

1 Department and sector overview

The Department of Human Services provides planning, regulation, management, funding and delivery of housing and community services for Victorians. It operates under the direction and leadership of the Ministers for Community Services, Women's Affairs, Housing and Youth Affairs.

1.1 Our strategic intent

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| We improve people's lives and reduce their experience of disadvantage. |
| To achieve this we provide housing and community services to support and protect Victorians most in need. |

1.2 Our objectives

| With our partners we aim to provide excellent housing and community services that meet the needs of our clients. | With our partners we aim to make a positive difference for Victorians experiencing disadvantage. |
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| Improve services through better integration and innovation | Respond to the needs of individuals and communities at greater risk |
| Develop the capacity of the workforce | Respond early to need |
| Work closely with industry, government and other partners | Provide opportunities for our clients to participate in society |
| Deliver sustainable client-centred services | Strive for our clients to exercise greater choice |

1.3 Challenges

Together with our service delivery partners we will need to continue responding to the growing demand for human services and ensure our clients receive the timely and responsive support they require. Key challenges include:

- Making a positive impact on disadvantage
- Addressing increasing complexity
- Preparing for an ageing and growing population
- Responding effectively to extreme weather events
- Building a workforce for the future
- Meeting the growing expectations of Victorians

1.4 Key service dimensions

The department manages an overall budget of around \$3.4 billion per year to plan, manage, fund and deliver human services for Victorians. This includes direct service delivery and funding to the non-government sector.

Around \$1.5 billion per year is provided to over 1,000 community sector organisations to deliver services for clients.

The department directly employs over 10,000 people, and up to 100,000 people are estimated to be employed in the Victorian human services system overall.

It is estimated that over a million clients access our services each year.

1.5 Our outputs and clients

Together with our service delivery partners the Department is responsible for delivery of outputs to achieve our strategic intent and objectives.

A significant proportion of our clients require support across more than one service area, due to multiple and sometimes complex needs. These people may be in contact with multiple parts of the human services system. We also support people who have been affected by floods, bushfires and other disasters.

1.5.1 Child protection and family services, youth services and youth justice

| Outputs <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
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| <p>Statutory support and placement services</p> <p>Specialist support and placement services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</p> <p>Family and community early intervention and support services</p> <p>Youth justice custodial supervision and support services</p> <p>Community based supervision services</p> | <p>We assist children, young people and families who need support or protection, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and adolescents subject to, or at risk of, harm, abuse and neglect • Aboriginal children subject to, or at risk of, harm, abuse or neglect • Children and young people who need support to remain with their family • Families who need support to ensure an appropriate, safe and stable developmental environment for their children • Children and young people with severe emotional or behavioural disturbance as a result of abuse or neglect • Young people who need help to address offending behaviour • Women and children experiencing family violence • Men who are attempting to address their violent behaviour • Children in state care who have high and complex needs • Young people who are in, entering, or exiting the youth justice system |

1.5.2 Empowering individuals and communities

| Outputs <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
|---|---|
| <p>Policy and programs for young people that support social, economic and civic participation</p> <p>Lead and coordinate whole of government policy, engage with women from diverse backgrounds and deliver initiatives to improve the lives of Victorian women and support their full participation in community and public life.</p> <p>Policy and programs for people with a disability that improve</p> | <p>We support the social, economic and civic participation of Victorian communities and vulnerable populations, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people aged between 12 and 25. • All Victorian women • People with a disability, their families and carers • Individuals and families experiencing disadvantage |

| Outputs <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
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| mainstream access and participation Community participation programs to support the social, civic and economic participation of Victorian communities | |

1.5.3 Disability services

| Output <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
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| Information, assistance with planning and coordination of support services Support services for people with complex and challenging behaviours Individually tailored support services for people with a disability, families and carers Community-based residential accommodation support | <p>We assist people living with a disability who need support in their living arrangements, recreation and engaging with the community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with permanent or long-term physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities • Young people and school leavers with a disability and high support needs • Children under school age with a disability • People with a disability who are homeless <p>We also assist the families and carers of people living with a disability, who may need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance in their role as carers • Practical support, information and advice • Short-term respite from their role as carers |

1.5.4 Housing and housing assistance services

| Outputs <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
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| Homelessness and family violence assistance Public and social housing services Assistance to access the private rental or home ownership markets | <p>We assist low-income and vulnerable people who need access to short-term or long-term housing and accommodation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including young people • Women and children escaping from family violence • Low-income families, older people, single people and young people who require long-term affordable rental accommodation • People who need support to stay in or move into the private rental and home ownership markets |

1.5.5 Concessions to pensioners and beneficiaries

| Outputs <i>What we deliver</i> | Our clients <i>The recipients and beneficiaries of our services</i> |
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| Assistance to households to meet the cost of essential services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low income households and people who need help to meet the cost of essential services |

1.6 Victorian Acts and Statutory Rules

All DHS funded organisations are obliged to meet the Victorian Acts and Statutory Rules as applicable and available on the Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents website; www.legislation.vic.gov.au

1.7 Simplifying funding and reporting for Aboriginal community controlled organisations

The Simplifying Funding and Reporting for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations initiative was developed in response to a range of government reports, departmental reports and community consultations highlighting the impact of government funding on Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) whilst stressing the need to reduce the administrative burden.

The Reforms were endorsed by the former DHS Executive in March 2009 and are a joint initiative of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health.

The initiative aims to:

- Provide flexibility in funding to ACCOs to reflect community needs
- Reduce administrative burden on ACCOs funded by DHS and Department of Health
- Improve reporting and rationalise data requirements

1.8 One Department of Human Services' Standards

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is integrating its current program standards and independent reviews into one approach.

The *Department of Human Services Standards* (the standards) represent a single set of service quality standards for service providers.

Standards and review processes are a necessary part of providing quality services that deliver positive outcomes for people. The Department of Human Services is integrating its current program standards and independent reviews into one approach.

The development of the standards was managed by a project board with representatives from service providers and the department in consultation with service providers, advocacy groups and service users. Australian Healthcare Associates was commissioned by the department to develop standards that are structured in accordance with current quality standard practices.

The standards are summarised as:

Empowerment *People's rights are promoted and upheld.*

Access and Engagement *People's right to access transparent, equitable and integrated services is promoted and upheld.*

Wellbeing *People's right to wellbeing and safety is promoted and upheld.*

Participation

People's right to choice, decision making and to actively participate as a valued member of their chosen community is promoted and upheld.

Service providers will be independently reviewed in relation to the standards by an approved independent review body. A service provider's governance and management systems will also be reviewed using the standards of the independent review body.

The standards will replace the current *Industry Standards for Disability Services, Outcome Standards for Disability Services, Registration Standards for Community Service Organisations and Homelessness Assistance Service Standards*.

The standards have been developed in response to the assessment by service providers that the *department's* current approach of using program based standards and undertaking multiple reviews impacts on the amount of time staff can work with clients and that the approach to standards and quality reviews could be improved.

The *Victorian Government's Plan for Community Services* seeks to reduce red tape by streamlining accreditation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

Integrating standards will help to ensure a consistent quality of service no matter which departmentally funded service people access.

Changes for organisations

The standards will require most service providers that deliver services directly to clients to be independently reviewed. From July 2012, one independent review will be required in every three-year service agreement period.

For the remaining 2009–2012 service agreement period service providers will continue to comply with the current divisional quality processes. During late 2011 a transition phase will commence during which service providers may, with the agreement of the department, be early adopters of the standards and quality review processes.

Funded organisations that provide services directly to clients will normally need to be independently reviewed and accredited. There may be some exceptions to this requirement for funded organisations that receive under \$100,000 of Department of Human Services funding or where the service funded is subject to a departmentally approved accreditation process for another government department.

Funded organisations that do not have a direct relationship with clients and are funded to only undertake for example, research, policy advocacy, professional development and community development will not need to be accredited or reviewed in relation to the standards.

The department will discuss accreditation requirements with each funded organisation as part of the transition and the timing of their first independent review of the standards between 2012–2015.

During 2011 and 2012 the department will consult with service providers and independent review bodies on the development of the evidence guide, the procedures and transition to the standards.

For more information visit the Department of Human Services website at <www.dhs.vic.gov.au> and the Funded Agency Channel at <www.fac.dhs.vic.gov.au> or email dhsstandards@dhs.vic.gov.au