaze
- Arts Access Victoria
- Association for Children with Disability
- Attitude Foundation
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
- Centre for Innovative Justice
- Council of the Aged
- Deaf Victoria
- Department of Social Services
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit
- Disability Services Commissioner
- Down Syndrome Victoria
- Drummond Street Services
- Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria (ECCV)
- First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)
- Fitzroy Legal Centre
- Migrant Resource Centre
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- National Disability Services
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU)
- STAR
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)
- Young People in Nursing Homes Alliance.

Engagement with people from diverse communities

We asked ECCV, FPDN, SARU, VALID and YDAS to undertake targeted engagement with people with disability from underserved groups. In total, 176 people took part in workshops and one-on-one interviews between April and June 2021.

FPDN hosted two workshops in Ballarat and Horsham with 53 people from Aboriginal communities. They also undertook another 11 individual interviews.

An independent consultant was engaged to consult with LGBTIQ+ communities. They held two consultation workshops with a total of 25 LGBTIQ+ Victorians with disability. Feedback from these workshops will also help inform the Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ strategy.

YDAS ran one online and one in-person workshop. Young people with disability co-designed and ran these workshops. Nine young people were selected to take part. They represented a range of disability types and ethnicities, gender identities and sexualities, and came from a number of places across Victoria.

ECCV held five workshops with 31 participants including people with disability and their families from regional and metropolitan areas.

VALID spoke with people with disability living in closed settings including disability residential services (group homes) and supported residential services. Seventeen people with disability and four family members took part.

We engaged SARU to consult with Victorian self advocacy groups for people with acquired brain injury, intellectual disability and complex communication needs. Workshops were attended by 30 self advocates representing the following groups:

- Brain Injury Matters
- Deafblind Victoria
- New Wave Leongatha
- New Wave Wonthaggi
- Positive Powerful Parents
- Power in Culture and Ethnicity
- Rainbow Rights
- Reinforce Self Advocacy
- United Brains
- Voices for Change.

Beyond representing the needs of people with disability, a number of these self advocacy groups specialise in representing the needs of parents with disability, people with disability in the justice system, LGBTIQ+ people with disability and people with disability from multicultural communities.

Glossary: Words and abbreviations used in this plan

Term/ abbreviation	What it means in the plan
Ableism	Describes discrimination based on a person's disability.
Aboriginal self-determination	The ability for Aboriginal people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not only individuals.
Accessibility	The extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite or public area.
Australia's disability strategy	A 10-year national plan for inclusion, providing an overarching approach for government to meet obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Co-design	The process of involving people with disability in designing, delivering and evaluating a policy, program or service.
Changing Places	Public toilets with full-sized change tables and hoists in major public spaces that meet the needs of people with disability.
Commonwealth	The Commonwealth Government of Australia.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Ratified in Australia in 2008, the United Nations Convention sets out obligations for equality and non-discrimination, accessibility and the right to live independently and be included in the community.
Data	Facts or information about a topic or group of people.
Disability Act	The <i>Disability Act 2006</i> (Vic) provides a whole-of-government and community response to the rights and needs of people with disability including a requirement to have four-year state disability plans.
Disability action plans	An important way that state government departments and local governments ensure they are delivering inclusive and accessible services.
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer.

Term/ abbreviation	What it means in the plan
National Agreement on Closing the Gap	Enables Aboriginal people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.
NDIA	The National Disability Insurance Agency, which is the government agency responsible for the NDIS.
NDIS	Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides access to disability supports for eligible people with disability.
Outcomes framework	A tool used to work out if actions are making a difference in people’s lives. We will use the outcomes framework to work out if the plan is making improvements to the lives of people with disability.
Person-first language	Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, ‘person with disability’. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person’s right to an identity beyond their disability.
Priority area	An area of the plan where we will be taking action to make improvements – for example, transport and education.
Representation	Making sure all people get an equal chance to be included or have their say.
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability	Seeks to understand the experiences of people with disability and recommend important safeguards. The commission is due to conclude in September 2023.
Safeguards	Actions taken to prevent abuse and neglect.
SDA	Specialist Disability Accommodation under the NDIS.

Term/ abbreviation	What it means in the plan
Systemic reform	<p>These are new areas of focus that will help the Victorian Government work differently to deliver inclusion and access and uphold rights. There are six areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-design with people with disability • Aboriginal self-determination • intersectional approaches • accessible communications and universal design • disability-confident and inclusive workforces • effective data and outcomes reporting.
TAFE	<p>Technical and Further Education institutions (TAFEs) provide training in technical and vocational subjects and are part of the Australian higher education and training system.</p>
Underserviced groups	<p>Groups of people who, because of systemic discrimination or disadvantage, often miss out on important services or having their voices heard.</p>
Universal design	<p>Making spaces, policies and programs that are inclusive, accessible and can be used independently by all people.</p>
Victorian Aboriginal affairs framework 2018– 2023	<p>The Victorian Government’s overarching framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians, organisations and the wider community to drive action and improve outcomes.</p>
Victorian Disability Advisory Council	<p>A group of people with lived experience of disability who provide advice to the Minister for Disability about how to make Victoria more inclusive and accessible.</p>
Vision	<p>In this plan the vision represents what we hope will happen if the actions do what they are meant to do.</p>
Wellbeing	<p>Wellbeing includes physical, mental and social health. Wellbeing can be described as how you feel about yourself and your life.</p>
Whole-of-government	<p>Term used to refer to activities or projects that every department of the Victorian Government will be part of.</p>

Endnotes

- 1 Adapted from United Nations 2006, **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, United Nations, New York.
- 2 Australian Federation of Disability Organisations 2021, **Social model of disability** <<https://www.afdo.org.au/social-model-of-disability/>>, Melbourne, viewed 17 September 2021.
- 3 People with Disability Australia 2018, **What is ableist language and what's the impact of using it?** <<https://pwd.org.au/resources/disability-info/language-guide/ableist-language/>>, Surry Hills, viewed 17 September 2021.
- 4 Partner agencies included the First Peoples Disability Network, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability, Self Advocacy Resource Unit and Youth Disability Advocacy Service.
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, **Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings**, Australian Government, Canberra.
- 6 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020, **People with disability Australia**, Australian Government, Canberra.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, **Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings**, Australian Government, Canberra.
- 9 LGBTIQ+ Health Australia 2021, **Snapshot of mental health and suicide prevention statistics for LGBTIQ+ people**, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, Pyrmont.
- 10 Australian Bureau of Statistics, **Ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings**.
- 11 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, **Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings**, Australian Government, Canberra.
- 12 Department of Health and Human Services 2019, **Absolutely everyone: annual report 2018**, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.
- 13 Department of Transport 2020, **Accessible public transport in Victoria – action plan 2020–2024**, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.
- 14 Department of Health and Human Services, **Absolutely everyone: annual report 2018**.
- 15 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability March 2021, **Research Report on the Nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability in Australia**, Australian Government, Canberra.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, **Disability, ageing and carers, Australia: summary of findings**, Australian Government, Canberra.

- 18 Department of Health and Human Services, **Absolutely everyone: annual report 2018**.
- 19 Degener T 2016, 'A human rights model of disability'. In: **Routledge handbook of disability law and human rights**, Routledge, London.
- 20 To be delivered as either dwellings or allocations.
- 21 Noting that people accessing Commonwealth Disability Employment Services (DES) cannot participate in Jobs Victoria services because DES does not allow dual servicing.

