

# Access and Inclusion Plan

2021-2024



## Aboriginal acknowledgment

We are committed to genuinely partner, and meaningfully engage, with Victoria's Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities to support the protection of Country, the maintenance of spiritual and cultural. We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices and their broader aspirations in the 21st century and beyond.



## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the All Abilities Network, Autism Success Network and VPS Enablers Network in contributing to this plan and its development. Staff-led networks in the VPS are integral to our work supporting an accessible and inclusive Victoria, and this plan is the result of their tireless advocacy. "Nothing about us without us".



## Cover photo credit

Lynn Bremner - Illustrator

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# Foreword

## Message from the Secretary

Since publishing our first access and inclusion plan in 2018 (covering 2018–2020), we’ve been strengthening our commitment to disability inclusion and the support we offer to all our people, including those with disability.

**We recognise the exceptional contribution that people with disability make to our teams and our culture, and to the way we deliver programs and services for the Victorian community.**

As we set our sights on the next stage of DELWP’s access and inclusion work, it’s important for us to reflect on our progress. We must understand where we have faced challenges and use those lessons to help elevate DELWP as an employer of choice for people with disability.

This plan also offers an opportunity to reflect on DELWP’s achievement in meeting the six per cent disability employment target identified in Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–2025, exceeding the VPS average. We now set our sights on meeting the 12 per cent target by 2025.

In developing the way forward, DELWP has committed to understanding and engaging with people with lived experience of disability to enhance how we deliver on our priorities and actions. I would like to thank DELWP staff and stakeholders with disability for their willingness to share – recognising that not all disability is visible.

Our staff disability advocacy networks were invaluable in contributing to the plan’s actions and outcomes, where commitments include

increasing and expanding our engagement with people with disability in the community.

From building the capability of our people, to enhancing our systems and processes, we are removing barriers to full participation by people with disability, supporting everyone to bring their best to the workplace and achieve success in their teams.

This plan also ensures that, as a department, our accessibility and inclusion objectives align with other Commonwealth and State government disability goals and connects us more closely to Victoria’s disability community.

As we move into greater disability confidence, we want to challenge our workforce to be flexible in its approach to what ‘great’ looks like. This will help us to be more agile in how we deliver as a department, highlighting the possibilities for new technologies and ways of working for our people. The plan outlines how DELWP can best champion access and inclusion, setting new goals and defining us as leaders in disability inclusion.



John Bradley, Secretary



## Message from our All Abilities Network

The All Abilities Network (AAN) is a staff led network established in 2018 to support and empower disabled and chronically ill staff and carers to thrive in their roles at DELWP. The AAN's key priority is to be an influential advocate for workplace diversity and inclusion.

**AAN is committed to acknowledging and centring intersectionality in its work. It works alongside other DELWP staff networks to ensure the intersectional experiences of DELWP staff are recognised and prioritised. The AAN believes staff deserve to feel safe and valued because of their diverse identities, not despite them.**

Diverse and inclusive organisations are thriving organisations. The AAN's vision is of a DELWP that is not only inclusive of people with disabilities, but also accompanies inclusivity with deep understanding, accountability, and action. In line with DELWP's organisational charter, the AAN puts the community at the centre of everything it does. The AAN recognises and values the exceptionally important knowledge and experience of community that disabled and chronically ill staff provide the department. We, as the Leadership Team, are very grateful to be a part of, represent, and engage with the communities that disabled and chronically ill staff have fostered at DELWP and the VPS more broadly.

Disability is NOT a dirty word! In 2021, the AAN identified four themes based on research and anecdotal evidence from staff to create a focus for the department in supporting disabled staff



**Staff deserve to feel safe and valued because of their diverse identities, not despite them.**



and carers. The themes were accountability and commitment, departmental resourcing, giving disability a platform where it is a priority, and education for all staff about disability. This clear focus engaged senior executives across the department and provided a platform for the AAN to support staff to achieve meaningful change and better outcomes.

AAN members have contributed their valuable time, expertise and experience to developing the Access and inclusion plan 2022–2024 (AIP). This involved reviewing the actions and outcomes to ensure DELWP has a focus on improvement and accountability. The AAN expects that this plan will lead the department to provide a psychologically safe workplace for all staff, creating a disability confident workforce. The AIP uses real time data to find solutions to achieve better outcomes for disabled staff, which is a key aspect of the AAN's work. This plan is an important step in the right direction for DELWP. The AAN looks forward to seeing disabled and chronically ill staff and carers thrive under the outcomes of this plan and beyond.

**All Abilities Network Leadership Team:**

**Darcy Hytt, Jessica Ferguson,  
Judith Sears and Kat Olesen**



# Access and inclusion at DELWP



This plan exists due to the shared vision between the Enablers Network, DELWP's All Abilities Network and the department's leadership for disability inclusive workplaces in the Victorian public sector, and recognises what is needed for us to reach our representation target of 12% people with disability. I look forward to our continued collaboration to deliver this plan for the benefit of all.



– DUNCAN CHEW, PRESIDENT,  
VPS ENABLERS NETWORK



# DELWP brings together Victoria's climate change response, biodiversity protection, resource recovery, water, energy, land management, planning and emergency management functions into a single department.

This enables an integrated approach to creating thriving environments and communities and supporting Victoria's economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

In our commitment to delivering the best outcomes for Victorians, DELWP understands and recognises that this is best achieved by fostering and valuing the diversity of our workforce and the communities in which we operate.

DELWP aims to offer supportive, accessible and inclusive workplaces for our employees with disability, as well as accessible services for people with disability in our broader community.

## **Building a positive organisational culture**

To best serve Victorians, we strive to build a positive organisational culture built on:

- strong leadership
- diversity
- collaboration
- innovation
- developing our people.

## **Our vision and principles**

Our vision for diversity, inclusion and belonging is a workplace culture that embraces individual differences in all forms and fosters innovation.

We live our diversity and inclusion values when our people:

- connect effectively with our diverse customers and communities to understand their needs
- embrace different viewpoints
- have equal opportunity in the workplace
- feel they belong and know their unique contribution is valued
- leverage the experience and ideas of others.



## What's our access and inclusion plan?

The DELWP Access and inclusion plan 2021–2024 (AIP) sets out our continued commitment under the obligations of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and aligns with Commonwealth and State government inclusion initiatives. The AIP has been developed with an emphasis on striving to remove barriers to participation for people with disability and improving our current practices across all areas of the department.

DELWP has developed this plan by completing a formal evaluation of the 2018–2020 AIP, by reviewing our current practices and by holding a series of focus groups with employees from across the organisation, including people with disability.

The AIP's priorities and actions outline clear and measurable outcomes for people with disability and provide the opportunity for continuous improvement. A mid-term review will be undertaken in 2022 to ensure the AIP stays consistent with national and State disability frameworks.

**The AIP is based on four priorities:**

- inclusive workplace culture and capability
- inclusive places and spaces
- inclusive information and communication
- inclusive communities.



### Priority 1: Inclusive workplace culture and capability

An inclusive workplace culture increases our capability to provide meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability at all levels of the organisation. It allows us to harness the knowledge and lived experience of our disability employee networks.



### Priority 2: Inclusive places and spaces

An accessible work environment is one that provides equal access to our places and spaces to support access and inclusion for people with disability.



### Priority 3: Inclusive information and communication

Accessible information and communications provided in alternative formats and preferred communication methods enables increased participation for people with disability.



### Priority 4: Inclusive communities

An accessible and inclusive community ensures all Victorians can access our services and programs equally, including people with disability.

In building on our success in access and inclusion, we are working towards supporting and developing our employees to increase their disability confidence. This will help us deliver more meaningful outcomes for people with disability.

Our aim is to embed access and inclusion in everything we do and to offer accessible and inclusive workplaces and services for our employees, customers and community.

# The social model of disability

One of the underpinning principles of creating accessible and inclusive environments is the social model of disability. It recognises that the barriers of societal attitudes, practices and structures, rather than an individual's disability, prevent equal and full participation in society.

In adopting the United Nations definition of disability, we will focus on removing barriers for people with disability to create safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces for our employees and Victoria's disability community.



**Access and inclusion is a way of thinking, not a project. It's about going beyond compliance and legislation and engaging all areas to support and involve people with disability.**



GRAEME EMONSON  
DEPUTY SECRETARY,  
CORPORATE SERVICES



## Defining disability

The United Nations defines disability as:

Disability includes long-term (lasting 6 months or more) physical, mental health, intellectual, neurological, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.



## Inclusive language

In understanding that people with disability often face both environmental and attitudinal barriers in our society, we acknowledge individual preferences and experiences when it comes to language and identity. We recognise that the use of 'identity language' or 'person-first language' is a personal choice.

### Identity language:

Using the term 'disabled person' can offer a sense of empowerment that is connected to the social model of disability – that is, being 'disabled' by society.

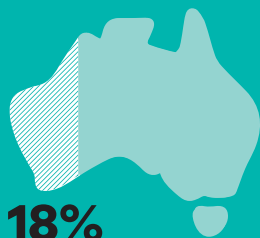
### Person-first language:

Using the term 'person with disability' may resonate with the concept that disability is only a part of who a person is and sees them as a person first.

For the purpose of this plan, we use *person-first* language.

# Disability in our community

Nearly everyone faces hardships and challenges at one time or another in their lifetime. But for people with disability, barriers can be more frequent and have a greater impact on their daily lives. With the Australian population of people with disability at approximately 18 per cent, we all have a role to play in removing barriers and creating a fair and equitable society.



Australia's population of people with disability and 17% in Victoria<sup>1</sup> (2018)

**1 MILLION**

Employees work with disability.

That's nearly 10% of Australia's workforce<sup>2</sup> (2015)



LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

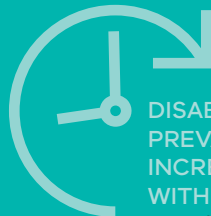
**83%** people without disability

**53%** people with disability



**45%**

of Australians will experience poor mental health in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> (2017)



DISABILITY PREVALENCE INCREASES WITH AGE

Nearly 40% of the Australian workforce is aged 45 years or older.<sup>4</sup> (2018)

12% of the population are carers<sup>5</sup>

**70%** of these people also work on top of their caring responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> (2018)



**630,000+**

people in VIC are primary carers, with around 239k Victorians having care responsibilities although they are not the person's primary carer.



**1 in 3**

people has difficulty accessing locations due to challenges with mobility or communication.<sup>7</sup> (2019)



DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION make up 45% of all complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission.<sup>8</sup> (2019)

**45%**



## Ableism

A fair and equitable society for people with disability is one where discrimination is addressed and negative attitudes are eliminated. People with disability often face what is called *ableism*, where discrimination and social prejudice is based on the belief that people with typical abilities are superior.

Just like racism and sexism, the concept of ableism includes harmful stereotypes and language, along with misconceptions and generalisations.

At DELWP, we understand the importance of a person's overlapping identities and interconnected discrimination and disadvantage such as disability, race, class, gender and sexual identity.

Regardless of background, we are committed to supporting intersectionality by promoting a workplace culture of mutual respect and responsibility.

In promoting positive attitudes and challenging bias at DELWP, we aim to create a safe, inclusive and respectful work environment for people with disability.



## Our employees with disability

### Getting to work

*Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–2025* sets a target of increasing representation of those with disability from 6 per cent of the public service workforce by 2020 to 12 per cent by 2025. In DELWP's 2021 People Matter survey results, 6 per cent of our workforce shared that they are a person with disability, meeting our *Getting to work* target. Further to this, 10 per cent of DELWP staff care for someone with a disability, medical condition or mental illness.<sup>9</sup>

This plan is about supporting our staff with disability. We aim to increase disability confidence in our organisation, along with creating a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace for our people to perform at their best and deliver the best outcomes for our community. It also recognises that an inclusive workplace creates positive impacts for the whole organisation – with 27 per cent of DELWP staff accessing adjustments at work to support disability, health conditions or caring responsibilities in 2021.<sup>10</sup>

Our employees are highly valued and are at the core of our commitment to building a diverse and inclusive organisation. The DELWP *Diversity and inclusion strategy 2019–2022* sets out our mandate to support liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities and thriving natural environments across Victoria.

### Disability champions

As part of the Victorian public service's *Getting to work: disability employment action plan*, each department has a disability champion within the executive team. Disability champions model understanding and confidence and oversee implementation of action plans. They are accountable for their department's disability employment targets.

### All Abilities Network

In delivering on our *Diversity and inclusion strategy* as part of the 2018–2020 AIP, we established a staff network for people with disability and allies. The DELWP All Abilities Network was created in 2019 as a departmental subnetwork of the VPS Enablers Network. The network has grown to a membership of more than 60 people with disability and their allies.

The All Abilities Network plays an important role in increasing awareness of access and inclusion within the department. It is committed to providing support, advocacy and valuable input into workplace policies and processes to improve outcomes for people with disability. Collaboration with the whole-of-government Enablers Network has provided the opportunity to contribute to the work of other State government departments such as the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

### Autism Success Network

In 2018, the Autism Success Network was established to provide support, information and advocacy to people on the autism spectrum and their carers. As a subgroup of the Enablers Network, they are committed to improving the employment outcomes and creating a positive working environment for autistic people across the Victorian public service.

In 2018, Specialisterne<sup>11</sup> delivered a two-week program in DELWP to guide RISE@DHHS<sup>12</sup> employees to secure roles as data analysts within our Digital Cadastre team. Three successful candidates were offered positions, and their record management skillset has provided strong transferable skills for future data analyst positions.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018 (Disability Prevalence in States and Territories), <sup>2</sup> Department of Employment Australian Jobs 2015 (Employees), <sup>3</sup> ABS Population Projections, Australia, 2017 (Mental Health), <sup>4</sup> ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2018 (Ageing & Carers), <sup>5</sup> ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2018 (Ageing & Carers), <sup>6</sup> ABS Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers 2018 (Ageing & Carers), <sup>7</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019 (Transport, Buildings and facilities & Discrimination), <sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019 (Transport, Buildings and facilities & Discrimination), <sup>9</sup> 2021 People Matter survey results, <sup>10</sup> 2021 People Matter survey results. <sup>11</sup> Specialisterne Australia assists organisations in recruiting and providing autistic and neurodiverse inclusive workplace practices and cultures, <sup>12</sup> <https://specialisterne.com.au/department-of-environment-land-water-and-planning-delwp-2019/>

# Staff with disabilities



Accessibility at work means everyone has the tools they need to bring their whole selves to work and perform their role in the way that suits them best – to me, this comes in the form of compassionate colleagues and a workplace which is open-minded to different ways of work.

– ELLA BROADBENT,  
SENIOR ADVISOR DISABILITY

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I'd like to feel comfortable coming in to work, knowing that I won't be patronized or disrespected, or that if you ask for stuff, it's not such a big deal to do.

– DELWP PARTICIPANT,  
VPS ENABLERS BRINGING  
OUR WHOLE SELVES TO  
WORK RESEARCH PROJECT





## Aisha

### Diversity and Inclusion Officer

**How long have you been working in DELWP, or in the Victorian public service? How has your lived experience shaped your work life?**

My time at DELWP, begun my VPS career. I started in 2018 and have spent that time working primarily within Corporate Services. My lived experience is as a person who lives with a number of disabilities that are not externally visible that I need to re-express my requirements for workplace adjustments as I change organisations and teams. At times over my entire work life, I have inadvertently been described as needing to 'focus on details more', 'slow down and take my time' specifically if I want progress my career, with something that is a cause of my neurodiversity. At times my chronic mental illness has required me to take short to extended times of personal leave.

**What have the challenges and opportunities been working as a person with disability at DELWP?**

The opportunities that DELWP has given me is I feel that I can bring my whole self to work and be open about my holistic wellbeing. For the

first time in my working life, there has been a normalisation of the diversity of what living with a disability and positive productivity in the workplace looks like. A key challenge for me is that due to my neurodiversity, I am sometimes still pigeon held as being not as capable as others, as it takes me longer to complete longer written tasks, ensuring that my spelling is correct. Leaving me at times quite exhausted.

**What does an inclusive and accessible workplace look like to you?**

People leaders and co-workers being reflective of what each member of their team brings, the diversity of what some define as living with a disability and that they need to reflect that there may be a myriad of reasons behind why a person does not deliver to their specific standards.

**What do you think the future of inclusion at DELWP will look like?**

It will be an acknowledgement of the benefits in having diverse lens that view and respond to problems and challenges. It will also be a shift in everyone not viewing the world and 'normal' through their own prism, but one of genuine curiosity of looking through different people's eyes.



## Mandy

### Senior Policy Advisor

**How long have you been working in DELWP, or in the Victorian public service? How has your lived experience shaped your work life?**

I have worked in DELWP for 14 years. My lived experience with acquired disability has been a big transition personally and professionally. But I have now learnt that my differences do not make me deficient, and that everyone uses compensatory strategies and approaches to grow and progress in career and personal life. All that is needed to remove barriers to success and wellbeing, is support and understanding.

**What have the challenges and opportunities been working as a person with disability at DELWP?**

The primary challenges for me have been overcoming the dominant culture perspective and the feeling of vulnerability when discussing /declaring impairment. Particularly overcoming incorrect unconscious biases around low expectations, just because a person needs to work differently. Joining the All Abilities Network has been a great support, as well as DELWP's work to create a more safe and inclusive workplace to support different styles of working and flexible work approaches.

**What does an inclusive and accessible workplace look like to you?**

A workplace that asks every employee, not just those with a disability, 'What do you need to perform at your best?'. A workplace that has strength based/abilities focused approaches, that focus on 'what a person can do, rather than what they can't do'. A workplace that overcomes the dominant culture perspective. A workplace that doesn't quantify disability through a risk lens, but supports and values all styles of working.

**What do you think the future of inclusion at DELWP will look like?**

Promoting space for difference. Promoting a culture of kindness and understanding, without judgment. Rather than focusing on what a disabled person can or can't do, the focus needs to shift to putting the responsibility on all of us to remove barriers, and provide for a diverse and inclusive workplace.

A workplace that is safe and inclusive and is disability confident and aware. A workplace that is curious, not judgemental.



## Strengthening access and inclusion within DELWP

This three-year AIP will guide DELWP to address the barriers experienced by people with disability in the work environment. It will help us build greater awareness and disability confidence among our people and create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the Victorian community we serve.

### Victorian state disability plan and national disability strategy

DELWP is committed to delivering its obligations to the community as outlined in the State disability plan 2021–2025. This includes several commitments that map against both the State plan and national disability strategy outcome areas.

### Our progress to date

The 2018–2020 AIP was DELWP's first plan to increase meaningful outcomes for people with disability. The focus of the original plan was to build the foundation for sustainable change to better include people with disability in our workforce and our community. We are proud to have delivered the following outcomes.

### Driving change

The DELWP All Abilities Network and the Autism Success Network are committed to driving change for employees with disability across the department. They have collaborated with the broader Enablers Network to successfully deliver events, promote awareness and provide valuable input into processes and policies such as DELWP's flexible work arrangements and return-to-work procedures following COVID-19.

### Keeping employees with disability safe

Implementing the Personal emergency evacuation plan process and procedure has increased safety for employees with disability at DELWP. In having such a plan, our employees can document their specific requirements in case an emergency occurs at their place of work.

### Enhancing accessible communications

With an increased focus on delivering accessible communications, we have trained 112 team members on creating accessible content. This has improved the way we write and develop our content, to provide the opportunity for people with disability to receive information in the format they prefer.



What's important for managers to realise is that everyone is different. The range of experiences so diverse. Some people have sensory challenges and are really sensitive to their environment, some may not. Communication is the key.



– ALL ABILITIES  
NETWORK MEMBER





#### PROFILE:

## Ella Broadbent

### Senior Advisor – Disability

I joined the VPS fresh out of university in 2019, and have since had the chance to work at four different departments – including two stints at DELWP. I was welcomed into the Enablers Network in my first role at the Department of Justice and Community Safety – being a part of the disability community in the VPS helped me to realise I really had something to contribute as a young professional with a chronic health condition. This informed my pivot to disability policy in 2020, where I have been working ever since.

My two roles at this department have been vastly different and have helped me to understand the nuances between working within one of the DELWP's portfolio areas and working in Corporate Services. Everything I learned in my first role at DELWP has informed how I create policy and programs to support staff with disability as the Senior Advisor, Disability in Corporate Services.

My role supports staff with disability, health conditions and carers across the department, and ensures we embed best practice in our policies and programs. I am always available for a conversation about workplace adjustments, supports, learning and development and recruitment.

I think DELWP is beginning its journey in external and internal disability inclusion. This not only means an inclusive and safe work environment for DELWP staff with disability, health conditions and carers, but also an acknowledgement of where our work as a department interacts with Victorians with disability and their carers – and how we can make Victoria a more accessible and inclusive state.



Accessibility at work means everyone has the tools they need to bring their whole selves to work and perform their role in the way that suits them best – to me, this comes in the form of compassionate colleagues and a workplace which is open-minded to different ways of work.



– ELLA BROADBENT,  
SENIOR ADVISOR DISABILITY





# Inclusion in the community

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To have the experience of being given the opportunity to really succeed because of all of those barriers that were causing me so much additional stress on me, all of that was removed. And so, I was able to present myself as the best person I could be.

//

– HANNAH KERBER, DELWP EMPLOYEE

The DELWP Community charter recognises the diversity of the Victorian community, and strives to ensure our service delivery is inclusive. Several existing DELWP programs deliver on this commitment to support the accessibility of Victoria's built and natural environment.

### **Coastcare Victoria Summer by the Sea**

Each year during the January school holidays, Coastcare Victoria, delivered by DELWP, delivers hundreds of free 'Summer by the Sea' activities. The online 2021 program has provided all its podcasts with accompanied English transcripts as well as all videos made accessible with closed captions for people with a hearing impairment.

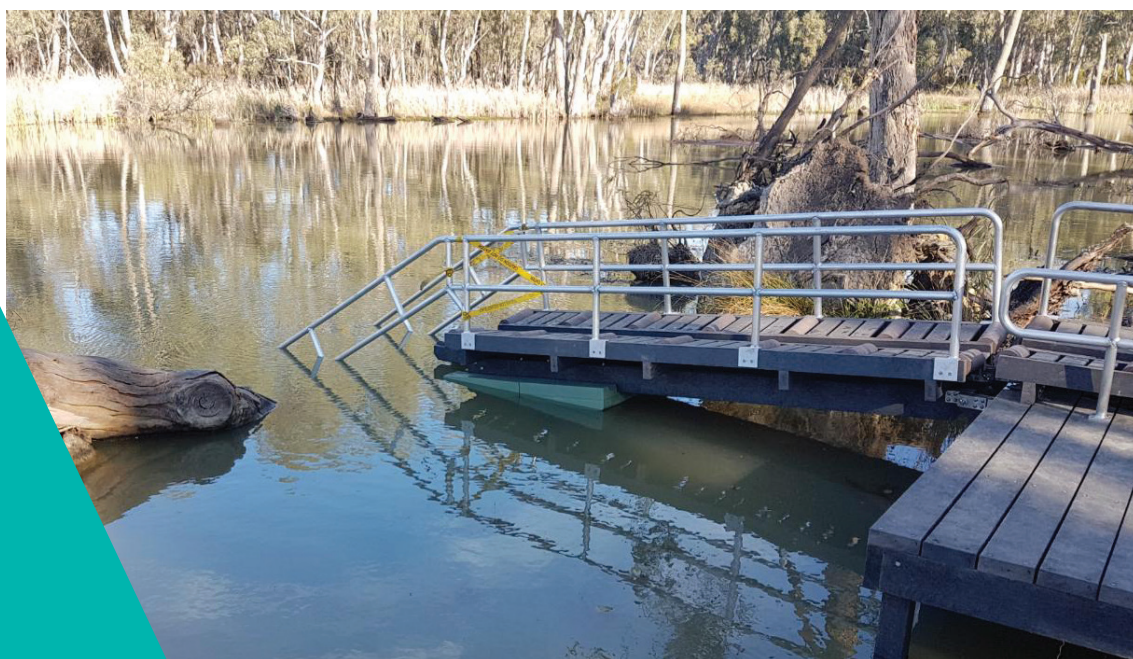
### **Victoria's Great Outdoors All-Abilities campgrounds, walking trails and facilities**

We want to help make camping easier for people with disabilities, so we've constructed several all-abilities facilities across Victorian State parks with all-abilities features including those detailed below.

### **Gunbower Canoe Launcher**

A new all-abilities canoe launching ramp has been installed at Gunbower, allowing all visitors to enjoy safer fishing and canoeing and providing easier access to the Gunbower State Forest Canoe Trail.

– GUNBOWER CANOE LAUNCHER





### Steavenson Falls (in development)

A major redevelopment of a popular visitor area and campsite is taking place at Steavenson Falls. The site has been redesigned to be 90 per cent DDA compliant with Disability Discrimination Act requirements. It will include a new, wider bridge at an appropriate gradient, rest areas and distributed seating. A sculpture of the falls will allow visitors with low vision to experience their surrounds via touch.

### Victorian Government commitment to national accessible building standards

Through our participation in the Building Ministers Meeting and Australian Building Codes Board, Victoria is leading the way in its commitment to supporting the construction industry to transition to new minimum accessible housing standards – work being led within DELWP. This includes investigating potential measures to increase the availability of homes with accessible features.

#### – STEAVENSON FALLS



**I think there's a long way to go in reducing the stigma about disability – the view that people with disability are more of a burden than an asset.**



– DELWP PARTICIPANT,  
VPS ENABLERS BRINGING  
OUR WHOLE SELVES TO  
WORK RESEARCH PROJECT

### Our ongoing commitment to access and inclusion

DELWP will continue to provide our workforce with the necessary tools and resources to keep improving our access and inclusion journey.

Our Digital and Customer Communications teams will continue to deliver training on accessible communication standards and creating accessible content. This will be expanded to include a greater understanding of the specifications of the **World content accessibility guidelines**.

A positive work environment increases productivity and workplace satisfaction, and DELWP will continue to facilitate and offer mental health and wellbeing training.

This training was highly beneficial during the adjustments to working arrangements throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and will provide ongoing support to all employees. In addition, the training will continue to promote and offer flexible working arrangements for all staff, including people with disability, to ensure ongoing flexibility is supported and maintained.



### **Lynn Bremner**

Our illustrator – Lynn Bremner – was commissioned to create a series of illustrations of our staff and Department for this plan with her bold, colourful and dynamic art style. Her work, which depicts friendly and inclusive faces and spaces, conveys the optimism and enthusiasm for inclusive practices we are working to embody at DELWP.

Our covering illustration depicts the built and natural environment we support, alongside our staff and Victorians with disability, their carers and allies. Lynn's portrait series illustrates two of the friendly and colourful faces of Disability at DELWP – as seen in situ in their home offices – as the COVID-19 remote working environment limited our ability to capture photographs of our staff

Through these illustrations we hope to convey a vision of our the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning as a safe, welcoming and inclusive space for Victorians and DELWP staff with disability, chronic health conditions and carers.

# Access and inclusion beyond 2021

Equitable and dignified access to services, facilities, communications and employment processes can be achieved by integrating access and inclusion across DELWP.

To do this, the department has identified 22 key actions over four priority areas, to be implemented within three financial years starting 30 June 2021.



## Priority 1: Inclusive workplace culture and capability



ACTION	YEAR <sup>^</sup>	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	OWNER
<b>Disability initiatives championed at Deputy Secretary level to build a disability-confident workforce</b>				
<b>Action 1:</b> Develop a DELWP disability employment action plan, with targets for special measures positions, disability secondments and internships/graduate positions set for each group.	2021–22 2022–23	Commitment to increasing employment of people with disability is demonstrated at the highest level.	Increased number of applicants and successful candidates with disability Disability employment targets are met.	Group Deputy Secretaries and Corporate Services
<b>Action 2:</b> Participate in the government-wide mentoring program pilot, with a specific focus on mentoring support for our neurodiverse employees.	2021–22	Neurodiverse employees are supported to progress their career at DELWP.	Two employees are supported within the pilot, with tailored support provided to mentors and mentees.	People and Culture
<b>Action 3:</b> Develop a data collection and reporting framework within existing corporate systems that complies with privacy requirements and staff preferences to measure onboarding, retention and support of employees with disability.	2021–22	Stronger data collection and reporting measures are embedded into our corporate systems to enable continuous improvement and accountability and compliance with privacy requirements.	DELWP's progress supporting employees with disability is measured and embedded in group performance reporting and AIP indicator reporting while protecting privacy where required.	People and Culture
<b>Action 4:</b> Develop and implement a facilitated intervention process and framework to ensure people with disability and carers are supported and obtain the right adjustments to enable them to perform at their best.	2022–23	Our people leaders are accountable for a safe, respectful and inclusive work environment at DELWP.	A Disability Safety framework is developed and embedded into our Safe and Respectful Workplaces program.	People and Culture

<sup>^</sup>Financial year



ACTION	YEAR^	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	OWNER
<b>Our workforce is disability-confident and understands the social model of disability</b>				
<b>Action 5:</b> The Access and inclusion plan 2021–2024 is embedded in the broader People and Culture corporate communications framework.	Ongoing	The AIP actions and activities are regularly promoted to employees, enabling increased knowledge and awareness on the inclusion of people with disability.	The People and Culture communications plan features AIP items, including a yearly review of AIP progress.	People and Culture
<b>Action 6:</b> The government-wide disability awareness e-learn modules are made available to all DELWP employees and are mandatory for all people leaders.	2021–22	DELWP employees understand how to eliminate barriers to employment and how to create safe, respectful and inclusive work environments for people with disability.	60% of people leaders have completed the training by 2023.	People and Culture
<b>Action 7:</b> Tailored support and disability confidence training is provided to Recruitment and HR Advisory teams.	2021–22	DELWP's Recruitment and HR Advisory teams have the capability and capacity to support employees with disability.	60% of DELWP's Recruitment and HR Advisory team members have completed the training by 2023.	People and Culture
<b>Our employees with disability have the tools and resources to perform their role at their best</b>				
<b>Action 8:</b> Implement a new workplace adjustment policy and scope mechanisms for enhanced accountability and privacy.	2021–22	Employees with disability have increased opportunities to perform their role at their best.	Existing and new employees are provided with workplace adjustments in line with updated procedure. Decrease in the number of People Matters Survey respondents whose adjustment request was not implemented.	People and Culture
<b>Action 9:</b> Develop a dedicated disability and carers resource on our intranet (Ada) that includes relevant policies, information, checklists and networks.	2021–22	Increased access to resources and information supports disability confidence at DELWP.	Disability inclusion tools and resources are developed to provide knowledge and understanding of DELWP's disability policies and processes.	Information Services
<b>Our recruitment processes enable full and inclusive participation for people with disability</b>				
<b>Action 10:</b> Review and implement DELWP's internal employment and recruitment processes to ensure they are accessible	2022–23	Candidates with disability have the support they need to successfully apply for roles	Increased number of applicants and successful candidates with disability	People and Culture
<b>Action 11:</b> Review the position descriptions and criteria requirements of the State Control Centre and regional incident support roles and our fit-for-emergency testing to remove barriers for people with disability	2022–23	Employees with disability can fully participate in DELWP's emergency management efforts	Completed review of emergency management intake procedures, with recommendations provided for consideration	People and Culture

## Priority 2: Inclusive places and spaces

ACTION	YEAR^	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	OWNER
<b>The DELWP physical environment provides an inclusive employee experience and makes DELWP offices more accessible to the community</b>				
<b>Action 12:</b> Review all access audit reports and develop a priority list for implementation	2021–22	A fully accessible environment that is welcoming to employees and community members with disability	Building access audits are assessed, and a plan is developed for implementation	Information Services
<b>Action 13:</b> Review commonly procured office items to ensure barriers are eliminated and that they are accessible	2022–23	Our commonly procured items have minimal barriers for people with disability in our workplace	Our commonly procured items have minimal barriers for people with disability in our workplace	People and Culture

## Priority 3: Inclusive information and communication

ACTION	YEAR^	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	OWNER
<b>Our information and communications are accessible for people with disability</b>				
<b>Action 14:</b> Undertake an audit of our intranet to ensure it meets current web accessibility compliance standards and establish a framework to deliver prioritised updates	2023–24	Employees with disability feel included and have access to the information they need in the format they require	The DELWP intranet complies with web content accessibility guidelines	People and Culture
<b>Action 15:</b> Review our website information for alternative formats of documents to ensure all documentation meets accessibility standards	2023–24	People with disability feel included and have access to the information they need in the format they require	Alternative formats are available on the DELWP website for people with disability	Digital and Customer Comms

## Priority 4: Inclusive communities

ACTION	YEAR^	OUTCOME	INDICATOR	OWNER
<b>DELWP is committed to supporting people with disability in the community, ensuring our services engage effectively with the community</b>				
<b>Action 16:</b> Review all current grant management program guidelines, webpages, guideline templates and other supporting documents to ensure they comply with access and inclusion requirements	2023–24	Our grants programs are fair and equitable and include opportunities for people with disability and disability organisations	Grant program design and guidelines include access and inclusion measures	Finance
<b>We increase access and inclusion for people with disability and use our purchasing power to influence social procurement</b>				
<b>Action 17:</b> Promote the opportunity to expand social procurement to include disability social enterprises where possible	2023–24	Increased economic participation for people with disability in the community	Increased number of procurements from disability organisations each successive financial year	Finance
<b>Our events and programs are accessible to people with disability</b>				
<b>Action 18:</b> Review and implement the accessible events guidelines and create a guidance document with examples and contacts for subject matter experts	2021–22	Increased participation by people with disability at DELWP events and programs across Victoria	Our accessible event guidelines are updated and communicated	Digital and Customer Comms
<b>Action 19:</b> Provide disability confidence training to customer-facing employees	2022–23	Our employees understand how to proactively remove barriers and ensure people with disability in the community feel included	Customer-facing teams in DELWP's Customer Contact Centre undertake inclusion training	People and Culture
<b>Action 20:</b> Audit DELWP sites for communication access boards, TTY and Hearing Loops, alongside training for customer-facing employees, and implement at 20 per cent of appropriate DELWP locations	2023–24	People with disability in our community feel included and have access to the information they need in the format they prefer	Sites are identified for implementing accessible communication options for people with disability, and resources are implemented at 50 per cent of appropriate locations	Information Services
<b>People with disability have a voice and their concerns are understood and respected</b>				
<b>Action 21:</b> Review DELWP's complaint and feedback systems to include a disability-related category for the purpose of continuous improvement	2022–23	Systemic issues are identified and resolved in a timely manner. Increased satisfaction in customer service experiences for people with disability	DELWP's complaints system captures issues relating to people with disability for review and action	Digital and Customer Comms
<b>Action 22:</b> (to be released) Ensure DELWP's public engagement processes are inclusive of people with a disability and we are meeting our obligations under the public engagement framework	2021–22 2022–23	Inclusive engagement practices increase the participation of people with a disability in decisions that impact or interest them	Engagement of people with disability in our engagement practices is measured. We have established relationships with disability peak bodies across Victoria managed with a One-DELWP approach	Digital and Customer Comms

## Governance, reporting and accountability

The AIP has a strong governance model, and progress towards its outcomes will be regularly reported to relevant governance groups.

The AIP and its implementation will be monitored via embedded actions in our internal reporting system (Sytle), with an Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group meeting regularly to highlight and assess any potential risks. The working group will also ensure the progress of the plan is updated. This will contribute to our annual reporting responsibilities. The Diversity and Inclusion team will lead the coordination of this working group, with DELWP's Senior Advisor, Disability overseeing implementation at the team level.

Responsible executives will meet every six months to monitor implementation of the plan and adjust priorities and actions as necessary. The Bord will annually assess any reviews and adjustments to the plan, with a final evaluation of the plan completed at the end of year three.

The following table details key roles and responsibilities that inform the AIP's governance structure. These actions ensure continued monitoring of the plan's progress across its lifetime.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
DELWP will ensure this plan is lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission	Senior Advisor, Disability
The Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group will meet quarterly to track and monitor actions	Implementation leads
DELWP will provide meaningful and measurable outcomes on the progress of this plan in its annual report	People and Culture Stewardship Committee
DELWP will undertake an annual review of the AIP to ensure it remains consistent with national and State disability frameworks	Senior Advisor, Disability
DELWP will regularly monitor and review actions in our internal reporting system (Sytle) and collate information for reporting purposes	Implementation leads / Senior Disability Advisor



# Appendix: Legislation and policy frameworks

The access and inclusion plan sets out how DELWP will consider meaningful outcomes for people with disability. DELWP has responsibilities under both Commonwealth and State legislation, including relevant international frameworks and strategies, to ensure barriers are removed for people with disability.

## International context

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Came into force in Australia in 2008 and sets out obligations around equality and non-discrimination, accessibility and the right to live independently and be included in the community.

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## National context

### **Australia's disability strategy (2021–2031)**

A 10-year national plan for inclusion, providing an overarching approach for government to meet obligations under the UN convention.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

Makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful in areas including employment, education and access to premises, goods, services and facilities.

### **National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State and territory governments to provide access to disability supports for eligible people with disability

### **Information Linkages and Capacity Building program**

Part of the broader remit of the NDIS to make the community more inclusive and accessible for all people with disability, not just those eligible for an NDIS plan

### **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**

Seeks to understand the experiences of people with disability and to recommend important safeguards. The commission is due to conclude in September 2023.

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## Victorian context

### **Disability Act 2006**

Provides a whole-of-government and community response to the rights and needs of people with disability. Provisions include a requirement to have a four-year State disability plan.

### **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**

### **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006**

### **State disability plan (2021–2025)**

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## Victorian local government & government agencies

### **Disability action plans**

Ensures local governments and certain agencies are delivering services and building communities that are accessible and inclusive.

### **Access and inclusion plan (2021–2024)**

## International

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the United Nations in 2006 and Australia became a signatory in 2008. The convention promotes the social model of disability and reaffirms that all people with all types of disability must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. Out of the 17 goals for the Toward 2030 agenda, five specifically mention outcomes for people with disability. These goals include goal 4 – Quality Education, goal 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities, goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, and goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals.

The Web content accessibility guidelines are a set of internationally recognised guidelines produced by W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) and are used by web developers and other interested audiences. They define how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. This can include information on a webpage or web application ranging from text, images, forms, sounds and more.

## National

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services or facilities against people on the basis that they have, or may have, disability. It is also unlawful to discriminate on the basis that a person has or may have associates with disability.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 establishes the framework in which the NDIS operates and promotes person-centred outcomes to promote inclusion of people with disability in the community.

The National disability strategy outlines a 10-year national policy framework to guide government and was endorsed by the former Council of Australian Governments on 13 February 2013

The Commonwealth's Access to premises standards 2010 set performance requirements and provide references to technical specifications to ensure dignified access to, and use of, buildings and infrastructure are equitable for people with disability.

The Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 provides for the rights of people with disability and addresses discrimination complaints in employment.

## State

The Victorian Disability Act 2006 provides for a strong whole-of-government, whole-of-community response to the rights and needs of people with disability and established a framework for providing high-quality services and supports for people with disability. Under section 38 of the Act, government agencies must prepare a disability action plan (also known as an access and inclusion action plan) that identifies actions to remove barriers and increase inclusion for people with disability.

The Victorian State disability plan 2021–2025 is legislated under the Disability Act, where public authorities and local governments must prepare disability action plans. This mainly applies to government departments and agencies.

Under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, it is against the law to discriminate against a person on the basis of disability and carer status, along with personal association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, any of the characteristics listed within the Act, including disability.

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 sets out our freedoms, rights and responsibilities. This formal recognition of our human rights protects people from injustice and allows everyone to participate in and contribute to society.

<sup>13</sup> The current national disability strategy Beyond 2020 had not been released at the time of the development of this plan.

<sup>14</sup> The Victorian Disability Act Review had not been finalised at the time of developing this plan.

# How can you contribute?

DELWP's access and inclusion plan provides the opportunity for us to work with our community to increase engagement and promote continuous improvement and innovations in access and inclusion.

**We welcome your feedback.**

If you have feedback or suggestions about this plan, you can email us at [diversity.inclusion@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:diversity.inclusion@delwp.vic.gov.au)

