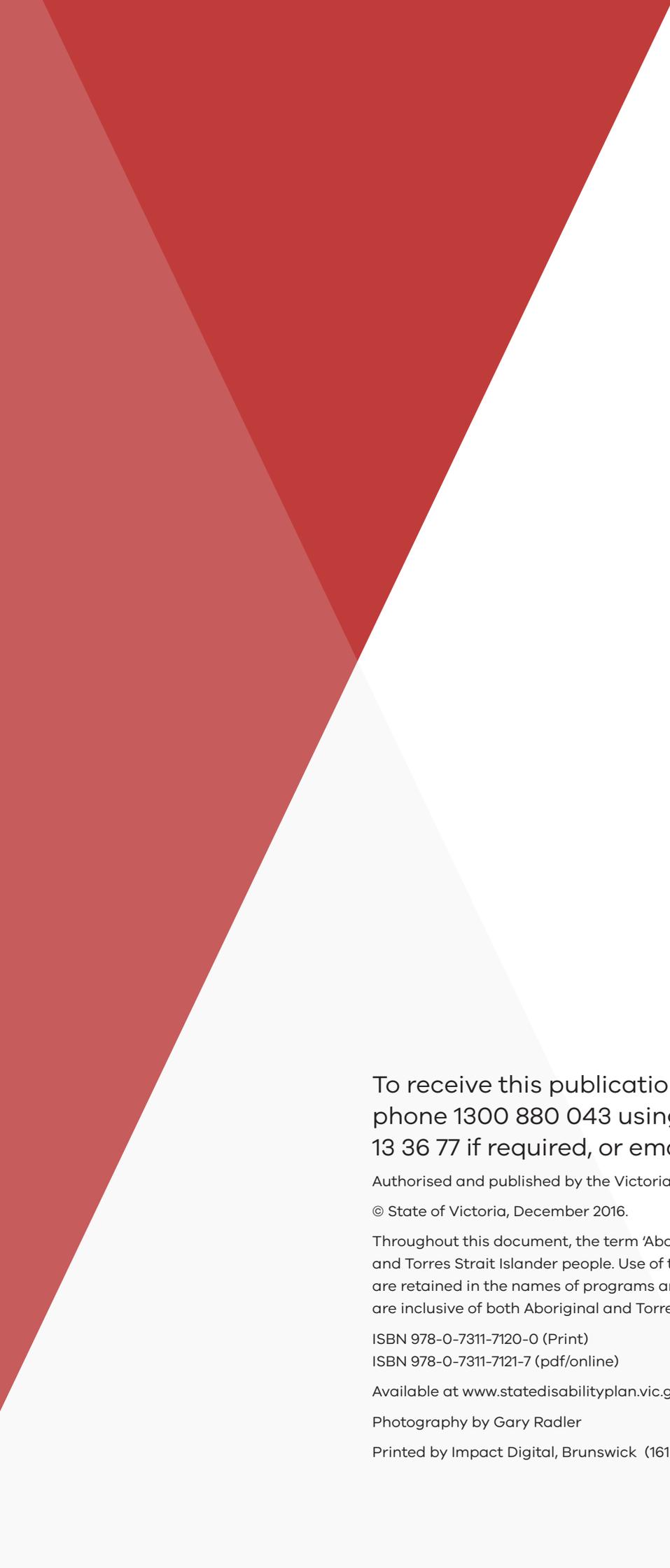




# ABSOLUTELY EVERYONE

State disability plan 2017–2020



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Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Use of the terms 'Koori', 'Koorie' and 'Indigenous' are retained in the names of programs and initiatives, and, unless noted otherwise, are inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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## Minister's foreword

This state disability plan continues a journey begun in 2002. The two previous state disability plans moved us closer to our destination, but we are not there yet. Many people with a disability have been putting up with negative attitudes and barriers as they go about living their lives. This needs to change.

We will keep working to see that Victoria has a place for everyone – a more inclusive society is how we improve our communities and grow our economy.

Every Victorian is entitled to equality – but regrettably – this is not always the case for the more than one million Victorians with a disability. The Andrews Labor Government is committed to turning this around.

The next four years is a great opportunity for Victoria as we transition to the NDIS – a step in the right direction that ensures people with a disability get greater choice and control. By the time the scheme is fully operational in 2019, Victorian investment in the NDIS will be \$2.5 billion a year. We need to ensure its sustainability and maximise its value to Victorians.

To maximise the benefits the NDIS will bring we must do more as a state – in the public and private sectors, our workplaces, schools and community to ensure that people with a disability can participate in everyday life.

Making mainstream systems more accessible and available to people with a disability through this plan is a key way of doing this. Just as important, this plan maps the ways we are going to continue supporting people with a disability.

The priorities and initial actions we have included in this plan are the first part of a longer process. The plan also strongly connects with action taking place through our other key social and economic policy agendas and strategies in areas such as education, mental health, child and family services, and family violence.

At the same time we are advancing our commitment to the rights and representation of people with a disability through significant investments in safeguards and protections, and a focus on disability advocacy.

Together, all these efforts will advance the inclusion of people with a disability. This plan will keep pushing change in the way we do business and in the broader community. I look forward to reporting to you on our progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Foley', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**Martin Foley**  
**Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing**



# Introduction

This is the Victorian Government's state disability plan for 2017–2020. It is our third state disability plan for the more than one million people with a disability living in Victoria.

We want Victoria to be a national leader in realising the social, economic and civic aspirations of people with a disability.

This plan is the way the government is taking a lead on promoting the inclusion of Victorians with a disability.

It is an opportunity to change the way we think about disability as we go about the major activities of government. We also know that working in partnership with business and communities is critical in changing attitudes and outcomes.

It tackles the barriers and exclusion that people with a disability have had to deal with daily as they go about living their life. The changes we want to see require sustained effort over the life of the plan.

In May 2016, we released a discussion paper and the feedback and submissions received were critical to developing this plan and its vision.

“**As an individual living with two different disabilities, just being included more in everyday life would be great. I have a physical disability so making friends and being treated like a normal person is rare. I always cherish the moments when someone does not only see what is on the outside.**

Consultation participant

The plan sets out how we are working towards people with a disability having full equality, inclusion and participation in society.

During consultation, we heard that citizenship, rights and equality are important across all parts of life. Your feedback also highlighted the fundamental importance of employment and making the most of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We describe the directions we are taking over the life of the plan and set out examples of our key priorities and actions. We are not including every action to be generated over the four years of the plan, as this is not an operational plan.

Recognising that Government has a leadership role, the plan outlines how the Victorian Government is driving outcomes. It also explains how monitoring and accountability will occur, and invites you to be involved in the future.

## Building on our achievements

Our efforts over the next four years will build on the concrete achievements of the 2013-2016 state disability plan, and on the environment for positive change created by a range of recent government initiatives.

A key element of the 2013-2016 plan was the shift to a more contemporary approach to disability support. At the same time as implementing the Barwon based trial of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, we have continued to make enhancements to our own disability services and prepare for transition to the full scheme.

In March 2016, we released the Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support resource – an important tool to support the education of children with a disability or developmental delay. This is just one example of our commitment to transforming learning through our Education State agenda. This agenda provides a strong platform for further effort to improve the participation and educational outcomes of students with disabilities.

Participation in cultural activities has also been a focus of recent efforts. The success of this work was recognised when Victoria's innovative Autism Friendly Museum project won the 2015 excellence award in Australia for large museums.

Significant recent effort has also been invested in disability awareness and training. For example, nearly 500 front line professionals in the justice system have participated in workshops to ensure the delivery of services that uphold the rights of people with a disability.

Accessing information, transport, buildings and places was an important goal of the 2013-2016 plan. One way this goal was achieved during 2015-16 was through our funding of four Changing Places facilities in a range of community and recreational sites.

We will expand this and many other accessibility initiatives over coming years to make the built and natural environment usable for as many people as possible.

Figure 1. State disability plan 2017–2020 overview

<b>Vision</b>	<b>An inclusive Victoria, which supports people with a disability to live satisfying everyday lives</b>			
<b>Principles</b>	Autonomy Opportunity Human Rights Diversity Accountability			
				
<b>Pillars</b>	<b>Inclusive communities</b>	<b>Health, housing and wellbeing</b>	<b>Fairness and safety</b>	<b>Contributing lives</b>
<b>Individual's experience</b>	I feel included	I live well	I get a fair go	I contribute
<b>Action areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing attitudes</li> <li>Universal design</li> <li>Public transport</li> <li>Inclusive schools</li> <li>Building requirements</li> <li>Community infrastructure</li> <li>Government communications</li> <li>Aboriginal self-determination</li> <li>Diverse communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health services</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Health promotion</li> <li>Dual disability</li> <li>Vulnerable children and families</li> <li>Parks access</li> <li>Sport and recreation</li> <li>NDIS transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family violence</li> <li>Disability advocacy</li> <li>Safeguards</li> <li>VCAT accessibility</li> <li>Victoria Police</li> <li>Corrections</li> <li>Assistance dogs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive education</li> <li>Employment</li> <li>Voice and leadership</li> <li>NDIS participation</li> <li>Creative industries</li> <li>Inclusive tourism</li> </ul>
<b>Key approaches</b>	Economic opportunity Representation Universal design Attitude change Rights and protections			



## Vision

**Our vision is an inclusive Victoria, which supports people with a disability to live satisfying everyday lives.**

We are working to ensure the rights of Victorians with a disability to live and participate in Victorian society on the same basis as everyone else – to be supported in their aspirations for an everyday life where they are judged by their efforts and achievements.

## Principles

There are five principles that underpin the plan:

- autonomy
- opportunity
- human-rights
- diversity
- accountability.

People use these terms with a range of meanings in different circumstances. The plan's principles are all equally important and interconnected. This means we need to consider all of the principles at the same time, not separately. We used your consultation feedback, Victorian laws and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to develop and understand these principles.

### Autonomy

Autonomy is about having the capacity and support to make your own decisions. It is the freedom to decide upon your own beliefs and relationships.

### Opportunity

Opportunity is a part of being treated fairly and means having the chance to take advantage of a situation.

### Human-rights

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act protects a range of human rights, respecting the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom.

### Diversity

Human rights belong to all people without discrimination and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community.

### Accountability

We have developed this plan as a framework for delivering concrete actions and real outcomes for people with a disability to hold us accountable.



# Human rights, disability and diversity

## Human rights

Every person has human rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 extends the international human rights framework, first established in 1948 by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Australian Government ratified the convention on behalf of our nation in 2008. The Victorian Government has obligations arising from the convention, and other human rights instruments.

The Victorian Government, along with all other states and territories, has signed up to the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, which sets out our key responsibilities in meeting these obligations.

This state disability plan is a key way in which we as a state government are implementing the strategy and the convention.

We also have responsibilities under our own legislation, including the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and the Disability Act 2006.

## Disability

There are more than one million people with a disability living in Victoria. They have a wide range of conditions and impairments. What they have in common is a shared experience of encountering negative attitudes and barriers to full participation in everyday activities.



**Disability, sexuality, cultural diversity, it's not 'special', or 'unusual' or 'not our problem'. It is the lived reality of a human being and therefore everybody's responsibility to ensure all are given an equal chance to experience their educational and social potential in a non-judgemental, inclusive, transparent, accountable and empowering way.**

Consultation participant

**This is a plan for everyone with a disability, whatever the cause or diagnostic label of an individual's disability.**

Some conditions and impairments are present from birth. Other people acquire or develop a disability during their lifetime from an accident, condition, illness or injury. For some people, support needs can increase over time. Others can experience fluctuating or episodic disability. This can particularly be the case for some people with mental illness. Some people are said to have a dual disability, such as intellectual disability and mental illness, giving rise to different support needs.

Government has a responsibility to ensure its public policy can address the needs of people with a disability to ensure they can participate in all walks of life.

The key to meeting this responsibility is recognising that people's experience of the restrictions on their participation is what is crucial, rather than the nature of their disability.

## Diversity

People with a disability have widely different life opportunities. They are not all the same, even if their disability might seem similar. People with a disability are diverse in the same ways as other people. They have many other parts to their identity, beyond their disability.

People are different due to their individual experiences, interests, and other reasons including sex, gender, sexuality and their background. Your background can mean being an Aboriginal person. It can also mean someone has come from a different culture or linguistic background to yours.

People with a disability can be treated unfairly, based on other parts of the person's identity, not just their disability. This discrimination can affect women and girls with a disability, Aboriginal people, people from diverse cultural backgrounds including those from refugee backgrounds and members of the LGBTI community.

We need to recognise that the disadvantage associated with disability is often compounded by other sources of discrimination. Recognising and responding to this multi-layered impact requires particular attention.

## Why we need this plan

### Our history

It is now more than 35 years since the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons. Legislative reform of the 1980s and since has seen the implementation of successful policies and legislation, including closing institutions, equal opportunity and human-rights laws and individualisation of services. These and other reforms, including our two previous state disability plans, have helped the Victorian community move closer towards inclusion.

We all have a responsibility to do more to ensure everyone with a disability has their human rights respected, whatever their level of impairment, age, background, gender, identity, sex or sexuality.

Widespread social and cultural barriers have a real and negative impact on people with a disability. This means that simple approaches based on equal access will not always work. We need to take additional steps to ensure people with a disability and their families, friends and carers live satisfying everyday lives.

## **Current situation**

### **Community participation**

As highlighted by the 2014 Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into Social Inclusion, people with a disability face barriers to participation in many areas of community life including sport and recreation, community groups and everyday social interaction.

Less than a third of people with a disability are actively involved in community groups.

Fewer than one in ten Victorians with a disability report having their social contact and community participation needs met.

Only two thirds of people with a disability participate in sport compared with nearly 80 per cent of the general population.

We need to see more people with a disability encouraged to be involved in decision-making processes across all areas of society. People with a disability are looking for mainstream opportunities to participate in decision making and take up leadership opportunities across all areas of public life.

### **Work and economic participation**

People with a disability want jobs. Employment outcomes for Australians with a disability were in the bottom third for OECD countries in 2012. Paid work is one part of economic participation that builds a sense of self-worth and independence. When people with a disability have higher incomes through work, they have more spending power as consumers and are more able to invest in housing and education. People with a disability also contribute as producers of goods and services.

### **Education**

The pathway to work and economic participation is through education and training. In Australia, less than 27 per cent of people with a disability achieve a bachelor degree or higher. This is one-third less than the rate of 40 per cent for people without a disability. We also know that only half of graduates with a disability gained employment after their training, compared with over three-quarters of graduates without a disability.

The education system has not always been inclusive, with integration of students with a disability not starting in mainstream schools until the 1980s. Low expectations have been part of the issue. We need to emphasise education for all from early childhood, through to schools and into adulthood, through vocational training and higher education.

### **Public transport**

Accessible public transport is critical for people with a disability. People with a disability need accessible public transport so they can easily travel to school, work and social events. Universal access to public transport services and facilities provides opportunities for people with a disability to make their contribution and lead a satisfying life. This means making public transport easy to use across all parts of the system including buses, trains, trams, taxis, and other commercial passenger vehicles.

Wheelchair accessible taxis continue to play an important role in the transport system. They provide point-to-point transport for people with a disability who are unable to access conventional public transport services.



### **Health and wellbeing**

We know we have more to do for the general health and wellbeing of people with a disability. The health status of people with a disability is worse than for the general population in ways that are not always directly related to an individual's disabilities.

Discrimination and a lack of inclusion have a negative effect on a person's health, both directly and indirectly. Constantly dealing with barriers, discrimination and negative attitudes brings about anxiety, stress and ill-health. Poverty, under-employment and fewer opportunities for social participation also reduce opportunities for maintaining good health.

People with a disability need to access different parts of the health-care system. We know that they experience a range of barriers in doing this and that the different parts of the system do not always work well together in responding to the complex needs of people with a disability.

### **Housing**

Housing is a basic human right and a foundation for independence and wellbeing. Barriers continue to limit the access of people with a disability to accessible, affordable, safe and sustainable housing. Many residential properties, including conventional houses and newer apartments, have highly limited access via steps and present other barriers such as narrow doors. This means that people with a mobility disability can only live in a restricted number of homes, and not visit many other people in their homes. Inadequate housing also directly impacts upon the economic participation of people with a disability, as well as restricting social inclusion.

People with a disability are also highly represented in public and social housing, partly because of limited options and discrimination in the private rental market. The way the disability and housing systems operate together can lead to a lack of control over living arrangements for people with a disability.

### **Justice**

Access to the justice system is essential to fairness, safety and social inclusion. There are significant challenges in the ability of various elements of this system to meet the needs of people with a disability. Some of the more serious concerns relate to the high numbers of people with a mental illness or acquired brain injury who are prisoners in Victoria.

The recent Access to Justice Review addressed the fact that people with a disability are at risk of legal problems. The review focussed on improving access to justice at all levels. Issues included the physical accessibility of buildings, workforce expertise, clarity of legal information, and the availability of legal assistance.

### **Violence and abuse**

People with a disability and their families and carers are subjected to higher levels of violence, abuse and neglect than others in the community. A series of inquiries including the 2015 Ombudsman's Inquiry into the Reporting and Investigation of Violence and Abuse, the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services have investigated this violence and abuse confronting people with a disability.

The Royal Commission found that the extent of violence against people with a disability is disturbing. This includes intimate partner violence, violence by carers and other workers within the home and service settings and by people living together in group homes. For example, evidence to the Commission indicated that women with a disability are 40 per cent more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

The Royal Commission noted that all services should support the person's independence, self-determination and dignity. This includes family violence services, the justice system and disability and health services.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence provided its report in March 2016. The government has accepted all of its 227 recommendations. We are working to prevent this violence through the Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change that connects with this plan.

We have responded to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services and accepted all recommendations in principle.

## The Victorian Government

The state disability plan commits the Victorian Government to a range of actions for achieving inclusion, in partnership with the community. This plan strengthens the whole-of-government approach of the previous plans and focuses on concrete measures. Every government department has contributed to the development of the state disability plan, and will be held accountable for implementing the plan. There are seven departments:

- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of Treasury and Finance.

Some of the other government agencies that are especially relevant to disability include:

- Disability Services Commissioner
- Office of the Public Advocate
- Transport Accident Commission
- Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- Victoria Police
- courts and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)
- WorkSafe.

Over time, departments and agencies will be implementing measures that are consistent with the state disability plan, through their own disability action plans.

## Local government

Councils make an important contribution to the inclusion of people with a disability in their local communities. We are working with local government to improve the autonomy, independence and social inclusion of Victorians with a disability. These expectations are also included in our Ministerial Statement on Local Government.

## Disability action plans

The Disability Act 2006 requires public authorities and local governments to prepare disability action plans. This mainly applies to government departments and agencies. These plans must reduce barriers to employment, promote community inclusion and bring about changes in attitudes and practices. As part of this plan, we will consider changing the current system of disability action plans so that public authorities make plans that are consistent with our state disability plan.



## Platforms for change

### Laws

In 2008, Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention has enhanced the shift towards the full inclusion of people with a disability. State and national legislation that supports human rights and non-discrimination is also relevant to this plan, including the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

### National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

Our government has endorsed the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, which gives a framework for implementing our obligations under the convention. It has a strong focus on making mainstream systems more responsive to people with a disability, their families and carers.

The state disability plan is one of our key methods for implementing the National Disability Strategy in Victoria.

## NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is about transforming lives of people with a disability for the better.

“It’s Thomas’ plan, it’s all about him but what we didn’t realise was that as his independence grew, so did ours. It’s new. It’s big. It’s scary because it’s unknown. It’s different to how things have been done in the past, but I truly believe it’s better for everyone.

Leanne, mother of NDIS participant

It is a once-in-a-generation reform. It is transforming the way disability services are funded and accessed so that people with a disability can receive the personalised and flexible support they need.

Its goal is to reshape how support and services are funded and accessed for around 460,000 Australians with a disability, including 105,000 participants here in Victoria. This includes an extra 27,000 Victorians that will get access to disability services.

Victoria’s disability workforce is made up of thousands of caring individuals who do great work every day but, the current disability service system has not always provided the individualised and flexible supports required by people with a disability.

A Productivity Commission report released in 2011 found that disability services across Australia were underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient. If you were receiving disability services you generally had limited flexibility in terms of the support you could receive and from whom.

In response to these findings, the scheme was created and is now being rolled out across Australia. When it is fully rolled out it will replace most disability services currently funded and delivered by the Victorian Government.

By the time the scheme is fully operational in 2019, Victoria’s investment will be \$2.5 billion a year.

The NDIS means big change for people with a disability as well as the entire disability sector as it is rolled out across Victoria over the next three years and the Government is doing its part to ensure its success.

People with a disability are depending on the NDIS and have fought for an approach that puts their needs at the centre. We want people with a disability to be able to live their life, their way and that is why the Victorian Government is doing what needs to be done.

### Wider opportunities

The NDIS has significantly raised the profile of disability as a human rights issue in the general community. Recent inquiries have also raised the profile of disability as a broader social issue of equality and fairness. Victoria's previous state disability plans have consolidated a whole-of-government approach to the inclusion of people with a disability. We are using this period of change and reform as an opportunity for harnessing momentum towards inclusion.

The vision of this plan will be vital as the Government introduces key reforms in a wide range of social and economic policy areas. Some of the other key government strategies and plans that support the state disability plan are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. The state disability plan and other government plans**



## Key approaches

We are using five key approaches in our plan to achieve our vision. These are the basis of practical action that can be applied across the many different areas of everyday life.

### 1. Universal design

To be able to drive change we need to be able to adopt a universal design approach. This involves making built environments, facilities, information, policies, products, programs and services that are accessible for all people and abilities from the beginning. Doing as much as possible at the start minimises the need for expensive adaptations. Universal design helps everyone.

“People do not live their lives compartmentalised. It is particularly important for all aspects of government that impact a person’s life to be held accountable.

Consultation participant

The plan will build on the progress we have been making as a community in adopting this approach. Universal design is one example of how introducing new policy approaches can lead to real and lasting improvements.

### 2. Attitude change

We need to shift the outmoded and negative attitudes towards disability held by some community members. We will tackle this issue through a combination of methods, including measures for raising awareness and understanding of inclusion. This also means making it clear that discrimination in all forms is unacceptable.

This approach is important across all parts of the community government, business and non-government agencies.

Promoting inclusion in mainstream systems includes addressing the information and education needs of decision-makers and workers so that they can practise and promote inclusion.

### **3. Economic opportunity**

We will work to increase employment and participation in the economy for people with a disability. Doing this provides a range of important economic and social benefits for individuals and Victoria.

When people with a disability have the benefit of good education and training and are contributing to the economy as consumers, employers, entrepreneurs, and workers; they are also challenging outmoded attitudes.

The opportunities for inclusion and benefits coming from employment and contributing to the economy make it a vitally important approach for driving change.

### **4. Representation**

Increasing the visibility, voice and representation of people with a disability will also help to change attitudes and drive change. The Victorian Disability Advisory Council is a key body that provides government with ongoing advice. We want to engage with more people with a disability and equip them with the skills that ensures we have a greater presence of people with a disability in leadership positions and on policy-making boards and committees at all levels.

### **5. Rights and protections**

We have an advanced system of rights promotion and protection in Victoria. Safeguards and quality assurance of standards are rights-protection measures. We accept that we have an enduring responsibility for ensuring necessary safeguards for people with a disability in all areas of daily life.

Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against Victorians is an issue that we must address through every means at our disposal. We have a commitment to disability advocacy and self-advocacy organisations as important rights promotion agencies, as well as providing voice and representation.

Our approach includes taking a lead role in influencing the detailed design of the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, so that it contains appropriate safeguards for participants. Victoria's growing human-rights and social inclusion culture and zero tolerance approach helps us to develop workable and effective measures. We are determined to remain a leader in this area.

## The four pillars



The four pillars provide a way of thinking about what is important in a person's life.

The pillars are:

- Inclusive communities
- Health, housing and wellbeing
- Fairness and safety
- Contributing lives.

Everyone has a role in fostering an inclusive Victoria. The pillars highlight those points where organisations, communities, places and governments come together in the life of an individual. They give us our focus for developing actions where we have a role.

“I think the most important way that the government can assist Victorians is to make it so everyday life is just as easy for someone with a disability as it is for a normal person.

Consultation participant

## Outcomes framework

We are using an outcomes framework to ensure we make real progress in achieving our vision. We will report progress on the actions we are taking using the outcomes framework, which is shown in Figure 3.

We have developed several outcomes for each pillar. Indicators and measures for each of these outcomes will be developed in 2017.

**Figure 3. Outcomes framework**

Vision	Domains	Outcomes
An inclusive Victoria, which supports people with a disability to live satisfying everyday lives	Inclusive communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Connection</b> – people with a disability are active participants in communities aligned with their interests and identities</li> <li>• <b>Inclusion</b> – Victoria’s communities and places are welcoming and inclusive for people with a disability</li> <li>• <b>Accessibility</b> – the built and natural environment is accessible to Victorians with a disability</li> <li>• <b>Mobility</b> – people with a disability are able to move around and get to the places they want to go</li> </ul>
	Health, housing and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing</b> – people with a disability have housing choices that are flexible, suitable, affordable and accessible</li> <li>• <b>Health</b> – people with a disability achieve their optimal mental and physical health</li> <li>• <b>Wellbeing</b> – people with a disability experience a high level of wellbeing in all aspects of their lives</li> </ul>
	Fairness and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Respect</b> – people with a disability are as recognised and respected as any other citizen</li> <li>• <b>Safety</b> – people with a disability live in safety and feel secure and protected</li> <li>• <b>Opportunity</b> – people with a disability have equal opportunities to identify, pursue and achieve their aspirations</li> </ul>
	Contributing lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Education and skills</b> – people with a disability actively engage and succeed in education and learning</li> <li>• <b>Employment</b> – people with a disability are engaged in flexible and sustainable employment and have opportunities to develop and succeed</li> <li>• <b>Economic independence</b> – people with a disability generate income through employment, business ownership and entrepreneurship and participate freely as consumers</li> <li>• <b>Influence</b> – people with a disability hold positions of leadership and responsibility across private, public and community sectors</li> </ul>

# Four pillars: Priorities and actions

## Inclusive communities

### 'I feel included'

The experience of inclusion is central to social interaction, sharing information and having everyday experiences. For this experience to be possible, accessible public infrastructure must be in place to allow people to go beyond their home and local neighbourhood. Roads, public transport, information and the internet are gateways to our broader communities and places where everyone lives and expresses their identity.



I've got lots of friends and know lots of people in my area.

Consultation participant

## Directions and actions

Every Victorian deserves access to high quality services and opportunities wherever they live and whatever their personal circumstances. We are working towards physical and social infrastructure coming together in good design for communities. This will occur through our regional and suburban development agendas.

Our investments in regional facilities, services and infrastructure will deliver a range of benefits to people with a disability in regional Victoria. They will improve liveability, accessibility and amenity. This will happen through better services, transport, communications, and internet connections.

## Supportive communities

People with a disability are entitled to be treated with respect. All the actions of this plan have a role in promoting positive attitudes towards disability. We are also taking considered action to challenge discriminatory attitudes.

### Key priority 1: Changing attitudes

Negative attitudes about disability impact greatly on the ability of Victorians with a disability to work, study, access services and engage with their community. Raising awareness of what people with a disability can achieve and simple steps that we can all take to make Victoria more inclusive, is key to shifting attitudes.

The government will work with people with a disability and seek expert advice to raise community awareness to achieve maximum impact in important areas like employment and community inclusion.



### Accessible places

We will ensure that all government buildings, public infrastructure and other facilities used every day by Victorians are accessible.

### Key priority 2: Universal design

We are committed to implementing the universal design approach by making the built environment, government, programs and policies usable for as many people as possible. In order to do this we will:

- coordinate a whole-of-government policy incorporating universal design principles into areas such as infrastructure and public transport
- apply universal design approaches across a range of infrastructure, programs, projects, and our suburban and Regional Development Victoria work. This includes:
  - public transport infrastructure projects for our road network, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities
  - commitment to building a number of new Changing Places facilities
  - inclusive schools fund
  - sport and recreation programs.

Thousands of Victorians rely on public transport to get to where they need to go and participate in the community on a daily basis. Ensuring our public transport system is accessible to Victorians with a disability no matter where they live in our state is vital.

### Key priority 3: Public transport

We will improve access to public transport options in rural and regional Victoria through the Regional Network Development Plan. We will:

- upgrade bus and coach stops with disability access
- implement the regional rail station accessibility program
- engage with the Public Transport Access Committee on accessibility issues in regional Victoria.

The experience that people have when using our public transport system is equally important, therefore we are going to use new contract arrangements to improve disability inclusion and awareness in customer service by requiring operators to:

- participate in try-before-you-ride events to improve the way they interact with customers who have a disability
- prepare and maintain an accessibility implementation plan detailing how they will make Victoria's public transport easier to use.

We are also going to investigate and trial new technologies in the public transport environment that enhance the journey for people with a disability and support the creation of new digital products by making real-time public transport datasets available to developers.

Many Victorians with a disability also rely on point-to-point transport services to get around. We are going to improve these transport services to people with a disability as part of major reforms to the commercial passenger vehicle industry by:

- increasing incentives for wheelchair accessible taxi operators and drivers
- appointing a commissioner with a dedicated focus on improving accessible point-to-point services
- leading a comprehensive review of accessible point-to-point transport that will focus on supply and viability of wheelchair accessible services, alternative models of service provision, and how the Multi Purpose Taxi Program can be expanded beyond taxis and open to all commercial passenger vehicles.

Getting the design right is an important consideration for all parts of our public transport network. To do this we will continue building our universal design approach by:

- making it a core consideration in the early stages of project planning and throughout project delivery
- embedding it in Public Transport Victoria's detailed design policies and technical requirements for transport infrastructure.

We will work with other parts of government to identify the best locations to install Changing Places facilities, such as existing or new key transport interchanges and at shared community locations close to public transport.

From 2017 all newly built government schools and schools undertaking significant building projects will need to accommodate the needs of students with a disability.

#### Key priority 4: Inclusive schools

We will accommodate the needs of students with a disability through:

- \$20 million in funding over the next four years for building improvements to schools to make it easier for children with a disability to participate in all aspects of school life
- the updated Building Quality Standards Handbook, which will be used by architects and builders working on all government school building projects as a foundation of inclusive design to ensure that a high standard of physical accessibility is built into our schools
- the new-schools public-private-partnership project will see 15 high-priority new government schools delivered across a number of Victoria's fastest growing metropolitan and regional communities. Eight of these schools will be opening in 2017 with the remainder opening in 2018.

#### Action 1: Building requirements

Well-designed housing creates and maintains socially inclusive communities and gives people with a disability more choices for where to live. We will:

- advocate to strengthen the National Construction Code, through the Building Ministers' Forum and the Australian Building Codes Board
- improve the design of new apartments to address the access needs of people with limited mobility. The Government will develop standards or guidelines for the design of new apartments
- implement our election commitment to improve domestic building regulations for older people and people living with a disability. This considers the need for minimum door widths, slip resistant tiles, low or no-step entries and ground floor amenities.

## **Action 2: Community infrastructure**

Across Melbourne, we are developing good design for communities, where physical and social infrastructure come together. People with a disability require access to the infrastructure and services they need, wherever they live. We will undertake to ensure:

- metropolitan partnerships consider issues related to access for people with a disability in identifying regional priorities for community infrastructure
- 5 Year Jobs, Services and Infrastructure Plans for Melbourne's regions reflect any major government investment to support people with a disability to access infrastructure and services they need
- where the Delivery Partnerships Broker Program facilitates delivery of community infrastructure initiatives between state and local governments, that planning processes engage people with a disability and incorporate universal design principles.

## **Communications**

Access to the internet is an important gateway to inclusion. We are increasingly communicating government information via the internet and observe the minimum requirements for web accessibility specified by the National Disability Strategy. We accept that this standard may no longer be sufficient, and will explore its further development.

We are also examining our approach to accessibility for all government communications.

## **Action 3: Government communications**

In consultation with people with a disability, we will develop an action plan to improve the accessibility of government communications. The plan will identify high-priority improvements that can be made quickly and longer-term reforms to be introduced over the life of the state disability plan.

### **Responding to diverse communities**

We will encourage and facilitate the active participation of people with a disability in the diverse communities with which they identify.

Our plan recognises and supports government's commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and the importance of partnering with the Aboriginal community to support a service system that is responsive to the needs of the Aboriginal community and culturally safe.

We will support specialist disability service providers to become more LGBTI inclusive. We will work with the legal and disability advocacy sectors to help them provide assistance and information.

Access to timely, coordinated and culturally responsive services is also a critical issue for the successful settlement of people with a disability from refugee backgrounds. We are committed to improving their long-term health and wellbeing outcomes. We are providing services that will help restore wellbeing, empower communities, and treat people who have survived torture, trauma and human rights abuses with dignity, compassion and respect.

We are committed to improving the wellbeing, independence and social inclusion of all veterans including veterans with a disability, and to supporting ex-service organisations that provide invaluable support to the veterans community.

### **Action 4: Aboriginal self-determination**

As part of our commitment to Aboriginal health and wellbeing, we will undertake a range of activities including:

- working with the NDIA to implement strategies to support Victorian Aboriginal communities during transition by fostering and supporting self-determined, place-based Aboriginal disability coordination and planning networks. This will draw on the lessons of existing Aboriginal-led disability support initiatives such as cultural support groups, yarning circles and respite groups
- Exploring options for expanding the Balit Narrum model. This is a culturally safe Aboriginal disability network in northeast Melbourne that is delivering good results
- Expanding the Balit Narrum model will enable a greater focus on:
  - strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal communities to navigate disability specific and generic service systems
  - providing culturally appropriate information for the Aboriginal community
  - building cultural awareness within the Victorian disability sector.

We will identify ways to support and build the disability service capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This will strengthen governance, workforce and service delivery in supporting Aboriginal people with a disability.

### Action 5: LGBTI people

As part of our equality agenda, we will undertake a range of initiatives that promote accessibility and inclusion for LGBTI people with a disability. To achieve this goal, we will:

- in collaboration with LGBTI people with a disability, ensure that the Pride Centre provides an accessible and inclusive space where LGBTI people with a disability can express their sexualities and celebrate their identities
- through the Virtual Pride Centre, consider ways to create an online space for LGBTI people with a disability to socialise, share experiences and provide mutual support
- support specialist disability service providers to become more LGBTI inclusive by developing training and resources for staff
- encourage and facilitate the active participation of LGBTI people with a disability in relevant forums and community events.

### Action 6: Refugees

We are working with partners to better respond to the needs of people with a disability from refugee backgrounds. We will:

- work with key sector partners, such as the Victorian Refugee Health Network and AMES Australia, to identify and respond to issues for people with a disability from refugee backgrounds, including those seeking asylum in Victoria
- support the Victorian Refugee Health Network to complete a needs assessment of the responsiveness of the disability and refugee health service system in Northern Melbourne.



After an old friend bought me tickets to attend the State of Origin game at the MCG in 2015, Queensland vs New South Wales, I was over the moon with excitement. But then my excitement soon turned to anxiety because last time I saw this friend I was not disabled and did not need a wheelchair to get around. We got the tickets changed, but then we had to park on a section of grass on a hill. I had to put my arms over two guys' shoulders to be carried to one of the paths, because my wheelchair wheels were sinking into the soft ground. Once in the stadium, the facilities are acceptable, but the experience was one of anxiety!

Neale, consultation feedback

### **Action 7: Veterans**

With the Victorian Veterans Council, we provide funding grants to ex-service organisations, local councils and community groups to support commemorative events and to protect and restore war heritage, including improving access. As part of these grants programs, we will provide further information about disability access, regulation and best practice to funded bodies and ex-service organisations.

### **Action 8: NDIS and diversity**

We need to maximise the opportunity that the NDIS gives us to enhance the support provided to diverse communities and groups. Meeting the needs of participants from diverse communities and groups raises a range of issues. These include service delivery, workforce, provider and participant readiness and communication and engagement.

Through agreed operational planning with the NDIA, we are:

- working with the NDIA to implement strategies to support regional, rural and remote communities, Aboriginal communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities through the transition
- working with local communities to identify any barriers and develop solutions for people to access the NDIS as part of their NDIS readiness planning.



## Health, housing and wellbeing

### 'I live well'

Having a stable home is key to looking after your health and wellbeing. We know there need to be significant improvements in housing affordability and access. We will continue to advocate for this at a national level and have made a commitment to improve domestic building requirements to increase opportunities for people with a disability.

We have an obligation to provide supports that assist people to have an adequate standard of living and access to services and amenities for everyday needs. To assist with these kinds of issues we provide access to concessions and financial counselling and other kinds of financial support to low-income Victorians to assist with council rates, and water and energy bills.

We also need to make sure that our healthcare, maternal, children, family and youth and aged care services meet the needs of people with a disability.

### Directions and actions

Across Government there is significant work underway to ensure we provide greater access to support. These include the support and safety hubs announced in Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change, our responses to vulnerable children and families under the Roadmap for Reform, and reforms to community-based mental health care.

Through all of these reforms, we are moving towards new integrated community service models. This includes designing the social services delivery system in Victoria so that it is built for diversity and can respond to the needs of children and families affected by disability.

We are developing tools and resources for responding to the needs and preferences of diverse communities, including people with a disability. We are building these into the design of new integrated community service models. We will develop these using co-design approaches involving people with a disability.

The Home and Community Care Program for Younger People will continue for people under 65 years of age, and Aboriginal people under 50, who are not eligible for the NDIS. This program provides a range of basic community support services to enable people to live independently. Existing service providers funded under the program for younger people will continue to receive funding to provide these services over the three-year transition period, to June 2019. This is the same timeframe as the implementation of the full NDIS.

We are continuing to work with health services and Aged Care Assessment Services to ensure people are not admitted into residential care facilities, when there are other more age-appropriate options available. Our aim is to ensure that eligible people under 65 years of age living in residential aged care are able to access disability supports to meet their disability related needs.



We are also working with the Commonwealth to identify people under the age of 65 years living in residential aged care, as the area in which they are living becomes part of the NDIS. They can then be supported to establish their eligibility to transition to the NDIS.

The continuing community care response for people who are not eligible for the NDIS will be considered in the design of new integrated community service models. Our aim here is to ensure that people having a range of needs receive coordinated services. This will be important for people with a disability wishing to access some disability-related supports, while also taking into account their opportunities to participate in the wider community.

“ I live with my parents and would like to domicile in my own place, but rent is expensive and the public housing list is extensive and I want to be near hospitals and transport. I have had a good education; but, at the moment, on the dosage I am on, thinking can be extremely difficult and I just feel tired. I am now waiting for the next anti-psychotic that will help me and not have too many side effects. We are going through some financial problems at home, which will take seven years to resolve. Thankfully, we will still have the house.

Consultation participant

## **Older people**

We recognise the needs of people with a disability change as they age and how disability for older people in general can lead to complex care needs.

We will use our funding support for the sector to include universal design resources or requirements when funding agencies or initiatives, such as age-friendly communities.

We will promote and encourage businesses to adopt age-friendly principles through our work with older Victorians and the Seniors Card program. We will develop resources to support businesses to develop products, services and environments that consider the needs of all Victorians.

We remain committed to providing public-sector residential aged care. This can be an option when older people, including those with a disability, are no longer able to live independently in their home. It may provide a suitable environment for care, particularly for those with a high level of persistent cognitive, emotional or behavioural disturbance.

People supported by public-sector residential aged care will include people who choose to transition from being NDIS participants after turning 65 (50 for Aboriginal people) and some who remain NDIS participants through continuity of care arrangements.

## **Health**

We will adapt health promotion and prevention activities where necessary to ensure they communicate effectively with people with a disability. These activities also need to respond to those factors that can put people with a disability at greater risk of ill health. This requires new partnerships between public health agencies and disability services.

Our hospitals, community health services and general practices (including the important new role of Primary Health Networks) will be encouraged and supported to focus on achieving better health outcomes for Victorians with a disability. All health services will be expected to deliver high quality care that is accessible, welcoming, safe and effective to Victorians with a disability, wherever they are treated. We will work with Primary Health Networks so that general practices also achieve better health outcomes for Victorians with a disability.

The recent Review of Hospital Safety and Quality Assurance in Victoria has particular relevance to these issues. As this review is implemented over coming years, we will work to embed a key message for the quality care of people with a disability. This is that care must be holistic, and not narrowly focused on the person's disability. Care must use necessary aids (such as Auslan) to overcome communication difficulties. Care must also seek the active participation of the patient, regardless of their disability.

## Key priority 5: Health services

To ensure the best health outcomes for Victorians with a disability we will:

- take a sector wide approach to reinvigorating disability action plans in every public health and community health service. The plans will have a specific focus on:
  - holistic care
  - facilitated pathways through care
  - preventing discrimination and abuse of patients with a disability.
- support new health advocacy efforts involving partnerships between disability agencies and health services to better identify and advise on systemic issues faced by Victorians with a disability in using universal public health services
- improve the provision of Auslan interpreters in Victorian hospitals and community health services and improve health outcomes for Deaf and hard of hearing Victorians. This draws on the Signs for Health web based resource and the whole of government review of language services.

Implementation of plans will be supported by stronger sector partnerships and departmental guidance. Public accountability for plans will be through the annual service quality accounts.

## Action 9: Health promotion

We will increase access to and adoption of primary and secondary prevention activities to improve health in a range of areas such as nutrition, physical activity, oral health, diabetes and cancer screening. These are delivered through partnerships between funded key prevention agencies and disability services providers. Specific priorities will include:

- a strengthened focus on promoting good oral health for people with intellectual, cognitive or psychiatric disabilities in specialist disability services and supported residential services.
- improving access to cancer screening by working with the disability workforce. This approach will promote and advocate screening for their clients with a disability and build trust and confidence in screening programs for people with a disability.

We are also going to improve reproductive and sexual health knowledge, understanding, skills and outcomes for Victorians with an intellectual disability. We will do this through services in community, clinical and school settings, training of relevant professionals, and widening proactive educational approaches.

## Housing

We are working towards having an appropriate volume of all new Victorian public and community housing reflecting the demand for accessible and adaptable houses. The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) has considerable experience and expertise in delivering highly accessible housing for people with a disability. We will explore ways of how we might apply this expertise more broadly.

### Key priority 6: Housing

We will work to increase the accessibility and affordability of housing for people with a disability. Initiatives include:

- private rental: using private rental brokerage as a strategy for assisting vulnerable Victorians to access suitable long-term accommodation in the private rental sector. This brokerage support can be tailored to different needs and linked to relevant support services so individuals with a disability and their families can sustain independent living.
- community housing: increase the supply of community housing and work with the sector to ensure that people with a disability are prioritised for suitable housing through the new Victorian Housing Register
- supply: as new public housing is progressively built, we will work towards better meeting the accessibility and adaptability needs of people with a disability. This also applies to the housing needs of women affected by family violence.



## **Mental health**

We have provided our directions regarding mental health in Victoria's 10-year mental health plan, which we released in November 2015. This plan is a long-term commitment to improve the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians.

The plan commits us to improving service quality, safety, accessibility and integration with other health and human services including disability support. It acknowledges the critical importance of our skilled mental health workforce and their delivery of recovery-oriented, trauma-informed and family-inclusive services.

### **Action 10: Dual disability**

We are improving accessibility to clinical mental health assessment, treatment and support for people with an intellectual disability or autism. We are doing this through a set of initiatives including the following:

- we will establish and evaluate two teams in Melbourne. The teams will develop and implement community service responses for clients with high support needs from having an intellectual disability and a diagnosed or suspected mental illness
- a new Clinical Child Specialist Initiative will improve the engagement, assessment and treatment of children aged 0 to 12 years with mental disorders, including those with highly aggressive behaviours and dual disability
- we will deliver assessment, diagnosis and early intervention for children and young people with complex presentations of autism spectrum disorder. We will complement this with funding to deliver autism-specific training in assessment, diagnosis and early intervention. This will focus on child and adolescent mental-health staff working with children 0-12, youth justice and adult mental health service staff.



## Families and children

We have begun a process of reforming services for families and children. The Roadmap for Reform outlines our vision and process for making it easier for people affected by family violence to find help and gain access to a greater range of services. The Roadmap aligns with our vision of inclusion and approach in this plan.

We will also continue to improve universal and early intervention services in the critical early years, for example maternal and child health services, to ensure that children and families affected by disability fully benefit from these supports. This includes support for parents with a disability.

### Action 11: Vulnerable children and families

Recognising the additional disadvantage of vulnerable families experiencing disability, child and family services (including statutory services), will support vulnerable children and parents with disability. This will provide access to the supports they require to improve their health, education, economic and social outcomes.

We will improve the opportunities for services to respond to the needs of vulnerable children and parents by:

- providing support to vulnerable children with a disability, with high support and/or complex medical needs, through the Kindergarten Inclusion Support program
- developing a new intensive early childhood support service, tailored to the needs of families who need the most support in their child's first years, that will expand current support, incorporating the latest evidence and consolidating best practice from existing early intervention programs.

## **Sport and recreation**

We are expanding the ways we support the wellbeing of people with a disability through sport and recreation.

### **Action 12: Parks access**

We will:

- expand the Summer by the Sea program, to include all-abilities activities. This will enable people with a disability to participate and learn about coastal environments in partnership with local councils, disability support groups and local coastal community groups.
- improve access to state forests by regrading walking trails to include more comprehensive information on trail accessibility and providing more accessible web-based information.

We will improve park accessibility by:

- providing equipment and programs that enable park visitors to better access and explore parks
- constructing new visitor facilities and upgrading existing facilities in accordance with universal design principles
- supporting health and wellbeing programs in parks
- implementing strategies to improve opportunities for training, volunteering and employment for people with a disability.

### **Action 13: Sport and recreation**

Between January 2016 and June 2019, we will provide around \$10 million in funding to more than 50 organisations through the Access for All Abilities component of the Supporting Victorian Sport and Recreation program. This will help create lasting opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport and recreation. It will also fund an information and referral service called AAA Play, which is a first-point-of call service for people seeking opportunities in the Melbourne metropolitan region.

This approach recognises that, working with and through our partners in the sport and recreation sector, we can build their capacity to deliver and sustain better opportunities for participation at the grassroots level.

## NDIS

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting people with a disability and their families, the disability workforce, and service providers as they transition onto the NDIS.

### Action 14: NDIS transition

The Government is supporting people with a disability and their families, the disability workforce, and service providers as they transition into the scheme and has provided \$10 million in funding to deliver readiness activities where they are needed most.

This transition support has been allocated to a range of diverse organisations representing people with a disability, providers, carers, unions, service users and their advocates, who will identify and deliver practical and targeted resources to help people and providers adapt to the way the NDIS will work. The support will:

- provide timely information, resources and capacity building to people with a disability and their families and carers. This will include information about how the NDIS works and support through the pre-planning process including exercising choice and control.
- prepare service providers, through delivery of training, information and engagement activities to support organisations to transition their operations to the NDIS.

### Action 15: NDIS and health services

We will improve streamlining and coordination of care for people with a disability who require a particular health response in order to achieve better overall health and social outcomes. We will also encourage and facilitate mainstream health services and disability services to support eligible clients with ongoing disabilities to make a smooth and coordinated transition to the NDIS. This will be achieved by:

- working with the NDIA to develop clear processes to support people with a disability who currently receive state funded health services and programs that are transitioning to the NDIS
- developing clear processes to ensure care coordination for clients who require a disability and a health response. This will include reasonable adjustments, adequate health professional training, and good quality health care, from detection and prevention, through to acute care.
- supporting health services to make decisions about their roles in delivering disability-related care in the context of the NDIS and reforms to aged care and Home and Community Care.

### **Action 16: NDIS access**

We will also work with the NDIA to help develop streamlined access and planning processes for Victorian clients transitioning to the NDIS. This work will include:

- monitoring participant outcomes and participant experience of operations, along with the NDIA and the Commonwealth, to ensure smooth transition
- ensuring local area coordination is in place before the transition and performing necessary information and referral functions
- implementing agreed workforce arrangements to ensure the transfer of our existing knowledge to the NDIA, to maximise the benefit of people moving to the NDIS.

### **Action 17: NDIS and mainstream services**

To make the most of the NDIS, we need to make sure that mainstream government services – like health, mental health, housing, transport and employment - are inclusive. The NDIS will provide more individual support to people with a disability, but people will still rely on accessible mainstream services to achieve health, education and employment outcomes and live an everyday life. Better mainstream services will also help all Victorians with disability.

To make this happen, we are:

- working with the NDIA to put into practice the agreed division of responsibility between the NDIS and Victorian government services
- making sure that Victorian services develop strong working arrangements with the NDIA to ensure people with a disability receive seamless support
- working to make sure that mainstream services are:
  - making reasonable adjustments to accommodate people with a disability
  - adaptive to individual needs
  - accessible.

In the process of working towards inclusive services, we are committed to hearing from people with a disability about what you need and how services could be better.



## **Workforce development**

The skills and knowledge of all our different workforces need to improve and adapt to respond properly to diversity and promote inclusion. For example, there is considerable evidence that people having a mental illness or a disability have poorer health outcomes due to inadequate healthcare. This is often due to misunderstandings and missed diagnosis of their condition, when people see the disability, rather than the person. There are similar issues across all sectors and their workforces.

Some attitudinal and education needs have also been prompted by the introduction of the NDIS while some have been further highlighted by the issues associated with preventing violence and abuse.

We are addressing these widespread and long-standing issues, while also tackling other emerging issues, including workforce capacity.

Workforce strategies form a key a part of our related strategies and reforms such as Victoria's 10-year mental health plan. As part of that plan we are developing a centre for mental health workforce and development. This centre will coordinate with this plan and the rollout of the NDIS across Victoria.

A highly skilled and professional workforce is the foundation of a high quality NDIS.

To make the transition to the NDIS possible, people with a disability and their families and carers need timely information, resources and supports to understand this important change. The Victorian disability workforce will also need to build their capacity to successfully adapt to the new operating environment under the NDIS.

An independent, legislated Victorian registration and accreditation scheme for the state's disability workforce, will also be established.

The accreditation scheme, developed in partnership with industrial partners, will protect vulnerable people from harm and support the development and growth of a quality disability workforce, by ensuring workers who care for people with a disability have the right skills, experience and qualifications.

### **Action 18: Disability workforce**

The Victorian disability workforce is one of the most highly skilled in the country, with a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting people with a disability. The introduction of the NDIS represents a time of unprecedented growth and change for the sector. The workforce will be on the frontline of this change and central to delivering on the ambition of the NDIS to transform the lives of people with a disability.

Keeping Our Sector Strong is Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS.

It provides \$26 million in workforce development, training and skills initiatives to build a world-class disability workforce in Victoria. This includes a \$4.88 million contribution from the Commonwealth's Sector Development Fund. It will guide actions over the three years of transition to the NDIS to:

- build intelligence on workforce trends to inform workforce planning and provide an evidence base for the future
- build workforce capability through quality education and training opportunities aimed at developing a high-performing workforce with the knowledge and skills required to thrive under the NDIS
- improve workforce supply by increasing the disability sector's capacity to attract and retain workers with the right skills and values to meet the growing demand
- maximise opportunities for innovation in practice, service delivery and workforce models to drive improved outcomes for people with a disability.

The plan includes \$2.1 million for the new Future Social Services Institute. This is a unique collaboration between the Victorian Government, RMIT University and the Victorian Council of Social Service. The institute will lead research and design world-best education programs to train the workforce of the future. Other key initiatives in the plan include:

- developing and delivering a multi-stream training approach to help staff develop new skills and capabilities that align with service delivery requirements under the NDIS
- a range of projects to ensure quality in accredited disability-related training courses and improve student outcomes
- funding to promote best practice approaches for working with people with behaviours of concern, and funding through the Commonwealth Government's Sector Development Fund to promote collaboration across mainstream and the specialist disability service system to ensure the best possible support for NDIS participants with high and complex needs
- resources for regional communities to design and implement responses to local NDIS workforce challenges and opportunities.

## Fairness and safety

### 'I get a fair go'

We want to create opportunities for all Victorians. Our responsibility for measures relating to preventing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation form part of this pillar.

The aim of our system of government and rule of law is that all Victorians are treated fairly and are able to live in safety. This pillar covers the key elements of our justice system: policing, the courts and prisons.

Understanding and responding to diversity is central to equality, and how we use other means, apart from laws, to promote fairness and inclusion. This shift requires participants to make decisions and plan their services, which raises new issues for some people.

“Have you ever been told to turn the other cheek? My friends often say it to me. They think I should stay calm and ignore people who insult me about my disability. But in my experience, people who say we should turn the other cheek scream blue murder when others do them wrong. Turning the other cheek is a good strategy at times. It can show bullies how small they are. It can also break the tit-for-tat cycle of hostility that occurs when we retaliate to others' rudeness. But some people, particularly those with a disability, have to endure constant insults. It can dent our confidence and darken our mood.

Turn the Other Cheek, consultation feedback

The different elements include our disability and mental health laws and the agencies under those laws, including the Community Visitor Program, Disability Services Commissioner, Mental Health Services Commissioner, Senior Practitioner and Office of the Public Advocate.

We are advocating to ensure the rights of all Victorians with a disability under existing legislation are not diminished during the transition to the NDIS. This includes rights under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act.

We are undertaking a program of work to strengthen safeguards for people with a disability during transition to the NDIS. We will continue to have high quality and strong safeguards in place during the transition until a nationally consistent NDIS quality and safeguards framework is agreed and implemented.

Our community disability advocacy sector is also a crucial part of our safeguards system. The representative nature of advocacy and self-advocacy organisations gives people with a disability a vital avenue for having their voice respected. Their independence also gives them the ability to seek remedies from powerful systems and interests with the person and groups they are supporting.



### **Directions and actions**

The accessibility of legal information in Victoria needs to be improved and this includes better integration of information provision and client referrals. There are some gaps, fragmentation and overlap in the information provided by different sources. We will address the lack of information in plain-language, Easy English and community languages.

A revised risk assessment framework has been included in workforce training for disability workers to improve their understanding of violence and abuse issues. This will help workers to eliminate or reduce the risk of abuse and respond appropriately when abuse occurs.

We are developing Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy, aimed at achieving real equality for all girls and women. This change will ensure all women get the support they need to remove barriers, including improving the lives of women with a disability and other women experiencing complex disadvantage.

Family violence against people with a disability has several dimensions. The complexity of the situation can lead to a reluctance to report the violence. This can be because of a fear of reprisal, or loss of relationships. Sometimes people will accept their mistreatment or others might dismiss it as carer burnout, rather than do something to help stop the violence.

As part of our response we are ensuring women with a disability inform our Family Violence Primary Prevention Strategy. The strategy will address factors leading to violence against people experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination.

## Key priority 7: Family violence

We are funding a range of initiatives to meet our commitments to Victorians with a disability who are experiencing family violence. Our initial efforts will include:

- working towards a consistent and comprehensive collection of data on people with a disability who experience family violence, as part of developing the Victorian Family Violence Data Framework
- reviewing disability services' critical incident reporting to consider how incidents of family violence involving clients of disability services should be identified
- beginning discussions with a range of stakeholders, such as Brain Injury Australia, who may have an interest in, or potentially contribute to research into the prevalence of acquired brain injury among family violence victims and perpetrators
- considering new approaches to workforce training (including for disability workers) as part of the revised Common Risk Assessment Framework to ensure that people with a disability who experience family violence receive the support and assistance they need
- working with stakeholders to review crisis accommodation and youth and family violence refuge service and funding models with a view to removing current barriers to accessing these facilities. We will work closely with the Family Violence Housing Assistance Implementation Taskforce on these issues.
- providing \$15 million over two years to replace four communal refuges with 'core and cluster' models. Funding of \$6.27 million will redevelop family-violence-refuge services with design features that enhance accessibility for people with a disability, as well as enable carers to sleep over, as needed.
- expanding the Flexible Support Packages program through \$40 million funding for 2016 to 2018. The packages will be available to people with a disability and will ensure people with a disability who are experiencing family violence have access to support that is better tailored to meet their needs and circumstances. This work will be aligned with the NDIS.
- \$2 million funding during 2016 to 2018 to support project activity that prevents family violence in diverse communities, including people with a disability.

In relation to the justice system, early action will include:

- establishing a Victoria Police Centre of Learning for Family Violence which trains police officers to improve their response to people with a disability who experience family violence. This will involve improving police officers' understanding of the specific vulnerabilities that people with a disability face in respect of family violence.
- Victoria Police collecting more disability data when conducting victim risk assessments. This work will be undertaken in line with a redevelopment of Victoria's Common Risk Assessment Framework, including how this information can be captured and used to help police and other agencies to respond more effectively to people with a disability who experience family violence.

## Key priority 7: Family violence (continued)

- supporting training of judicial officers in consistently applying s. 31 of the Evidence Act 2008 to allow courts to make adjustments to the way people with a disability may be questioned and give evidence, as part of comprehensive family violence learning and development training across Victorian Courts.

### Advocacy

Advocacy is a critical safeguard to advance the rights of people with a disability and influence systemic change. We will maintain Victoria's position as a national leader in promoting the rights of people with a disability and support for the NDIS principle of choice and control.

## Key priority 8: Disability advocacy

We are committed to strengthening the disability advocacy sector. We have a dual focus on immediate investment to build the sector's capacity and longer-term improvements. Immediate activities include:

- fixed-term funding of \$1.5 million through a Victorian disability advocacy innovation fund to:
  - engage diverse and isolated people with a disability
  - address demand and gaps in service delivery
  - undertake systemic advocacy to reduce barriers to social, economic and civic participation
  - strengthen mainstream consumer protections for people with a disability.
- improvements to the operation and management of the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program including:
  - more effective measurement of demand and outcomes
  - building stronger links with other safeguarding mechanisms
  - simplifying administrative requirements for funded organisations.
- longer-term reform to ensure Victoria has a strong and sustainable disability advocacy and self-advocacy sector
- targeted strategies to engage and provide advocacy support to diverse and hard to reach groups of people with a disability.

## Safeguards

In many ways Victoria leads the country in terms of the quality and safety of its disability services, but there is more to do.

We are implementing a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the knowledge and understanding of people with a disability, carers, providers and support workers.

Victoria's Senior Practitioner will continue to consolidate safeguarding roles and functions concerning the use of restrictive alternatives and compulsory treatment during the transition to the NDIS. This includes completing projects focussing on capacity building in the sector to reduce the use of restrictive interventions.

We are improving the safety of people using disability services by implementing our response to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services to prevent abuse, and improve the response to abuse when it occurs.

Recent reforms have strengthened safeguards for people receiving mental health services, including those with a dual disability. These include the establishment of the new Mental Health Complaints Commissioner, and an expanded role for the Mental Health Tribunal. We are also implementing decision-making support arrangements, including advance statements, nominated persons and second psychiatric opinions.

### Action 19: Safeguards

Key measures we will implement to strengthen safeguards include:

- priority actions in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services including:
  - building a culture of zero tolerance of abuse in disability services
  - developing a Victorian disability abuse prevention strategy
  - establishing an independent, legislated Victorian registration and accreditation scheme for the state's disability workforce
  - expand the Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme to all disability services
  - strengthening oversight of disability services
  - implementing the new Client Incident Management System to strengthen processes, systems and workforce capability to prevent, and effectively manage client incident.
- developing and distributing guidelines for disability service providers and Victoria Police to improve the joint response to victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators with a disability
- developing and implementing a reportable conduct scheme that will apply to organisations providing services to children, including organisations that provide services for children with a disability
- working with the NDIA to ensure people with a disability who experience family violence receive the support and assistance they need. This includes developing practices for child protection, out of home care, family services and family violence workforces that support collaboration between these mainstream systems and the NDIS

### **Action 19: Safeguards (continued)**

- working with the Commonwealth Government to support the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- developing a restrictive practices framework across the Department of Health and Human Services.

### **Justice system**

It is important that we ensure the justice system meets the needs of clients with a disability. A key part of this response is the community legal sector, including Victoria Legal Aid and community legal centres. We will be exploring ways that we can strengthen the capacity of this sector to increase its responsiveness.

We will increase early interventions for young people with a disability who are at risk of contact with the youth justice system.

### **Action 20: VCAT accessibility**

VCAT is implementing a four-year accessibility action plan with actions to reduce barriers to accessible justice for people with diverse needs. This will raise awareness, build competencies and provide the foundation for driving cultural change. This will include designing and implementing an awareness program.

### **Action 21: Victoria Police**

#### **Improving access to information for people with a cognitive impairment**

Victoria Police will develop accessible information products for identified information needs as an ongoing initiative.

#### **Responding to allegations of abuse perpetrated against people with a disability**

Victoria Police will develop a protocol with the Disability Services Commissioner to clarify investigation roles and processes.

#### **Implementing VEOHRC 'Beyond doubt' report**

Victoria Police is incorporating the recommendations of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) report, Beyond doubt: the experiences of people with disabilities reporting crime. Victoria Police will continue working with VEOHRC to better meet the needs of people with a disability.

## Corrections

We are committed to improving outcomes for people with an identified cognitive impairment involved in the justice system. This includes through appropriate placements within corrections facilities, access to specialist supports and assessment for pre and post release reintegration supports. The Corrections Victoria Disability Framework 2016-2019: Expanding the opportunities, outlines our platform to build on our achievements and to offer offenders and prisoners with a disability access to the full range of services provided to other cohorts, as well as additional supports where necessary.

We are improving responses to mental health in the criminal justice system through partnerships between departments, Victoria Police and key mental health bodies.

### Action 22: Corrections

Our initiatives underpin and complement a service delivery action plan that promotes equal, fair and inclusive opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration of all prisoners and offenders with a disability.

Over the next four years, we will:

- deliver supports to meet the needs of prisoners and offenders with a disability including:
  - maintaining, monitoring and improving programs and services to address demand and identified service gaps
  - improving systems and processes for people with a disability
  - identifying and addressing multiple disadvantage as part of a correctional response
  - supporting offenders with a disability on community-based disposition.
- provide correctional staff with training and support in their work with offenders and prisoners who have a disability
- further build collaborative partnerships across government, with key disability organisations and the NDIA, to establish processes that will ensure eligible prisoners and offenders with a disability are able to access the NDIS.

### **Assistance dogs**

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 does not recognise assistance dogs in Victoria. There are currently no standards or regulations covering minimum standards for their breeding and training. We need a way of monitoring and ensuring that assistance dogs are trained and able to behave appropriately in a range of commonly encountered situations.

#### **Action 23: Assistance dogs**

We will review options for:

- defining assistance dogs within the Domestic Animals Act
- establishing a registration scheme for dogs trained through an approved organisation
- developing a ministerial approval scheme.

Legislative amendments will proceed for commencement in 2018.



## Contributing lives

### 'I contribute'

We focus on the three key areas of civic life, the economy and education in this pillar.

Voting, running as a candidate in an election, and participating in political parties, interests groups and activist movements are examples of civic participation. Input into decisions and policy making by government at all levels is another key civic process. People with a disability, particularly people with an intellectual disability, are under-represented in these civic activities.

Education is the pathway to participation in civic processes and the economy. The pursuit of knowledge and the arts is also an area of attainment in its own right. The participation rate of people with a disability in education is significantly lower than for people without a disability.

People with a disability participate in the economy in many ways including as employees, employers, homeowners, renters, sellers, consumers and investors.

The participation rate of people with a disability in the economy is significantly lower than for people without a disability. This under-employment means earning a lower income and exclusion from opportunities to prosper and grow.

People with a disability must be able to improve their quality of life through full participation in the economy, education and civic activities. Increased economic participation depends upon people with a disability having access to opportunities and resources. The NDIS provides necessary and reasonable disability supports for participants so they have the platform they need to begin accessing opportunities.

“My son is about to commence a pathway to a bachelor degree. I will continue to support his pursuit of an education to enable a meaningful and productive participation in society. So many children are left floundering in poorly paid work or disability pensions because we do not give them the necessary support or hold ourselves accountable. I would like to see inclusion in all aspects of a person's life including education.

Pizzi, consultation feedback

### Directions and actions

#### Education

Equitable access to life-long learning and education for people with a disability is critical to enabling meaningful participation in society. We are committed to establishing Victoria as the Education State where every Victorian has access to a quality education that supports them to gain the knowledge and skills to reach their full potential and shape their lives.

The Inclusive Education Agenda is part of our vision for Victoria as the Education State. We are currently undertaking a major reform of the provision of services and support to schools and students with a disability. The reform underway seeks to transform the culture, policy and practice of Victorian schools to be fully inclusive of all students.



Providing high quality early childhood learning and development services that support access, equity and inclusion of children with additional needs is also a key element of this commitment.

### Key priority 9: Inclusive education

Our Inclusive Education Agenda includes major reforms to transform culture, policies and practices. Victorian early childhood, schools, training and TAFE settings will be supported to be fully inclusive of learners with a disability. These reforms involve a range of priority actions relating to: policy and practice; workforce development; and accountability and funding.

#### Policy and practice

We will provide a shared vision for excellence in inclusive education through:

- collaborating with students, families and schools to develop clear inclusive education policy and frameworks, as well as guidance and support materials for staff working with students with a disability
- developing an inclusive education index and undertaking a feasibility study into establishing an inclusive education institute
- increasing skills training opportunities for young people, including those with a disability, through expanding the Reconnect program to support an additional 3,300 high-needs learners.

## Key priority 9: Inclusive education (continued)

### **Workforce development**

We will develop guidelines, tools and resources to maximise learning outcomes, engagement and wellbeing for Victorians with a disability including:

- developing an inclusive education workforce capability strategy to support teachers in supporting and improving learning outcomes
- prioritising strengths-based, person-centred approaches in the design of guidelines and tools to provide more personalised, evidence-based programs as well as guidance on early identification of students with a disability
- developing and trialling a new personalised support-profiling tool that identifies strengths and functional needs for all students with a disability in schools
- implementing a dyslexia and learning difficulties strategy
- developing and providing professional development opportunities that help implement inclusive practices and the learning and development of children with a disability or developmental delay in the early years
- providing autism-specific guidance, expertise and resources
- increasing workforce capability within the disability sector through designing education programs that help develop skills and enable high quality care for people with a disability to be provided.

### **Accountability and funding**

We will develop a more transparent, accountable system for funding and supporting students with a disability including consideration of a new strengths based, functional needs based funding model.

## Employment and economic participation

Economic inclusion is a key part of our government's overall approach for Victoria to deliver strong and inclusive growth. Every Victorian deserves the opportunity to flourish and share in the benefits of greater prosperity. Access to employment and other economic opportunities is a key way people can overcome poverty and disadvantage. Broadening income and wealth distribution grows the economy, which is good for Victoria too.

Our commitment is to increase the participation of people with a disability in employment across the full breadth of the Victorian economy (see table 1). This commitment applies to all Victorians with a disability, including people with a psychosocial disability.

We are implementing immediate action through the Jobs Victoria Employment Network and other measures. We are investing \$39 million to ensure developing our broader economy is inclusive of disadvantaged Victorians.

As part of the Jobs Victoria Employment Network initiative, we have allocated nearly \$2.5 million to community-based services for people with a disability. They will assist about 190 people into sustainable employment across Melbourne and regional areas.

**Table 1. The four key areas of economic participation**

	Employment	Business
Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leadership</li><li>• local initiatives</li><li>• promoting good practice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• self-employment</li><li>• private enterprise</li><li>• social enterprise</li></ul>
Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• leadership</li><li>• inclusive policies and practices</li><li>• pathways to employment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• inclusive procurement policies</li></ul>

## Key priority 10: Employment

Developing an employment strategy will drive systemic improvements and outcomes for people with a disability. Potential ways forward include:

- engaging with the wider business community to build on existing employment models. We will also explore new and creative ways to drive economic participation and pathways to employment, informed by best practice.
- demonstrating leadership and leveraging our role as a major employer through targeted approaches to the employment and retention of people with a disability in the public service and broader public sector. This may include:
  - establishing a disability champions network consisting of senior leaders to promote our commitments across the public sector
  - empowering a network of public servants with a disability to help build better practice in attraction, retention and career development
  - raising awareness of existing public service policies for workplace flexibility and reasonable adjustments to prospective employees with a disability
  - exploring the development of entry level opportunities and other pathways into the public service for people with a disability who may struggle to secure existing roles.
- supporting people with a disability to generate income through business ownership, entrepreneurship and social enterprises. This may include:
  - exploring ways for people with a disability to establish their own businesses
  - building on opportunities to grow social enterprises.
- leveraging our role as a major purchaser. This may include:
  - actively promoting existing opportunities to incorporate social objectives into Victorian Government procurement processes, opportunities made possible through a suite of five principle based supply policies that encourage greater participation and access for all enterprises, including those that offer employment to people with a disability.

## Leadership and representation

Many parts of government have an important role to play in increasing the voice and representation of people with a disability. The measures we are developing need to be sensitive to diversity and gender. Below are some further actions for increasing voice and representation.

### Action 24: Voice and leadership

People with a disability have much to contribute to civic life, yet they are excluded from decisions that affect them and the broader community. We are committed to providing opportunities for people with a disability to lead and contribute to public debate and influence change within government and communities.

We will implement the following strategies:

- increase the profile and capacity of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council. This will include strengthening its role to monitor and report on the plan's progress in consultation with other advisory and consumer groups.
- provide scholarships and funding to increase the participation of people with a disability in mainstream and disability-specific leadership, governance and mentoring programs
- develop guidelines about inclusive board recruitment and governance and promote case studies to boost the number of people with a disability on government boards and committees
- provide an improved online space for people with a disability by redeveloping the Divine website.

Other parts of government also have an important role to increase the voice and representation of people with a disability. Current initiatives include the following:

- the Energy, Environment and Climate Change group is exploring options to actively recruit people with a disability for governance and management boards within the portfolio. We will also look to expand the process across the whole of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.
- the Office for Youth will engage young Victorians with a disability as part of its youth survey, youth barometer and its annual youth summit
- the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship is strengthening the representation of people with a disability on boards and committees as board appointments are made to vacant positions within the Multicultural Affairs portfolio
- working with local communities and stakeholders (particularly those disadvantaged in their access to transport resulting from age, disability and location) to improve the connectedness of local transport via mechanisms such as pilot local transport forums, regional accessibility committees, and local transport service bodies
- over 2016 to 2018, \$700 000 has been allocated to increase women's leadership and participation in decision making through increased board representation. This includes scholarships for women with a disability.

### **Action 25: NDIS participation**

We remain committed to ensuring people with a disability are at the heart of decision-making in matters affecting the design and implementation of the NDIS. As a significant shareholder and investor in the scheme, we will:

- use our role on the Disability Reform Council to advocate for representation of people with a disability in ways that inform the ongoing governance and future policy development of the NDIS
- foster a partnership approach with people with a disability in transition to the NDIS, including through opportunities for active participation in consultative processes
- provide leadership opportunities for the sector to influence government policy and practice. These opportunities include participation in consultative committees, such as the NDIS Implementation Taskforce.

### **Creative industries**

We are increasing the participation of Victorians with a disability in the creative industries as artists, technicians, administrators, board members, industry leaders, audiences and active community participants. We are doing this through our Creative State plan.

We will support opportunities for identifying and supporting a person's creative aspirations as part of NDIS planning.

### **Action 26: Creative industries**

This plan and Creative State have a shared objective to work together to increase the participation of Victorians with a disability in the creative industries.

Specifically, Creative State will deliver:

- creative industries inclusion and planning, including a focus on increasing participation, employment opportunities and pathways for people with a disability within creative industries, such as opportunities for actors with a disability in screen and theatre and participation by people with a disability in festivals
- social impact projects that engage people with a disability, demonstrating the benefits of participation in creative arts practice
- additional funding to key creative industry organisations that deliver employment and participation opportunities for people with a disability through organisation investment and program capacity building.

## Tourism

In addition to the personal benefits for people with a disability, tourism and travel makes a significant contribution to the economy. Australians with a disability spend about \$8 billion every year on tourism and travel.

### Action 27: Inclusive tourism

Building on recent efforts to engage tourism businesses through the development of an Accessible Tourism Toolkit, we will roll out a staged approach to making Victoria the destination of choice for travellers with a disability by:

- continuing to work with Regional Tourism Boards and Destination Melbourne to promote accessible tourism to businesses across Victoria
- undertaking research into the needs and preferences of travellers with a disability
- supporting accessible businesses to promote their services to travellers with a disability through [visitvictoria.com](http://visitvictoria.com)
- continuing to promote, review and enhance the Accessible Tourism Toolkit in 2017
- targeting 500 businesses across the state to become more aware of accessibility and more than 100 to be compliant with universal design principles
- hosting workshops in each of Victoria's 12 tourism regions by 2020.



# Driving outcomes

## Making outcomes happen

We will achieve our vision by driving outcomes.

Progress made against the outcomes framework presented in this plan will be regularly publicly reported after the framework has been completed and tested. Some existing indicators used across government already relate to the outcomes in our framework. Others will need to be adapted and in some cases new indicators will need to be developed. During 2017, we will work in partnership with key stakeholders on the development of relevant indicators and measures.

We will expand the outcomes based approach so that key stakeholders report on the work they are doing, and report against outcomes that are relevant to them. This will mean we can see how the changes and actions we are implementing are progressing more broadly across Victoria.

To achieve this we are also inviting other organisations outside our government, including local government, to adopt the outcomes based approach in their own disability action planning.

## Planning

While we are leading and driving change, other bodies are also taking action through their own approaches, including disability action plans. Through the life of this plan, we want to extend the reach of these plans and bring about greater alignment between our state disability plan and organisational plans.

We are extending the vision and outcomes framework to all government departments and local government. The whole-of-government alignment of disability action plans is another key element of this plan. The outcomes framework provides departments with a clearer focus on achieving the things that will make a difference to people's lives when developing their disability action plans. The benefits will come from departments working towards shared directions and outcomes.

Our aim is to encourage greater consistency and rigour in plans, while acknowledging the need for flexibility. Agencies need to be able to present and integrate their plans into their work in ways that match with their specific role and operations.

“The plan requires leadership and commitment from all areas of government, so that access and inclusion for people with disability is considered in all planning decisions, policy development and service delivery design. Given the plan cuts across numerous government portfolios, a strong governance structure is needed to drive the plan.

Fairer Futures: VCOSS submission

## Disability action plan alignment

As part of the process of aligning disability action plans with this plan we will:

- explore what changes may be necessary to the regulatory framework
- work to have the timing of all departmental disability actions plans aligned with the next state disability plan that starts in 2021
- work with Local Government Victoria to:
  - develop a tailored guidance document to support councils in aligning their disability action plans with this plan to be undertaken in 2017
  - review guidance documents for developing disability action plans
  - identify and promote good disability planning practice in the local government sector
  - provide guidance on the use of the outcomes framework to support alignments.

A new guidance document will be an important resource for councils to develop a new action plan, or update an existing plan. This will be released in the first half of 2017.

We will use this developmental approach with relevant statutory bodies and other agencies. For example, we outlined earlier how health services will also be supported to develop and implement a disability action plan that meets the particular challenges of their sector.

## Monitoring and accountability

We will provide annual reports on progress. We want these reports to be readily available and will explore the best way to ensure public accountability, including reporting to parliament.

The process we used to develop our plan also provides us with the structures we need for monitoring its progress. This is a key part of being accountable. The process involved your feedback and oversight from across all departments. All our departments have made a commitment to continuing oversight and monitoring of this progress.

The Victorian Disability Advisory Council also provided input during the development of the plan. Members of the new council were appointed in late 2016, for three-year terms. The council advises on whole-of-government policy directions. Under the Act, it also has a responsibility for monitoring the implementation of strategies for promoting inclusion and participation in the community and removing barriers. The council will have an important role in overseeing the plan and reviewing the progress being made in different areas.

Departments and the council will regularly review progress towards achieving the outcomes of the framework, and other relevant issues emerging from our plan and actions.

The Office for Disability in the Department of Health and Human Services will have an ongoing role in coordinating and monitoring the plan.



**No use having a shiny state disability plan for all the state to see and then having everyone wipe their feet on it**

Listen Up: Aboriginal people with disabilities, Yarns discussion paper

Another way we are accountable for our progress is through our support for the National Disability Strategy. The planning and action we are undertaking forms the basis of our reports for this national work.

## **How you can be involved**

We need your help to lead change, for people with a disability and their families and carers are central to our vision. We are committed to working with you over the life of the plan. Our ambition for this plan is that it produces changes in everyday life for everyone, focussing on the experience and aspirations of people with a disability. This is our vision, and your involvement can help it succeed.

Accountability lies at many levels. We accept our responsibility as the government, and look to the community, business and other bodies to support our vision.



**Self advocates spoke of real inclusion equating to being engaged and participating in an ongoing process of consultation.**

Self Advocacy Resource Unit, Shaping the 2017–2020 Plan

We acknowledge the leadership of people with a disability in this change process. We look forward to this increasing as people with a disability are progressively represented in all of the civic and other participatory avenues available to you.

We are in a time of significant change. The NDIS will be fully implemented during the life of this plan. By monitoring and reporting on progress, we will be able to see what further actions and changes need to be made through this plan, and the next plan. We can say with certainty that the time for inclusion has already arrived. We look forward to working with you on this shared business.

Let us know if you want to be involved:

- [ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:ofd@dhhs.vic.gov.au)
- [statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au](http://statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au)
- 1300 880 043

## Appendix: Words used

Word	What it means in the plan
Changing Places	Public toilets with full-sized change tables and hoists in major public spaces that meet the needs of people with a disability having high support needs
Commonwealth	The Commonwealth Government of Australia
Disadvantage	People belong to groups, based on their interests or backgrounds. Some groups are more disadvantaged than other groups. People with a disability are a very large and diverse group. People with a disability also belong to smaller groups. Women and girls with a disability experience higher rates of disadvantage, compared with men with a disability. People with a disability who are Aboriginal experience higher rates of disadvantage too. The way we measure disadvantage can include income, employment and education rates and other indicators relating to wellbeing.
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and intersex.
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
TAFE	Technical and Further Education system
Universal design	Universal design involves creating facilities, built environments, products and services that can be used by people of all abilities, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptations. Making everything usable for as many people as possible from the beginning, so that changes do not need to be made later.
We	We are the elected Government of Victoria. Our Office for Disability produced this plan on behalf of our government.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is about more than not being ill or having a disease. It combines physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. In short, wellbeing could be described as how you feel about yourself and your life when things are going well for you.



