

Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029



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.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



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Message from the Secretary

I am pleased to share DEECA's Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029 (the Plan).

The Plan reaffirms our commitment to a disability-confident workforce, supported by strong governance structures and visible accountability. It outlines how we will make informed decisions about organisational priorities, ensuring decision-making considers the lived experience of people with disability and is genuinely connected to the operational reality of our work. This includes understanding what support employees with disability need, how programs of work are designed and delivered, and how our organisation resources and supports responsible implementation.

The Plan has been co-designed with our people, drawing on insights, lived experience and subject matter expertise to ensure it is practical, relevant, and impactful. It is structured around four key pillars:

- Leading with accountability
- Designing a workplace for people first
- Building a disability-confident culture
- Supporting people to thrive

Delivering this Plan requires shared responsibility and visible leadership across every level. Policies, systems, processes, and practices must be aligned so that expectations are clear, implementation is supported, and progress is measured transparently.

Effective governance is central to this work. A clear link between strategy, operations and workforce experience ensures that we build a culture where people with disability are supported to contribute their best and where disability confidence is reinforced through shared values, beliefs, and behaviours.

Contributing to a positive workplace culture is essential – not only for delivering results to the community but for creating an environment where everyone can bring their whole self to work. One of the simplest expectations I hold is to treat people the way they want to be treated. This principle underpins inclusion and helps create a safe space for authenticity, learning and growth.

Our commitment is to remove systemic barriers to equal employment opportunities through transparent accountability, continuous improvement, and responsiveness to lived experiences. We will monitor outcomes, report openly, and continue to listen, learn, and evolve.

DEECA will continue to work on embedding access and inclusion. Every DEECA employee deserves a workplace that values their strengths, acknowledges their uniqueness and actively removes barriers to full participation. This Plan is our next step to making that a reality.

Kate Houghton PSM

(She/Her)

Secretary, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action



Message from our All-Abilities Network (AAN)

Established in 2018, the All Abilities Network (AAN) is a volunteer staff-led network dedicated to supporting and empowering employees with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and caring responsibilities to thrive in their roles.

With one in five Australians living with a disability—and approximately 80–85% of these being non-visible—DEECA staff are directly impacted, either as individuals with a disability or as carers. By fostering an inclusive workplace for staff of all abilities, DEECA sets a strong example for partner agencies and stakeholders, contributing to a more inclusive Victorian public sector.

Despite progress, fear of disclosing a disability remains a significant barrier, often resulting in physical, attitudinal, communication, or social challenges. DEECA's 2025 People Matter Survey revealed that 43% of staff chose not to disclose their disability due to concerns about negative impacts. While this represents an improvement from previous years, it underscores the need for continued efforts to create a psychologically safe workplace.

We recognise that:

- Diverse and inclusive organisations are thriving organisations.
- Inclusion of staff with diverse abilities is essential for individual wellbeing and organisational success.
- A workforce that reflects the diversity of the Victorian community strengthens engagement and aligns with our organisational charter to put the community at the centre of everything we do.
- An inclusive workplace attracts and retains talented people.

The AAN believes staff should feel safe and valued because of their diverse identities—not despite them.

AAN members have contributed their time, expertise, and lived experience to the development of the Access and Inclusion Plan 2026–2029 (AIP). This process included feedback sessions and action reviews to ensure DEECA remains focused on improvement and accountability. The AIP is a critical step toward creating a culturally and psychologically safe workplace and building a disability-confident workforce.

The AAN looks forward to DEECA becoming a disability confident employer and seeing staff with disabilities, chronic illnesses, and caring responsibilities thrive under the outcomes of this plan and beyond.

AAN Executive Leadership Team



Access and Inclusion at DEECA

DEECA brings together Victoria’s energy, environment, water, agriculture, forestry, resources, climate action, and emergency management functions into a single department to maximise connections between the environment, community, industry and economy.

Our challenge is to improve Victoria’s liveability with a population expected to almost double by 2050 while responsibly tackling climate change and protecting our natural environment, infrastructure and heritage for future generations.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and able to contribute their best. We know that embracing diversity and fostering inclusion is essential to delivering the best outcomes for the Victorian communities we serve. This means building a positive organisational culture grounded in strong leadership, collaboration, innovation, and the growth of our people. Our vision is a workplace that welcomes individual differences in all their forms and proactively removes barriers to participation and opportunity. This commitment is reflected not only in our values, but also in how we meet our responsibilities under the Victorian Public Sector Employment Standards and uphold the principles of fairness, equality, and human rights in every part of how we work.

What is our Access and Inclusion Plan?

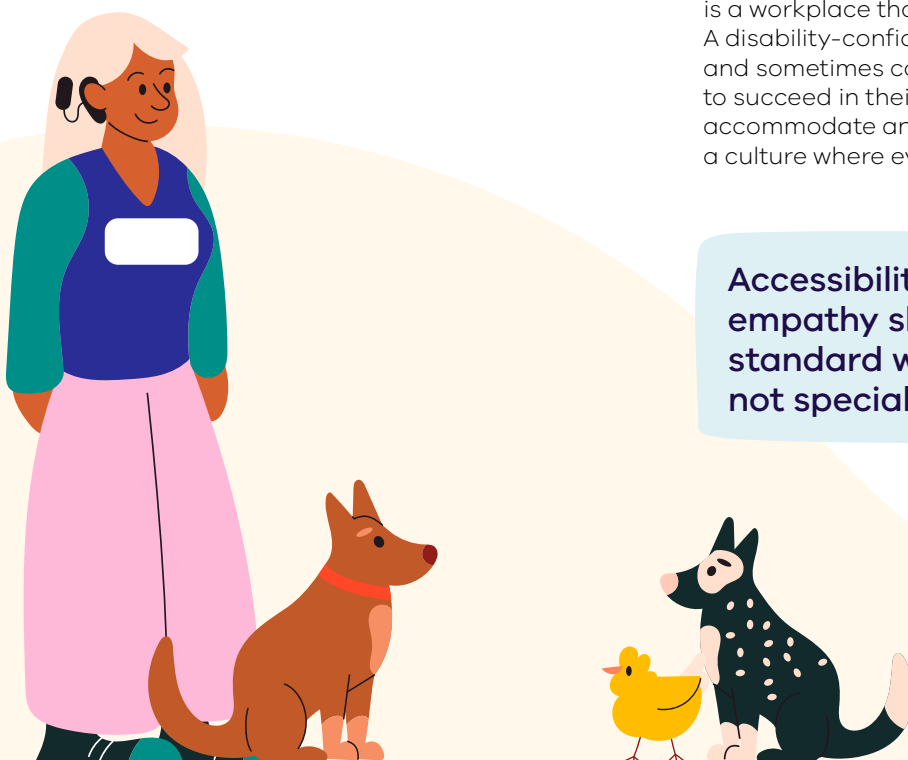
Our Access and Inclusion Plan (the plan) sets out our vision for an organisation that is disability-confident, accessible, inclusive, and empowering for people with disability. It outlines a clear pathway to achieving tangible progress over the next four years through sustainable and scalable actions.

The plan is grounded in the belief that diverse experiences, perspectives, and needs strengthen our workforce culture and are critical enablers of innovative service delivery to the Victorian community.

The inclusion and support of all forms of diversity must be designed into the everyday experience, not made conditionally available to those who fit within existing policies or processes. True inclusion requires flexible structures, systems and attitudes that embrace people’s continuously changing lives, not just accommodate them when convenient.

A workplace that works for people with disability is a workplace that works better for everyone. A disability-confident employer supports the varying and sometimes complex needs employees have to succeed in their role. When we build systems that accommodate and support diversity, we create a culture where everyone can thrive.

Accessibility, flexibility, and empathy should always be standard workplace experiences—not special circumstances.



A note on language

The words 'our' and 'we' in this document refer to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA).

The department acknowledges the evolving nature of language and its assigned meaning. Language is a powerful tool for building inclusion at work, and we are committed to using respectful, accurate, inclusive, and strengths-based terms. In doing so, we acknowledge that there is no universal conceptualisation of disability, which is perceived differently across cultures.

Person-first and identity-first language

We have used the term 'people with disability' in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and most recent Australian government guidance. This aligns with what is known as person-first language, which recognises that disability is one part of a person's identity, not a defining feature.

We recognise that some people prefer identity-first language (such as "disabled person" or "Autistic person") as a source of pride, identity, or alignment with community and culture. We respect the right of individuals and communities to define their own language preferences, and we are committed to listening, learning, and evolving our language over time.

Defining disability

This plan uses a broad definition of disability, adopting definitions from Victorian and Commonwealth law and the social model of disability. This intentionally broad definition allows us to best capture the breadth of people's lived experiences with disability.

Victorian and Commonwealth legislation defines disability as:

- physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities
- disabilities that are permanent or temporary, visible or invisible
- conditions and impairments present from birth, acquired or developed during a person's life due to accident, condition, illness or injury
- future disability, such as a health condition that runs in your family that you may develop

Some people may experience fluctuating or episodic disability, or may have multiple disabilities, which can result in different support needs over time.

A person with disability can also include someone who has not shared their disability or someone who does not identify as a person with disability.

Social model of disability

In addition to the legal definition, this plan is informed by the social model of disability, which recognises that it is attitudes, behaviours, and environmental factors, not a person's disability, that create barriers to participation in work and life.

This model shifts the focus to removing these barriers, so that everyone has equal access, inclusion, and opportunity in the workplace.

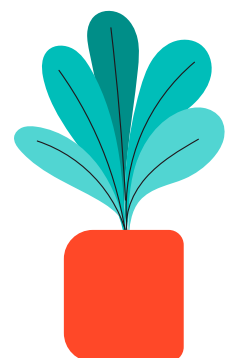
Ableism

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

Intersectionality

Ableism also helps us understand how disability discrimination can intersect with other forms of inequality. Intersectionality recognises that people may face compounding discrimination, including when ableism combines with sexism, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or ageism.

These overlapping forms of discrimination can create additional barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, LGBTIQ+ communities, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and older and younger people with disability.



Lived experience of disability

The department's vision for diversity and inclusion is a workforce that reflects the diversity of the Victorian community we serve. Combining Victorian Census data and People Matter Survey responses enables us to understand who makes up our workforce, identify where barriers may exist, and highlight where progress is being made. By grounding our actions in evidence, we can ensure our efforts to create a more accessible and inclusive department are both targeted and meaningful.

Disability in Victoria - data from the 2022 Victorian Census

26%

of Victorians have a disability.

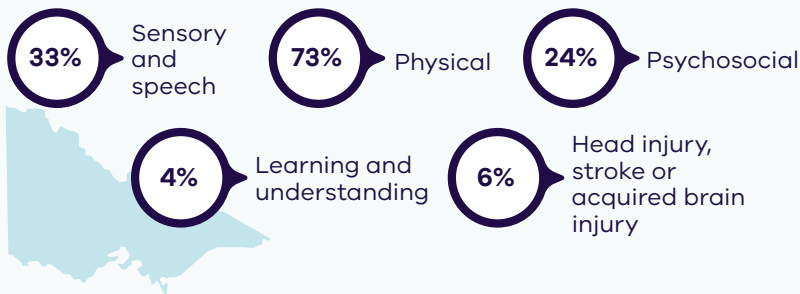
Of those:

- **48%** were male*, and
- **51%** were female.

*Sex-based language used by the survey.

11% of Victorians are a carer for a person with a disability, health condition or due to old age

Type of disability



Population experiences

- **10%** have experienced disability discrimination in the last 12 months
- **27%** experienced discrimination or unfair treatment from an employer
- **23%** experienced discrimination or unfair treatment from a work colleague
- **29%** avoided work due to their disability

Our diverse workforce - data from the 2025 People Matter Survey

Employee profile

9%

of staff identified as a person with disability.

- **60%** were women | **30%** were men
- **3%** were non-binary or used a different term

18% of staff cared for someone with a medical condition, mental illness, disability or due to old age or fragility

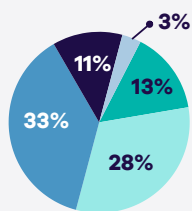
- **41%** of staff cared for children of secondary school age or below
- **16%** of staff were born overseas
- **2%** of staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Age

- **28%** 25–34 years
- **23%** 45–54 years
- **29%** 35–44 years
- **11%** 55–64 years

Employment of staff with disability

- **13%** VPS 1 to 3
- **28%** VPS 4
- **33%** VPS 5
- **11%** VPS 6 to 7
- **3%** executive or senior technical specialist
- **21%** fixed-term | **75%** ongoing
- **14%** frontline workers



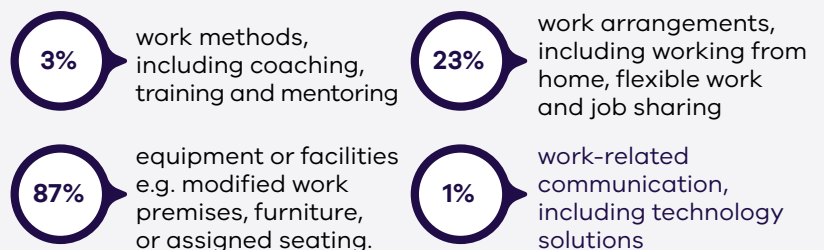
Workplace adjustments

1364

workplace adjustment requests were submitted

- **12%** listed 'disability' as a reason for requesting
- **32%** listed 'health' as a reason for requesting
- **35%** listed 'caring responsibilities' as a reason for requesting

Types of adjustments requested



Experiences of discrimination

Of those who identified as a person with disability, **12%** experienced discrimination in the last 12 months.

- **33%** denied flexible work arrangements or other adjustments
- **28%** denied opportunities for promotion
- **17%** denied opportunities for training or professional development
- **65%** experienced discriminatory behaviour from a manager or supervisor
- **43%** experienced discriminatory behaviour from an executive, senior leader or the head of your organisation
- **24%** experienced discriminatory behaviour from a colleague



Our access and inclusion pillars

Guided by the voices of our staff with disabilities, carers and allies, this plan is structured around four key pillars that will shape the future of our functional, operational, and strategic workplace environments.

Pillar 1: Leading with accountability and action

Disability-confident leadership at every level.

When leaders are visible, consistent, and active in driving disability inclusion, they instil confidence in everyone to follow. This includes providing clear direction, accountability, inclusive governance, and a strong foundation of rights-based organisational structures that translate into everyday experiences. Leaders have the power to prioritise time for genuine conversations of lived experience, normalise talking about disability, and help de-stigmatise it. Everyone contributes to disability inclusion, but leaders must champion it.

Pillar 2: Designing for people first

A workplace that works for everyone.

Accessible and inclusive design creates better workplaces for everyone. When inclusion is built in from the beginning, we don't place limits on who belongs in the workplace, what needs can be met, or who can succeed. Everyone is considered, and no one is left to adapt to a system that wasn't designed for them. This includes ensuring physical spaces, digital systems, recruitment and promotion processes, performance measures, and workplace adjustments are accessible, flexible, and built for people first.

Pillar 3: Building a disability-confident culture

Inclusion is how we work, not an add-on.

A culture of belonging means inclusion is felt in everyday experiences. People feel valued for what they add, not how well they 'fit in.' Disability inclusion is a shared responsibility and a way of working across the organisation, not limited to a team, policy, or plan. A disability-confident workforce culture is one that ensures the lived experiences of people with disability are visible, respected, and represented. Allyship, fairness, and organisational pride are championed in the workforce culture as a core value. Everyone has the tools, permission, and responsibility to call out opportunities to 'do better' and help build a workplace where all employees feel they belong.

Pillar 4: Supporting people to thrive

Growth, recognition, and opportunity at every stage of the employee journey.

People with disability have the same right to grow, lead, and succeed in ways that are meaningful to them in the workplace. Equitable access to opportunities and recognition is essential, from recruitment to onboarding, development, progression, and beyond. Supporting people with disability to thrive in the workplace means career pathways are transparent, accessible, and inclusive, and that learning, leadership, and decision-making are open to all. Every employee's journey is one of high-performance, autonomy, and trust, knowing that people thrive when access and inclusion needs are met.

Our Access and Inclusion Plan sets a clear expectation: disability inclusion is not the job of a few; it is the responsibility of all.

Access and inclusion beyond 2026

Equitable and dignified access to services, facilities, communications and employment processes can be achieved by integrating access and inclusion within the department’s operational structure.

To do this, the department has identified 11 key actions over four priority areas, to be implemented between 2026 to 2029. The below table identifies action owners that will collaborate with Groups and individuals to champion active citizenship as described in the 2026 – 2029 Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

Pillar 1: Leading with accountability and action

Objective: Disability-confident leadership at every level.

Action	Year(s)	Outcome
Action 1: Elevate de-identified data insights to enhance reporting and drive evidence-based, disability-confident business decisions to improve employment experiences for people living with disability.	2026	Better data leads to better outcomes. This action focuses on strengthening how the department captures, analyses, and uses disability-related information to inform decision-making. By benchmarking current practices, improving data standards, and developing dashboards, we provide leaders clear insights into where barriers exist and where progress is being made. Regular, de-identified reporting on recruitment, workplace adjustments, and service outcomes helps identify trends, close equity gaps, and ensure accountability. This data-driven approach enables confident, evidence-based decisions that advance inclusion and improve experiences for people with disability.
Action 2: Standardise disability-confident and inclusive capability into all people leader roles.	2026	Inclusive leadership is essential to building a workplace where everyone can thrive. This action embeds disability confidence as a core leadership capability across the department. By developing clear learning goals for inclusion in Performance Development Plans (PDPs) and strengthening awareness through leadership forums and communities of practice, the department ensures disability inclusion is consistently modelled from the top down. This action supports accountable, capable leadership that drives cultural change, improves employee experience, and strengthens our reputation as a disability-confident organisation.
Action 3: Embed disability and risk impact assessments into business processes for Groups through the development of targeted tools and guidance.	2027	Integrating disability considerations into everyday business processes ensures that inclusion is built into how the department makes decisions and not added on retrospectively. This action establishes practical tools and governance mechanisms that helps Groups identify and manage disability-related impacts and risks early in the process. By developing a disability impact assessment template, embedding these assessments into key approval pathways, the department can make more informed, equitable, and compliant decisions. This proactive approach strengthens organisational accountability and drives better outcomes for people with disability across all areas of our work.

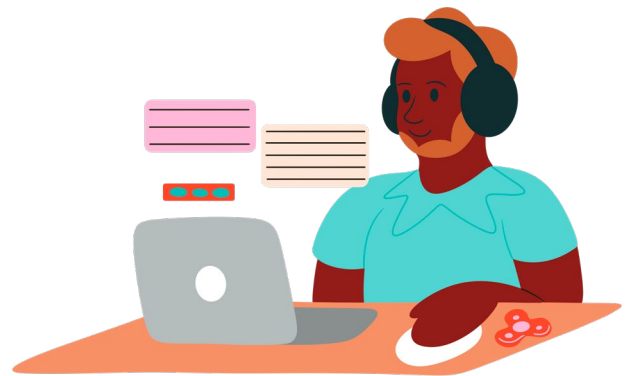


Activities	Measures	Owner
1.1 Undertake benchmarking and business needs analysis for data standards including workplace and recruitment adjustments / outcomes / applicants with disability metrics and reporting.	1.1.1 Benchmark and business needs analysis report completed.	People and Culture Division
1.2 Create live data dashboards to support decision-making and process improvements.	1.2.1 Live dashboards created and available for reporting.	
1.3 Implement annual collection and reporting of disaggregated data on outcomes for people with disability across services and programs, with clear strategies for closing identified gaps.	1.3.1 Reports are presented to D&I Council annually and on an as needs basis.	
2.1 Creation of Performance Development Plan (PDP) learning goal examples for leaders to include in their annual PDP.	2.1.1 Development of inclusion goals and guidance in PDP templates and supporting resources.	People and Culture Division and Strategic Communications Division
2.2 Increased promotion of disability confident awareness / capability.	2.2.1 At least four dedicated disability inclusion segments annually.	
3.1 Develop a Disability Impact Assessment template that enables Groups to identify, assess, and document the potential impacts of decisions, policies, and projects on people with disability.	3.1.1 Creation of Disability Impact Assessment tool/template.	People and Culture Division
3.2 Establish a standard practice requirement for when a Disability Impact Assessment should be completed.	3.2.1 Creation Disability Impact Assessment process and approval pathway.	
3.3 Embed the inclusion of high-level Disability Impact Assessment findings into Board templates and processes to ensure Board support evidence-based decision-making.	3.3.1 Create process for Disability Impact Assessment outcomes and recommendations to be included in Board governance papers.	

Pillar 2: Designing for people first

Objective: A workplace that works for everyone.

Action	Year(s)	Outcome
<p>Action 4: Design a sustainable and practical system for setting and maintaining dignified access to workplace environments.</p>	2028	<p>Creating inclusive workplaces starts with ensuring every employee and visitor can access our physical environments with dignity.</p> <p>This action focuses on embedding accessibility as a core part of DEECA's workplaces, meetings and events.</p> <p>By developing practical tools and consistent processes such as an accessibility checklist, a central repository of site features, and assessments of our current offices—we can identify and address barriers proactively.</p>



<p>Action 5: Integrate accessibility standards across all employee-facing platforms to deliver a consistent, inclusive digital experience.</p>	2028 – 2029	<p>Digital accessibility is essential to equitable participation and productivity.</p> <p>This action ensures the departments online environments, systems, and communications meet recognised accessibility standards, providing a consistent and inclusive experience for all.</p> <p>By aligning employee-facing platforms to WCAG 2.2 AA compliance, updating communications and eLearning templates for accessibility, and delivering targeted training to build capability, the department will embed accessibility into the digital lifecycle.</p> <p>This approach supports compliance, enhances user experience, and ensures everyone can access and engage with digital tools and information effectively.</p>
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Activity	Measures	Owner
4.1 Develop a checklist including physically accessible and inclusive requirements for events, meetings and workplaces	4.1.1 An accessibility checklist for running and planning events is available for staff to access.	People and Culture Division and Infrastructure and Procurement Services Division
4.2 Create a repository of accessibility features at each worksite for any staff to access	4.1.2 A checklist for accessible workspaces/buildings is available for staff to access.	
4.3 Assess current state accommodation/office locations to determine if they meet standard accessibility requirements	4.1.3 Annual report to D&I Council on workspaces that don't meet accessibility checklist requirements	
4.4 Promote SafeWell as a means to raise tickets regarding accessibility related hazards, incidents, barriers etc.	4.2.1 A repository of accessibility features for each work location including event spaces is available for staff to access.	
	4.3.1 Complete audit of all accommodation/work locations to determine if they meet accessibility requirements.	
	4.4.1 Communications plan executed to support people with disability reporting to SafeWell for accessibility related hazards, near misses and incidences.	
5.1 Standardise online environments and digital accessibility to AA level of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 compliance.	5.1.1 New and updated systems assessed against AA level of WCAG 2.2	
5.2 Review and update communications templates to ensure accessible branding, images, colour contrasts, videos, audio and templates for accessibility.	5.2.1 Review and update Microsoft Office templates to ensure accessible branding.	
5.3 Coordinate training for internal learning and digital communications designers to increase capability related to creating accessible content.	5.2.2 All new video and audio content on websites meet AA level of WCAG accessibility.	
5.4 Review and update department built eLearn's to ensure accessibility.	5.3.1 Number of training participants per year.	
5.5 Development of an access and inclusion commitment statement for the department's corporate website/s.	5.3.2 Bi-annual training sessions for internal learning and digital communications designers.	
	5.4.1 All e-learn modules/content meet AA level of WCAG 2.2.	
	5.4.2 Contracts with learning providers must include standardised accessibility requirements.	
	5.5.1 Access and inclusion commitment statement published on `corporate website/s.	

Pillar 3: Building a disability-confident culture

Objective: Inclusion is how we work, not an add-on.

Action	Year(s)	Outcome
<p>Action 6: Develop a structured opportunity for senior executive* leaders to learn directly from the lived experiences of employees with disability.</p> <p>*Senior Executive Service</p>	2029	<p>Building a disability-confident culture requires genuine understanding and connection.</p> <p>This action creates a structured platform for senior leaders to engage directly with the lived experiences of employees with disability, fostering empathy, insight, and accountability.</p> <p>Through initiatives such as opt-in mentoring, employees with disability can share perspectives that inform leadership decision-making while supporting their own professional development.</p> <p>This two-way learning approach strengthens leadership capability, promotes inclusion at all levels, and helps ensure that the voices of people with disability actively shape the organisation's culture and strategy.</p>
<p>Action 7: Embed inclusive learning design principles and disability content in all in-house learning products to ensure training and guidance are accessible and effective for all.</p>	2026-2029	<p>Embedding disability and neurodiversity inclusion across learning and development ensures every employee gains the knowledge and confidence to contribute to an inclusive workplace.</p> <p>This action focuses on integrating disability-aware and neuroinclusive principles into all internal training, leadership programs, and toolkits.</p> <p>By updating training to strengthen understanding of early interventions, workplace adjustments, and practical responses to discrimination and victimisation the department will increase capability at every level.</p> <p>This approach promotes equitable participation, prevents exclusion, and strengthens a culture of respect, safety, and inclusion.</p>
<p>Action 8: Amplify lived experiences of disability through storytelling, communication, and leadership-led recognition.</p>	2026-2029	<p>Authentic storytelling has the power to drive cultural change.</p> <p>This action focuses on celebrating and elevating the voices of people with disability across the department to build awareness, empathy, and inclusion.</p> <p>By implementing an annual communications plan that highlights key days of recognition and shares stories with lived experience of disability, and by creating a repository of case studies demonstrating inclusive practices in action, the department will make disability inclusion visible and relatable.</p> <p>Leadership-led recognition of these stories reinforces inclusive values, normalises adjustments, and strengthens a culture where employees with disability feel seen, supported, and valued.</p>



Activities	Measure	Owner
6.1 Create an opt-in program, such as mentoring, for people with disability to support their professional development and connect with senior leaders.	6.1.1 Create and launch mentoring program. 6.1.2 Number of participants per year. 6.1.3 Report on employee experience.	People and Culture Division
7.1 Update Safe and Respectful Workplaces training to include early intervention and workplace adjustments to support the mental health needs of employees.	7.1.1 Update Safe and Respectful Workplace training with People Matter Survey data and Workplace adjustment feedback (see Activity 10.2)	People and Culture Division
7.2 Curate an inclusive learning design toolkit to support learning designers and facilitators in applying accessibility and people-centric practices.	7.2.1 Number of toolkits distributed, and feedback received. 7.3.1 Number of training resources updated	
7.3 Update internal training materials, resources and toolkits to include content that is disability confident, embeds inclusivity and addresses discrimination and victimisation.	7.3.2 Feedback on training resources.	
8.1 Integrate elevated disability story telling in the annual communications plan through the celebration of days of recognition, sharing lived experiences and leadership-led recognition.	8.1.1 At least two disability-related communication campaigns or features delivered annually. 8.1.2 Number of comms posts / Ada Newsroom / Sec messages / Viva Engage / DEECA Digest mentions per year	People and Culture Division and Strategic Communications Division
8.2 Develop a repository of storytelling examples that can be used in a range of presentation/projects demonstrating support of people with disability and how their lived experiences of disability can be accommodated.	8.2.1 Number of communications with storytelling examples.	



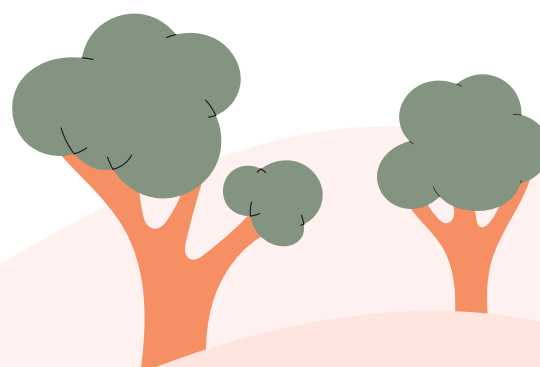
Pillar 4: Supporting people to thrive

Objective: Growth, recognition, and opportunity at every stage of the employee journey.

Action	Year(s)	Outcome
<p>Action 9: Implement a digital workplace adjustments system with clear workflows and tracking mechanisms to enhance accessibility and deliver inclusive outcomes.</p>	2026-2027	<p>A streamlined and transparent workplace adjustments process is critical to ensuring employees with disability receive timely, effective support to do their best work. This action focuses on modernising the department's workplace adjustment systems to improve efficiency, accountability, and the employee experience.</p> <p>By implementing a secure online platform to manage adjustment workflows, establishing a post-adjustment feedback survey to measure satisfaction and outcomes, and integrating de-identified adjustment data into live dashboards, the department will strengthen continuous improvements.</p> <p>This approach ensures adjustments are delivered consistently, equitably, and with measurable business insight.</p>
<p>Action 10: Establish a centralised, accessible intranet hub with disability-related information, support, and self-service resources for employees.</p>	2028	<p>Access to clear, reliable information is key to building confidence and capability in disability inclusion.</p> <p>This action focuses on creating an intranet hub that consolidates all disability-related resources, tools, and guidance in one easy-to-navigate, accessible location.</p> <p>By coordinating practical materials that support staff and people leaders, and enabling self-service access to information on adjustments, inclusive practices, and workplace support, DEECA will reduce barriers, improve consistency, and empower employees to take proactive steps toward inclusion. This centralised approach promotes awareness, efficiency, and a culture of shared responsibility for accessibility.</p>
<p>Action 11: Increase awareness and support for hidden and invisible disabilities</p>	2026-2029	<p>By normalising conversations about hidden disabilities, and ensuring equitable access to support, the department will foster a culture where all employees feel recognised, safe, and supported to perform at their best.</p> <p>This action ensures systems and procedures are inclusive of all disability experiences, not only those that are visible, helping to remove bias, improve consistency, and strengthen trust in organisational support mechanisms.</p> <p>By building understanding and confidence in supporting staff with hidden disabilities, and embedding considerations into workplace policies and practices, we provide a more disability confident culture.</p> <p>This action acts to build awareness and support for staff with non-visible disabilities addressing feelings of isolation those with hidden disabilities frequently experience.</p>



Activities	Measure	Owner
9.1 Establish a secure online system for managing workplace adjustment workflows and monitoring service delivery.	9.1.1 Launch a digital Workplace Adjustment management workflow tool.	People and Culture Division and Information Services Division
9.2 Create a Workplace Adjustment Feedback Survey (Post-Adjustment) to gather feedback from employees after workplace adjustment implementation ensuring it meets their needs and identifies areas for improvement.	9.2.1 Create a Workplace Adjustment Survey for staff with workplace adjustments.	
	9.3.1 Establish KPIs for positive feedback.	
9.3 Coordinate process for capturing de-identified data related to Workplace Adjustments that can be added to the live dashboards (see Activity 1.2).		
10.1 Establish an online self-service information hub that stores resources and information to increase staff capability in disability confidence by the end of 2028.	10.1.1 Collation and creation of Disability resources	People and Culture Division and Strategic Communications Division
10.2 Promote awareness of approved assistive digital tools through communication and content on the hub.	10.2.1 Creation of Disability Information Hub site	
	10.2.2 Disability Information Hub metrics i.e. number of resources downloads	
11.1 Support initiatives, such as the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, that build understanding in supporting employees with non-visible disabilities, chronic health conditions, and neurodiversity.	11.1.1 Support the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program.	People and Culture Division and Strategic Communications Division
11.2 Embed consideration of hidden disabilities into workplace policies and practices.	11.1.2 Number of employees that have completed the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower module.	
	11.1.3 Guidance materials on disclosure, privacy, and adjustments developed in collaboration with employees with lived experience of disability.	
	11.2.1 All new or reviewed workplace policies and procedures include an accessibility and hidden disability impact assessment.	



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 by an Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group meeting regularly to highlight and assess any potential risks. This working group will be comprised of representatives from functional areas progressing actions items meeting biannually. The working group will also ensure the progress of the plan is updated. This will contribute to our annual reporting responsibilities.

The Culture, Capability and Belonging Branch will lead the coordination of this working group, with the departments Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team overseeing implementation and reporting to the Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Diversity and Inclusion Council

The department's Diversity and Inclusion Council was created to oversee the development and implementation of inclusion practices, strategies

and related action plans, informed by the lived experiences of staff and with a focus on applying an intersectional focus to the work.

The Council is comprised of Executive Directors from each of the department's eight Groups ensuring consideration of staff from regional, metro, office and field-based workplaces, while valuing the diversity, experiences and unique identities of the workforce.

The Council will annually assess any reviews and adjustments to the plan, with a final evaluation of the plan completed at the end of 2029.

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
The Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group will meet bi-annually to track and monitor actions	Implementation leads
The department will provide meaningful and measurable outcomes on the progress of this plan in its annual report	Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Team
The department will undertake an annual review of the AIP to ensure it remains consistent with national and State disability frameworks	Access and Inclusion working group
The department will update actions, accountability and delivery timelines annually to ensure implementation remains on track	Diversity and Inclusion Council
The department will regularly monitor and review actions and collate information for reporting purposes	Implementation leads / working group



Appendices

Appendix: Legislation and policy frameworks

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

Context

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

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

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

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

Carer Recognition Act 2010

Formally acknowledges the role and contribution of unpaid carers and aims to increase recognition and awareness of the role carers play in providing daily care and support for people with disability.

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

Carer Recognition Act 2012

Recognises, promotes and values the role of carers, formally acknowledging the important contribution that people in care relationships make to our community and the unique knowledge that carers hold about the person in their care.

Victorian local government and government agencies

State disability plan (2021–2027)

Disability action plans

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

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 2021–2027** 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.

How can you contribute?

The departments 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@deeca.vic.gov.au.



deeca.vic.gov.au