

Disability action plan 2024–25

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

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In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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# Foreword

I am pleased to present the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing’s **Disability Action Plan 2024–25**. The plan is a thorough and strategic approach to empowering communities to build a fairer, safer and more inclusive Victoria that upholds the rights of people with disability.

As a department, we commit to reducing barriers, promoting inclusion and fostering a culture of respect and dignity for all Victorians. This plan reflects our dedication to achieving tangible change. It aligns with **Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022–2026** and our obligations under the **Disability Act 2006**. It also recognises the social and human rights model of disability in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

This plan outlines key actions and priorities across the department’s nine divisions. By adopting a whole-of-community approach, we aim to create lasting change for people with disability across various aspects of life including housing, work and community participation.

We recognise that achieving real and meaningful change requires ongoing effort and commitment. We do this in partnership with people with disability including departmental staff with lived experience. To ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of this plan, we will be transparent about our achievements. We will communicate our progress to people with disability, their families and carers, the disability sector and other stakeholders.

As Secretary, I am proud of the work our department has done in developing this plan. I am committed to driving its implementation. Together, we will make Victoria a more inclusive, accessible and equal place for all.

**Peta McCammon**

Secretary, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

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# Introduction

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing commits to creating an inclusive, accessible and safe Victoria for people with disability. This **Disability Action Plan** (DAP) outlines how we will empower communities and people with disability. It aligns with the department’s vision, strategic priorities and legal obligations.

The DAP is designed in keeping with s 38 of the **Disability Act 2006**, focusing on:

* reducing barriers to accessibility
* reducing barriers to employment
* promoting inclusion
* changing community attitudes.

The DAP also aligns with the **DFFH strategic plan**, which has five outcome areas:

* Aboriginal voice, knowledge and cultural leadership drive Aboriginal policy, legislation and system reform.
* Children, young people and families are safe, strong and supported.
* Victorian communities are safe, fair, inclusive and resilient.
* All Victorians have stable, affordable and appropriate housing.
* Our social services system is integrated, effective, person-centred and sustainable.

In developing this DAP, we also considered the policy landscape including:

* Victorian law and policies
* Commonwealth law and policies
* alignment with the department’s strategic plan and frameworks.

The DAP aligns with the state disability plan’s outcomes framework. This ensures it helps create an inclusive and accessible Victoria for people with disability. The DAP follows the four priority pillars of the state disability plan. We have listed commitments and actions under each pillar where the department has lead responsibility.

The DAP also focuses on:

* disability employment commitments for the department
* actions to make the department a leading employer in diversity and inclusion.

# Purpose and objectives

The DAP outlines the department’s commitments, actions and strategies to improve the lives of people with disability in Victoria. Our action plan works off a set of priority pillars set out below.

**Pillar 1: Inclusive communities**

* People with disability, including those from diverse and underserviced groups, are represented and actively participate in decision-making processes within the department.

**Pillar 2: Health, housing and wellbeing**

* Foster inclusive and accessible environments, services and opportunities for people with disability in all aspects of community life.

**Pillar 3: Fairness and safety**

* Promote the rights and dignity of people with disability, encouraging disability pride, recognition and respect for diversity.

**Pillar 4: Opportunity and pride**

* Support the development of more leaders with disability, focusing on providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

The department also sets out its disability employment commitments and actions to:

* increase work opportunities for people with disability in the department
* provide an accessible work environment for people with disability.

This DAP is a roadmap for the department to achieve its objectives. The values of collaboration, innovation, integrity and respect drive this plan.

# Legal and policy context

The DAP sits within the context of legal and policy frameworks at the state and federal levels. These frameworks guide and inform the actions and strategies outlined in the DAP. This ensures they align with broader government priorities and obligations.

## Victorian legislation and policies

The Disability Act provides a framework for enabling people with disability to fully take part in the life of the community. The Act sets out the requirement for developing a DAP.

### Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022–2026

This plan outlines the government’s commitments and actions to make the community inclusive and accessible for everyone*.*

### Equal Opportunity Act 2010

This Actaims to stamp out discrimination and promote equal opportunity and protection of human rights in Victoria.

### Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

This Actsets out the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria.

## International and national legislation and policies

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

This is an international treaty. It promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people with disability.

### National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013

This is Australian legislation that establishes the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS provides supports for people with disability, their families and carers.

### Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–31

This is a national framework. It outlines priorities for creating an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfill their potential as equal members of the community.

### Disability Discrimination Act 1992and associated standards and regulations

This is federal legislation that looks to stamp out discrimination against people with disability. It promotes equal rights, opportunities and access to goods, services and facilities.

## Alignment with the department’s strategic plan and frameworks

The DAP references the **DFFH strategic plan**. The strategic plan outlines the department’s vision to empower communities to build a fairer and safer Victoria. The DAP also considers other departmental policy frameworks such as:

* the **Diversity and inclusion framework 2022–2027**
* the **Community services quality governance framework**.

# [Disability employment commitments](#_Alignment_with_DFFH)

## Diversity and inclusion framework 2022–2027

The framework complements our vision of empowering communities to build a fairer, safer and more inclusive Victoria.

The **Diversity and inclusion framework**supports our aim to become a leading employer in diversity and inclusion.

As we work to create a more inclusive and fair society, we commit to:

* employing a workforce that reflects Victoria’s diverse communities to better meet community needs
* building workplaces that are culturally safe and inclusive for diverse staff.

We will be a proactive leader in diversity and inclusion. We will empower people to express their identity and belong. We will remove structural and systemic barriers. This will help ensure everyone can reach their full potential in a safe, fair and respectful workplace. Our vision through this framework is to create an organisation that:

* embodies inclusive leadership
* celebrates diversity of thought
* reflects the diversity of the communities we serve so we can better support them.

We commit to the goals of the **Diversity and inclusion framework**. These include a 14 per cent increase in the number of people with disability in our workforce by 2024. We aim for a 17 per cent increase by 2027. We also commit to have a 50 per cent increase of people with disability in our leadership roles by 2024. This will rise to a 100 per cent increase by 2027.

The department and the **Diversity and inclusion framework** also align with the **Getting to work: VPS disability employment action plan 2018–2025**. **Getting to work** is Victoria’s long-term jobs plan for people with disability in the public sector.

The Victorian Government has committed to increasing the number of people with disability in the public sector. **Getting to work** sets a target of 12 per cent representation by 2025. These targets apply to the Victorian public service. They will expand to the broader public sector over time.

### Capacity building and workforce development

We will continue to improve disability confidence, knowledge and skills across our workforce. We will review and update our learning and career development programs to ensure opportunities and access for diverse staff. We will offer ongoing training and professional development opportunities to staff. This training will improve our staff’s understanding of:

* disability
* disability inclusion
* the DAP’s priorities and actions.

We will implement a recruitment plan to address inequalities in roles that show a diversity and inclusion imbalance. This includes external representation on diverse recruitment panels.

The department will ensure leadership and manager development programs:

* are accessible to all
* reflect diverse people
* have processes and resources to address newly identified access barriers quickly and effectively.

Our priorities under disability employment commitments are as follows:

| Priority | Activity or initiative | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strategy and business alignment | What we are doing and continue to do:* Ensure the lived experience of staff with disability is core to policy programs and services. This will improve business practices for the communities we serve.
 | Corporate and Delivery Service Division |
| Leadership and accountability | What we are doing and continue to do:* Ensure the department’s leadership profile, governance structures and workforce reflect the diversity of the community. All staff will be accountable for creating an inclusive workplace.
 | Corporate and Delivery Service Division |
| Employment and careers | What we are doing and continue to do:* Empower the voices of our diverse workforce and value diversity of thought. Create a workplace where all staff are supported to develop and progress their careers.
 | Corporate and Delivery Service Division |
| Culture and safety | What we are doing and continue to do:* Embed culturally safe actions into systems and practices as the norm. We will make sure work environments are accessible and safe. This includes prevention, early intervention and suitable responses to discrimination and inappropriate behaviours.
 | Corporate and Delivery Service Division |

# Actions

The DAP sets out the department’s priorities and actions to advance disability inclusion. This includes addressing the barriers people with disability face in accessing:

* goods
* services
* facilities
* work opportunities.

The DAP also aims to:

* promote inclusion and participation in the community
* achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against people with disability.

The priorities and actions align with:

* the state disability plan’s outcomes framework
* the **Diversity and inclusion framework**.

Other work is also underway to identify outcomes and measures that will help us track our achievements. We will include outcomes and measures in an implementation plan to go with the DAP.

## Pillar 1: Inclusive communities

People with disability, including those from diverse and underserviced groups, are represented and actively participate in decision-making processes within the department.

### Community attitudes

| Priority  | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Identify and share evidence-informed approaches to shifting community attitudes. | What we have done and continue to do:* Funded and guided two waves of the ‘Change Your Reactions’ multimedia campaign. This campaign builds helpful attitudes and behaviours towards autistic people and their families. We will deliver more waves of this campaign in 2023 and 2024. Messaging will focus on areas where autistic people particularly miss out, such as work.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Facilitate activities to change community attitudes including efforts to build disability-confident and inclusive workforces. | What we have done and continue to do:* The departments of Health and of Families, Fairness and Housing lead the Disability Liaison Officer program. The program works in Victorian health services to help people with disability to navigate the health system and access care and treatment.
* Leverage good practice across government in capacity building and working well with people with disability.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Deliver a state-wide campaign to celebrate and support LGBTIQA+ communities, including LGBTIQA+ people with disability. | What we have done and continue to do:* Ensure visibility of LGBTIQA+ people with disabilities in public-facing products, campaigns and documents. Pilot an LGBTIQA+ Disability Expert Advisory Group to ensure the voices of people with disabilities inform LGBTIQA+ policy in the Equality portfolio.
 | Fairer Victoria Engagement  |

### Digital inclusion

| Priority | Activity or initiative | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Create accessible digital platforms. | What we will do:* Review and update internal and public records to be accessible and ensure language and imagery is inclusive. This will include published strategies, plans, guidelines and the department’s website, intranet and SharePoint sites.
 | Fairer Victoria Engagement  |
| Develop an accessible communication policy. | What we have done and continue to do:* Funded dedicated accessible communications roles at the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Emergency Management Victoria.
* Established a whole of Victorian government Accessible Communications Working Group to share initiatives for embedding accessible communications in all our work.

What we will do:* Build on Premier and Cabinet’s accessible communications work to inform an accessible communication policy. This policy will set out rules and guidelines for communicating clearly, directly and in a manner that is easily understood. This is so Victorians of all abilities have equal access to Victorian government information.
 | Fairer Victoria Engagement  |

## Pillar 2: Health, housing and wellbeing

People with disability will have increased access to inclusive and accessible environments, services and opportunities in all aspects of community life.

### Housing

| Priority  | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ensure we design and build new social housing that delivers more accessible and better-quality homes that meet the needs of people with disability. | What we have done and continue to do:* Championed changes to the National Construction Code. Changes include accessibility standards of a minimum silver level of the Liveable Housing Australia design guidelines.
* Increased the supply of accessible social housing for people with disability. This is via the Big Housing Build and new social housing programs.
* Ensure five per cent of the social housing constructed by Homes Victoria as part of the Big Housing Build will have a high level of physical accessibility. This will help meet the needs of Victorians with significant disability.
 | Homes Victoria |
| Ensure availability of appropriate supported homes for adults living with mental illness. This includes psychosocial disability. | What we have done and continue to do: * Completed a co-design process to inform the Social Housing Growth Fund Mental Health Supported Housing rounds.
* Changed the Victorian Housing Register to better prioritise adults living with mental illness who need ongoing intensive treatment, care and support. This includes NDIS recipients.
* Set up a partnership with the Department of Health for service coordination between housing and support providers.
* Delivered 2,000 supported homes for people living with mental illness.
 | Homes Victoria |

### Supporting a high-quality NDIS

| Priority  | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Support the Victorian NDIS Community Advisory Council to provide advice about the operation and implementation of the NDIS in Victoria. | What we have done and continue to do:* Support quarterly Victorian NDIS Community Advisory Council and Victorian Executive Steering Committee (ESC) meetings. The council is an advisory committee to the ESC made up of:
	+ people with disability
	+ NDIS participants
	+ peak bodies
	+ service providers
	+ people holding statutory positions.

The council’s advice centres on improving people’s experience with the NDIS. The council also advocates for people with disability having a central role in the design and operation of the NDIS. * The ESC is comprised of senior executives from:
	+ the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
	+ Victorian government agencies
	+ Commonwealth government agencies.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Represent and advocate for the needs of Victorians with disability in all forums. These include the Disability Reform Ministers meetings and the Victorian Executive Steering Committee. | What we have done and continue to do:* Represent and advocate for the needs of Victorians with disability through providing policy advice, analysis and key points of advocacy. This supports the minister’s role with Disability Reform Ministerial Council (DRMC) meetings and the governance groups that report to the DRMC.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Work with the NDIA on our shared responsibility to support more coordinated and person-centred responses for people accessing support across and within service systems. | What we have done and continue to do:* Engage with the NDIA through the ESC workplan. The workplan includes joint work to improve the experience with the NDIS by Victorian participants. This involves:
	+ using the Critical Services Issues Response to help escalate urgent, unresolved matters between the NDIA and Victorian Government.
	+ regular meetings between the Department of Health and the NDIA to speed up plans for people awaiting hospital discharge.
	+ capacity building to improve operations between the NDIS and the mainstream service systems of Child Protection, Justice, Education and Health.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Work with the Commonwealth and other states and territories to ensure the NDIS continues to be based on lifetime insurance principles and provides equitable access for all eligible Victorians with disability. | What we have done and continue to do:* Advocate to the Commonwealth for the NDIS to be equitable for all eligible Victorians and based on lifetime insurance principles.
* Advocate for using outcome frameworks through relevant forums. These include the DRMC, ESC and other multilateral and bilateral forums such as working groups.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Support groups of at-risk Victorians with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS. | What we have done and continue to do:* Fund the HACC Program for Younger People for people with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS. At-risk Victorians who are eligible but face barriers accessing the NDIS can ask for help to navigate the NDIS from the department’s Intensive Support Team.

What we will do:* Changes to immigration policy mean permanent residency, and therefore NDIS eligibility, is available to additional cohorts in Victoria. Intensive work will transition a large number of people previously ineligible for the NDIS due to their residency status into the NDIS.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Work across the Victorian Government to ensure jobs and skills initiatives result in positive outcomes for the disability workforce. | What we have done and continue to do: * Initiated the Jobs that Matter awareness campaign that aims to:
	+ increase the number of community services workers in Victoria, including disability workers.
	+ help existing workers feel more valued for the work they do.
* The Jobs that Matter campaign is now underway, with planning for more phases. This will continue to build awareness of career opportunities in community services.

What we will do:* Develop a Certificate (III/IV) scholarship program to upskill the existing disability workforce in regional areas. This will also encourage new workers into the sector.
* Under Jobs Victoria’s ‘Priority Workforce Projects’ initiative, work with a range of employers to recruit non-tertiary-qualified workers into entry-level community services and disability roles. This will focus on people who face barriers to finding work.
 | System Reform and Workforce |
| Support skills and training authorities to design and deliver educational programs and resources tailored to the needs of disability workers. Promote best practice and culturally responsive service delivery outcomes for people with disability. | What we have done and will continue to do:* Work with key stakeholders including peak bodies, the Commonwealth government and unions to develop solutions to barriers to:
	+ professional development
	+ training and learning for disability services workforces.
 | System Reform and Workforce |
| Advocate to ensure NDIS pricing is adequate to provide disability employers and workers with better conditions. This will help attract, train and retain a quality NDIS workforce, including in regional and rural areas. | What we have done and continue to do:* Advocate for pricing that reflects provider costs including administration, compliance and workforce training. Better pricing will incentivise providers to increase supply and offer innovative, high-quality supports to participants through:
	+ DRMC meetings
	+ input to the NDIA Annual Pricing Review.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Identify service gaps and service system interface issues. This will inform strategies to support a thriving disability workforce and market. | What we have done and continue to do:* Collect and analyse information about the disability market from a range of sources including:
	+ the NDIA
	+ the Department of Social Services
	+ other parts of the department
	+ Victorian Government agencies
	+ National Disability Services Victoria.
* This will contribute to key disability reform work and support the disability minister at DRMC meetings.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |

### Children and families

| Priority  | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Build the capacity of parents and families to help prevent children with complex disability support needs from needing care outside of their family home. | What we have doneand continue to do:* In late 2019 we introduced the Children with Complex Disability Support Needs Program. This program delivers tailored packages of support to families of children with complex disability needs who:
	+ need extra supports to sustain care in the family home, or
	+ live outside the family home because of their disability needs.
 | Children and Families |
| Help families to navigate the NDIS. | What we have done and continue to do:* In 2021 we set up the Family Services Specialist Disability Program. The program addresses the challenges many vulnerable families experience with accessing the NDIS and disability supports. It aims to enhance sustainability of care by supporting families to access the NDIS and disability supports while also building parenting capacity. The program strives to build both disability and NDIS expertise across the child and family service system.
 | Children and Families |
| Expand the Parents with Intellectual Disability program to include intensive home-based care and case management. | What we have done and continue to do:* Since July 2021 the program (now titled the Steps to Confident Parenting program) has provided wraparound family services, early parenting and disability supports to parents with cognitive or intellectual impairment/disability who have children at risk of entry to care.
* The program supports parents to provide for the health, safety and development of their children through intensive home-based case management response. While taking part in the program, no parent had a child removed from their care.
 | Children and Families |
| Work with parents with disability and advocacy agencies to identify program and service improvements, including for those navigating the child protection system. | What we have done and continue to do:* Produced communications in Easy English for parents with intellectual disability or cognitive challenges involved with the child protection system. Consultation continues with parents with disability and their advocates about opportunities for collaboration and co-design.
* Led on the Charter of Rights of Parents and Carers with Disability involved with Child Protection. The Charter aims to ensure parents and carers with disability who have a child involved with Child Protection will understand their rights and know what supports are available to them. The Charter will form part of the training to practitioners on first engagement with families.
 | Children and Families |
| Bolster the care services system to better support children with disability. Use a specialist approach that draws on improved partnership with the NDIS. | What we have done:* Worked with the NDIA to set up a crisis and afterhours response where care has broken down or imminent breakdown is likely. This will help prevent avoidable care placements for children with disability where there are no protective concerns.

What we will do:* Improve processes for identifying children with disability entering care services. This will help ensure all children who may have a disability receive a specialist response from the state-wide Targeted Health Supports for Children in Care Program.
 | Children and Families |

## Pillar 3: Fairness and safety

Promote the rights and dignity of people with disability, encouraging disability pride, recognition and respect for diversity.

### Preventing abuse and neglect

| Priority  | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Co-design with people with disability an online accessible safeguards information hub. The hub will have information about preventing violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability. | What we will do:* Set up an information hub that will fulfil Victoria’s commitment to improving access to the Staying Safe resources. This hub will entail co-designing with people with disability an accessible hub with resources about preventing violence, abuse and neglect. Scoping of available resources has been undertaken.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Strengthen the authorisation process for restrictive practices.Ensure Victoria continues to meet the national principles for restrictive practice authorisation. | What we have done and continue to do:* Amendments to the Disability Actbecame law in May 2023. This strengthened the authorisation process for restrictive practices within Victoria.
* Strengthen the commitment to the principles with several funded projects delivered through the Victorian Senior Practitioner and amendments made to the Disability Act.
* Support continuing work by all jurisdictions to reduce and ultimately stamp out restrictive practices on people with disability.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Work with the Commonwealth, states and territories to improve the capacity and capability of behaviour support practitioners to develop and implement high-quality behaviour support plans. | What we have done and continue to do:* Begun Professional Development in Behaviour Support and Intervention training programs. These programs support practitioners to develop their competencies in positive behaviours support approaches. The course works to ensure the skill and knowledge base of practitioners aligns with the NDIS **Positive behaviour support capability framework**.
* Working with the Victorian Senior Practitioner and the University of Melbourne, the course will become an accredited micro credential course. Further funding was provided for the initiative in May 2023.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Identify and work to address gaps in legislative residential rights and protections for residents of, and people needing, disability supported accommodation. | What we have done:* Amendments to the Disability Act.
* The Act became law in May 2023. Changes addressed gaps in residential protections for Victorians in disability accommodation. We also strengthened quality and safeguards via changes to the **Residential Tenancies Act 1997**. The changes to the Residential Tenancies Act will come into force before 1 July 2024.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Work with the Commonwealth, states and territories towards nationally consistent residential rights and protections for people living in specialist disability accommodation across all jurisdictions. | What we have done:* Provided a breakdown of the current residential rights and protections in Victoria to the NDIS Review Secretariat, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in July 2023, as an exemplar for other states and territories. The NDIS Review is expected to make some recommendations about national consistency, which will be considered at that time. The department has offered to help other states and territories with their deliberations.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Set up principles and functions to guide and modernise the role of community visitors within the context of the NDIS.Strengthen the role for state-based disability services through legislative reform. | What we have done and continue to do:* Advocated for the inclusion of the Community Visitors program into the National Quality and Safeguarding framework. This was identified in the NDIS Review. We continue to work together to strengthen the role of the Community Visitor program. This includes proactive engagement with the NDIS Review panel to support reforms such as nationally consistent principles to underpin outreach visitation initiatives.

What we will do:* As part of the amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act, Victoria will expand the scope of the Community Visitor program to include properties not currently visited. This recognises the important safeguarding function the program performs.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |

### Family and sexual violence

| Priority | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Strengthen the capability of the primary prevention, disability and social service workforces in disability-inclusive primary prevention activity through the Women with Disabilities Victoria’s Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program. | What we have done:* Supported the development of resources, which build on the evidence for preventing violence against women with disability and support the design and delivery of prevention projects, which address the gendered drivers of violence and ableism.
* Supported Women with Disabilities Victoria to deliver a range of training to strengthen the prevention of family violence sector capability to address the gendered drivers of violence and ableism.

What we will do: Through the program until 2027:* Continue to build the evidence base for addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women and ableism. We will do this through resources that support organisations to develop primary prevention projects with an intersectional lens.
* Continue to deliver learning and development approaches to strengthen the capability of the prevention of family violence sector in addressing the drivers of violence against women with disabilities, including in disability, and social service settings.
* Support Women with Disabilities Victoria to provide strategic advice to the family violence and violence against women sector on policies and programs to prevent violence against women with disabilities.
 | Family Safety Victoria |
| Roll out family violence and disability practice leader roles in eight departmental areas from 2021 and 2023. | What we have done:* We have so far funded eight practice leader positions to build the capacity of family violence and sexual assault services to provide inclusive support to people with disability. This includes building stronger links and referral pathways across service systems including disability services.

What we will do:* An evaluation of the program will inform future family violence and sexual assault systemic capacity building. This will improve outcomes for people with disability at risk of family or sexual violence.
 | Family Safety Victoria |
| Continue to build professionals’ understanding of different risk factors for people with disability experiencing or at risk of family violence. This is part of rolling out the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework. | What we have done:* The MARAM practice guides, tools and resources for professionals include detailed information about applying an intersectional lens when identifying and responding to family violence.
* Training to support department-prescribed workforces in understanding and applying the MARAM Framework, victim survivor practice guides and supporting resources is available to all departmental workforces. This includes training on understanding how workforces can identify and respond more effectively to people with disability.
* MARAM also encourages voluntary alignment where departmental workforces are not currently prescribed. This includes access to resources, guidance, advice and peer support such as communities of practice.

What we will do: * Family Safety Victoria is finalising three training packages on working with adults using family violence. These packages will help departmental staff in responding to family violence and support the recent practice guide’s release. This includes specific information about responding to people with disability whether a victim survivor or a person using family violence. This includes non-collusive practice and misidentification where people with disability may be more at risk.
* Family Safety Victoria is developing MARAM practice guides that focus on children and young people. The guides continue to emphasise using an intersectional analysis including people with disability.
* Family Safety Victoria is also working with Safe and Equal on training for policy leaders. The training covers understanding MARAM and applying it to policy and projects managed across the department.
 | Family Safety Victoria |
| Explore the role of disability service providers in identifying and responding to family violence risk as part of implementing the MARAM Framework. | What we have done:* Forensic disability services and programs managed or funded by the Victorian government departments are subject to the MARAM and information sharing reforms and prescribed under regulation. Disability service providers are not currently prescribed under MARAM phase 1 or 2 but have been identified as a gap in the current reform.

What we will do:* If work is approved to scope further prescribing services, we will look more closely at disability services. We will do this in consultation with sector stakeholders (subject to ministerial approval).
* Consideration will be given to any findings and recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability noting that the 2019 MARAM Framework and practice guides are currently under five-year evidence review. We will note any findings from this review.
 | Family Safety Victoria |
| Continue to implement the Family Violence and Disability Crisis Response initiative. | What we have done:* The Disability Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative has provided immediate practical help to 302 victim survivors with disability in crisis over 12 months (2022–23). Victim survivors have accessed more than $150,000 in disability-related supports to remain safe and/or escape family violence. This has included funding for:
	+ personal support workers and carers
	+ disability aids
	+ assistive technologies
	+ accessible transport options.

What we will do:* Continue to provide disability family violence crisis response brokerage and secondary consultations.
* Continue to build capacity in services that support victim survivors living with disability.
 | Family Safety Victoria |
| Continue to inform, shape and improve family violence and sexual assault policy and practice to include adults, children and young people with disability. | What we have done:* Developed the Everybody Matters Statement. This statement supports a family violence service system that is:
	+ strengths-based
	+ human rights–focused
	+ inclusive.

What we will do:* The statement will continue to be used to support the application of an intersectional lens and consideration of people with disabilities experiencing or using family or sexual violence. This will apply to:
	+ designing the Serious Risk Pilots
	+ developing the **Victorian sexual violence abuse and harm strategy**
	+ more broadly across policy and program development.
 | Family Safety Victoria |

## Pillar 4: Opportunity and pride

Support the development of more leaders with disability, focusing on providing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### Voice and leadership

| Priority | Activity or initiative  | Lead division |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Co-design departmental policies, programs and services with people with disability. | What we have done and will continue to do:* We will increase collaboration and co-design with people with disability on departmental policies, programs and services. We will ensure that DFFH policies, programs, and services are accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of people with disability by:
	+ encouraging co-design of departmental policies, programs and services with people with disability
	+ ensuring disability voices are central to the development process.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Strengthen connections between the Victorian Disability Advisory Council (VDAC) and local government advisory committees to build coordinated efforts on emerging issues. | What we have done and continue to do:* A dedicated VDAC session was held in 2022 to seek council advice on steps for increasing its engagement with local disability advisory bodies.
* We will continue to work with VDAC on opportunities to engage with local bodies.
 | Disability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |
| Develop more leaders with disability through an ongoing commitment to providing sponsorship for positions in leadership programs. | What we have done: * Set targets for disability leadership in the **Diversity and inclusion framework**.

What we will do:* Support the Diverse Women in Leadership Fast Track Program.
* Audit existing leadership and manager development programs for access and inclusion for staff with disability.
* The Office for Disability continues to partner with Leadership Victoria to support leaders with disability through sponsoring a dedicated position in the Williamson Community Leadership Program for 2023.
 | Corporate and Delivery Service DivisionDisability, Complex Needs and Emergency Management |

## Implementation and monitoring

Implementing the DAP requires a coordinated effort across the department. This will involve staff at all levels and ongoing engagement with people with disability, their families and carers. We will engage with VDAC and other key stakeholders in the implementation and evaluation of the DAP.

The following steps outline the approach to implementing and monitoring the DAP:

* governance and accountability
* communication and engagement
* collaboration and partnership
* reporting and evaluation.

The DAP will be improved over its life based on feedback and learnings from:

* people with disability
* their representative organisations
* other stakeholders.

## Governance and accountability

The department’s People and Culture Committee will provide governance and accountability for the DAP. We will report annually to that committee and to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

This will help align the DAP and the **Diversity and inclusion framework**, which the People and Culture Committee also oversees.

## Communication and engagement

The department will communicate the DAP to all departmental staff. We will encourage their involvement in implementing the plan’s actions and priorities.

We will ensure the DAP is offered in different formats including Easy Read to ensure accessibility to people with disability.

## Collaboration and partnership

The department will foster partnerships with:

* other Victorian government departments
* disability organisations
* advocacy groups.

This will help advance disability inclusion and share best practices.

We will take part in interdepartmental working groups and forums to collaborate on cross-government initiatives related to the state disability plan.

## Reporting and evaluation

The department will include updates on DAP implementation in our annual report, as required by the Disability Act.

We will conduct an evaluation of the DAP towards the end of its implementation period. This will involve assessing its effectiveness and inform the development of future disability action plans.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the department’s **Disability action plan 2024–25** is a crucial step in our ongoing commitment to creating a more inclusive and accessible Victoria for people with disability. The DAP outlines key actions and priorities across all nine departmental divisions. It aims to address barriers and challenges people with disability face. These actions are centred around:

* housing
* community attitudes
* digital inclusion
* supporting a high-quality NDIS
* children and families
* preventing abuse and neglect
* voice and leadership
* family and sexual violence.

By focusing on these priority areas, we strive to create lasting change in the lives of people with disability and their families.

The DAP also highlights the importance of ongoing engagement, monitoring and evaluation. This will ensure the effectiveness of our efforts.

We will regularly review our progress. We will keep channels of communication open with the disability community. This will better equip us to adapt and respond to emerging needs and challenges.

Together, we will continue to work towards an inclusive, accessible and equal Victoria. We envision a state where people with disability can fully take part in all aspects of life. People with disability deserve to enjoy the same rights, opportunities and privileges as every other Victorian.

We remain committed to upholding the rights and dignity of people with disability and fostering an inclusive society for all.

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