

**Victorian
State Disability Plan
2002–2012**

September 2002

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Further information and copies of the Victorian State Disability Plan are also available on the Department of Human Services website at: [**www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability**](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability)

Victorian State Disability Plan

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Premier's Message



The State Disability Plan 2002–2012 provides a strong and flexible agenda for change. It reaffirms the rights that people with a disability have to live and participate in the community on an equal footing with other citizens of Victoria.

This Plan brings into focus my Government's commitments to building safe and caring communities in which opportunities are fairly shared.

The Plan provides a vehicle for putting these objectives into action. It is a vehicle for working creatively and collaboratively to grow Victoria into the kind of State we want it to be for all citizens.

The essence of this Plan lies in respecting and valuing the diversity of Victoria's communities as one of this State's greatest strengths.

As citizens of Victoria, people with a disability have an important contribution to make to the life of this State. To maximise this contribution we must support communities so that they can be more inclusive.

This will be a challenge, but it is a challenge that I firmly believe we can achieve.

My Government has significantly increased funding over the past three years and will continue to listen to the issues that are important to people with a disability, their parents, families and carers as we put this Plan into action.

I invite you to join this Government, and the communities of Victoria, as we work together to achieve better outcomes for all Victorians, and particularly for Victorians who have a disability.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Bracks".

STEVE BRACKS MP
Premier of Victoria

Minister's Foreword



I have great pleasure in presenting the Victorian Government's State Disability Plan 2002–2012.

The State Disability Plan outlines this Government's vision for the future and some strategies for realising this vision.

The State Disability Plan has been developed in a spirit that reflects our goals - a spirit of partnership, inclusion and participation across government and across the community.

The Plan reflects the important issues that people with a disability, their parents, families and carers have identified as their priorities.

The Victorian Government has commenced work to address many of these issues through increasing funding for disability supports by 34% over the last three years.

We have also seen the benefits for people with a disability through improvements that have occurred with the introduction of more accessible public transport and additional resources for the inclusion of children with a disability in preschools.

Our commitment to inclusive communities is occurring through the redevelopment of Kew Residential Services and the introduction of community building and access projects that promote the inclusion and participation of people with a disability in their local communities.

Real success in achieving the goals outlined in the State Disability Plan requires that we work together with communities—mobilising the resources and efforts of governments, communities and of all Victorians.

A hallmark of this State Disability Plan is its whole -of-government approach. Over the next decade, Government departments will be strengthening working partnerships with people with a disability, parents, families and carers, support providers, local governments and local communities to build a Victoria that works together to fulfil the aspirations of people with a disability.

As we move forward, we will learn new ways of working and we will see new results and build on these strengths.

I commend the State Disability Plan to you and I look forward to working with you as we put the strategies outlined in this Plan into action.

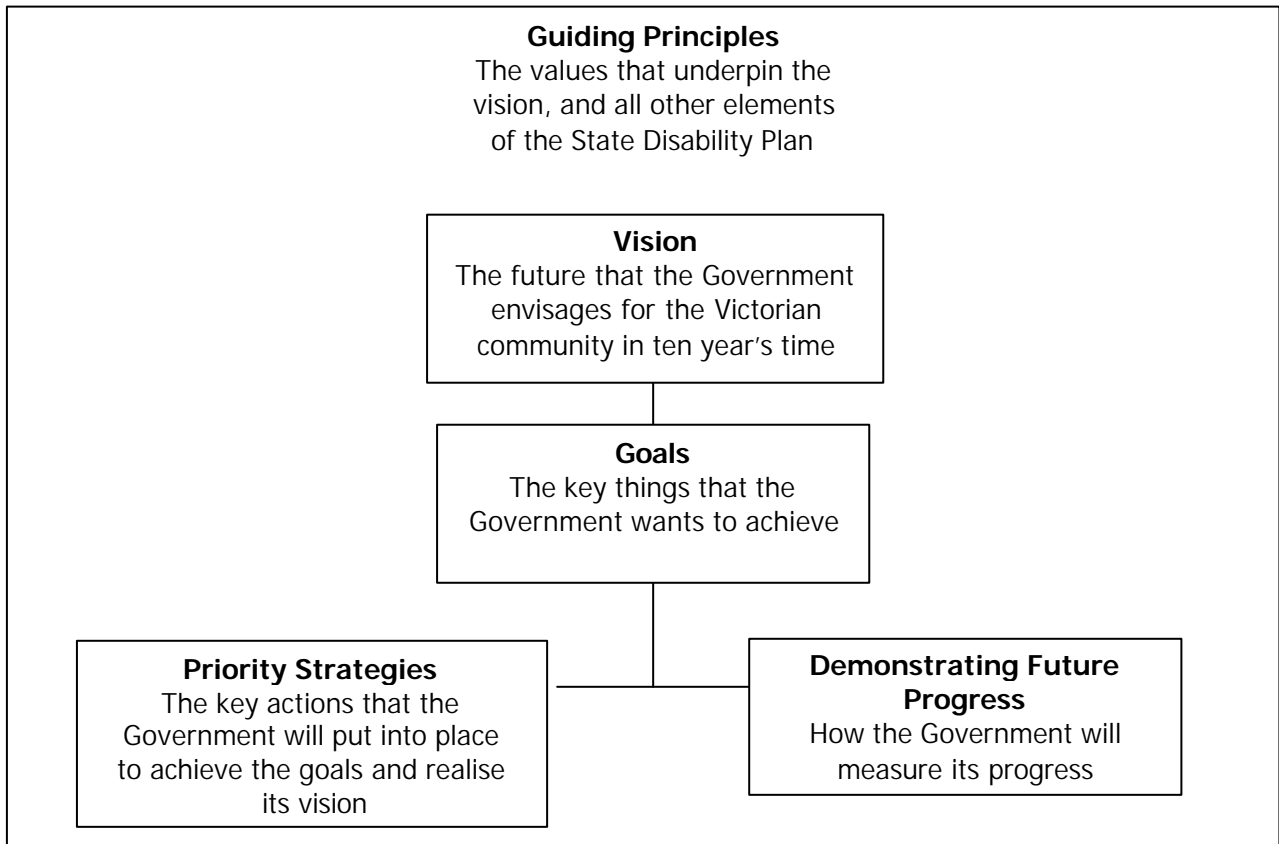
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike".

Hon Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Community Services and Housing

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The State Disability Plan has a number of inter-related elements. These are:



The Way Forward

The Victorian Government believes that people with a disability should be able to live and participate in the life of the Victorian community, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as all other citizens of Victoria.

This State Disability Plan has been developed in consultation with the Victorian community—including people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers, community groups, local government, State and Commonwealth Government Departments, statutory authorities and other members of the broader community. Appendix One tells you more about these consultations.

The State Disability Plan has a ten-year outlook to 2012, and outlines the Government's vision for the future. The Plan links the issues that people have identified as being the most important to them to five priority strategies. The Government will put these priority strategies into place to enable people with a disability to participate more fully and equally in the life of the community.

A New Approach to Disability

People with a disability currently access a range of different supports and services to meet their needs; including accommodation, day programs, personal care, respite, aids and equipment, and many others. Appendix Two tells you more about these supports and services.

The Victorian Government is changing the way it approaches disability and the supports and services that people with a disability may need.

This State Disability Plan outlines a new approach to disability that is based on fundamental principles of human rights and social justice. The challenge for the Victorian Government, and the community as a whole, is to work towards making these principles a reality.

This is the first disability plan in the history of Victoria to take a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to disability. It is the first Plan that looks at all aspects of life for people with a disability—including disability supports, health and community services, recreation, education, employment, transport and housing.

This is also the first Plan to address the needs of people with a range of different types of disabilities; that is, people with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities, acquired brain injury, and neurological impairments.

In doing so, this Plan offers potential benefits to all Victorians who have a disability, and to the Victorian community as a whole.

What is Disability?

The State Disability Plan talks about people with a 'disability'. Each person's experience of disability is different. These experiences are influenced by a person's own life experiences, the attitudes of other members of the community towards disability, and how easy it is for a person to get access to information, services, opportunities and the physical environment.

Types of Disabilities Covered by This Plan

There are many different types of disability. A disability can be caused by a genetic condition, an illness or an accident. In this State Disability Plan, 'disability' includes:

- Intellectual disability
- Physical disability
- Sensory disability
- Acquired brain injury
- Neurological impairment
- Dual disability (one of the above and a psychiatric disability)
- Disabilities that are unrelated to ageing
- Any combination of these.

Who is Included in This Plan?

When the State Disability Plan talks about people with a disability, it includes:

- Men and women with a disability.
- Children, young people, adults and parents with a disability.
- People with a disability who are ageing.
- People with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have a disability.

Disability in the Future

The Government recognises that the nature of disability is changing, and that new and different types of disabilities are now being recognised. Advances in technology have made it possible to find out about and treat many medical conditions, when this was often not possible in the past. As things continue to change and develop, the way that society thinks about disability in ten year's time might be very different. As the Government puts this Plan into place, it will look at these changes and the new challenges that emerge, so that it can respond appropriately.

The Key Challenges We Face

The Government recognises that people with a disability currently face many inequalities and barriers to participating in the community. These barriers are the challenges that need to be addressed, so that the Government's vision can become a reality for all people with a disability in Victoria.

Some of the key challenges that people with a disability and their parents, families and carers have told the Government about are:

- Enabling disability supports to be provided earlier and to respond better to people's individual needs, as well as to the needs of their families and carers.
- Ensuring that disability supports enable and empower people with a disability, so that they can participate in the community and pursue a lifestyle of choice.
- Valuing families, carers and volunteers for the contribution they make towards meeting the support needs of children and adults with a disability.
- Supporting families so that all children and young people can live in a family environment and can develop relationships fostering the social, emotional and physical well-being of all family members.
- Strengthening rural, regional and urban communities, so that they are more accessible and more inclusive of people with a disability.
- Raising the community's awareness of disability, so that all people with a disability can be respected and valued for who they are.
- Developing more effective strategies to respond to the increasing demand for disability supports.
- Improving access to physical environments, including public transport and buildings.
- Creating more opportunities for inclusive education and lifelong learning.
- Increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability, to enable people to fulfil their personal aspirations and so that all Victorians can contribute to Victoria's growth.
- Building more opportunities for people with a disability to participate in arts, cultural, sport and leisure activities.

The Government will continue to listen to Victorians and provide leadership to the Victorian community. But the Government cannot achieve all that needs to be done by working alone. Governments, service providers and communities will need to work in partnership with each other to address these challenges and build a more inclusive Victorian community.

Vision: Victoria in 2012

The Victorian Government's vision for the future is that Victoria will be a State where there are caring, safe communities in which opportunities are fairly shared, and where all Victorians have access to a range of services to support their quality of life.

The vision for the State Disability Plan is a broad vision that offers potential benefits to all members of the Victorian community. This State Disability Plan is particularly concerned with the potential benefits this vision can offer to people with a disability.

The Victorian Government's vision for the future is that:

By 2012, Victoria will be a stronger and more inclusive community—a place where diversity is embraced and celebrated, and where everyone has the same opportunities to participate in the life of the community, and the same responsibilities towards society as all other citizens of Victoria.

This means that if you have a disability, in 2012 you will be as much a part of things as anyone else. As a citizen, you will choose the role you want to play in society alongside other citizens. Your rights and dignity will be respected and upheld by the people around you.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are the values that underpin the vision and all other elements of the State Disability Plan.

The Principle of Equality recognises that people with a disability are citizens who have the right to be respected and the right to have equal opportunities to participate in the social, economic, cultural, political and spiritual life of society.

As citizens, people with a disability also have equal responsibilities towards Victorian society and should be supported to exercise these.

The Principle of Dignity and Self-Determination (Choice) is about respecting and valuing the knowledge, abilities and experiences that people with a disability possess, supporting them to make choices about their lives, and enabling each person to live the life they want to live.

The Principle of Diversity is about recognising and valuing individual difference. Inclusive societies are strengthened by the diversity of their populations and by the contribution that each person makes to the social, economic, cultural, political and spiritual life of society.

The Principle of Non-Discrimination implies that all people have the right to live their lives free from discrimination. This means that society must set right all forms of discrimination—including both active and passive forms of discrimination, and unfair and outdated standards, laws, policies and practices.

It also means recognising and valuing people's differences. Failing to embrace these differences is itself discriminatory.

Goals

The Goals are the things that the Government wants to achieve to make its vision a reality. All of these goals are equally important, and the success of one goal depends on the success of the other goals.

Goal 1: Pursuing Individual Lifestyles

To enable people with a disability to pursue their own individual lifestyles, by encouraging others to respect, promote and safeguard their rights and by strengthening the disability support system so that people’s individual needs can be met.

Enabling people with a disability to pursue their own individual lifestyle means ensuring that people have maximum control over their own lives. To achieve this, the Government will reorient disability supports so that they are more responsive and more focused on people’s individual needs and choices, and to the needs of their families and carers.

Goal 2: Building Inclusive Communities

To strengthen the Victorian community so that it is more welcoming and accessible, so that people with a disability can fully and equally participate in the life of the Victorian community.

Building inclusive communities means strengthening communities so that people with a disability have the same opportunities as all other citizens of Victoria to participate in the life of the community—socially, economically, culturally, politically and spiritually.

Goal 3: Leading the Way

To lead the development of a more inclusive community for people with a disability by developing more inclusive and accessible public services, and promoting non-discriminatory practices.

The Government will lead by example, building more inclusive communities by improving the accessibility and responsiveness of public services and making them more inclusive of people with a disability.

Working in Partnership

The Victorian Government recognises that it cannot achieve all of the changes outlined in this State Disability Plan by working alone. It will need to work together with others to achieve real and lasting change for people with a disability in this State.

This means strengthening relationships and developing partnerships with people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, as well as with non-government organisations, who are valued partners in achieving positive outcomes.

Working in partnership means that different individuals, organisations and groups work together to define their needs and priorities, and to find the best ways of addressing them.

Working in partnership means developing and strengthening relationships, and working collaboratively with and between:

- Different organisations across government (such as Government Departments and statutory authorities).
- Service providers in the non-government sector (including for-profit and not-for-profit organisations).
- Local governments.
- Community groups.
- Businesses and industry leaders.
- The Commonwealth Government.
- The broader community.

Working in partnership does not mean that the Government is giving up its responsibilities. Nor does it mean that there will always be agreement on all issues. All Governments must make difficult decisions about priorities and about the allocation of resources.

The Victorian Government strongly believes that working in partnership will achieve better outcomes for people with a disability, their parents, families, carers and local communities.

From Vision to Reality: The Priority Strategies

Making the Victorian Government's vision a reality involves changing the way that Victorians think about disability, about the community, about the disability support system, and about the role of government.

The Victorian Government has identified five priority strategies. These are based on the issues that people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers and other members of the community have identified as being the most important to them.

The priority strategies are the key things that the Government is going to do to achieve its goals and realise its vision. The five priority strategies are:

- 1. Reorient disability supports**
- 2. Develop strong foundations for disability supports**
- 3. Promote and protect people's rights**
- 4. Strengthen local communities**
- 5. Make public services accessible**

This section of the State Disability Plan tells you about the key actions that the Government will put into place to address these priority strategies. The ways that the Government will measure its progress are also described.

The strategies involve changes that will be achieved in a step-by-step way. Each strategy will be put into place in ways that are accountable, transparent and are considered within the resources that are available.

The Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services has written a detailed Implementation Plan outlining the role of the Division in putting these priority strategies into place.

The strategies outlined in the Implementation Plan focus on the next three years to 2005. These strategies will be reviewed before further strategies are developed for the years 2006–2008 and 2009–2012.

Copies of the Implementation Plan are available by contacting:

Telephone: 1300 366 731 (for the cost of a local call)

TTY: 1300 131 525 for people who are Deaf or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment (for the cost of a local call)

Email: statedisabilityplan@dhs.vic.gov.au

Or see the Department of Human Services website at:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

The New Approach

At present, the disability service system focuses mainly on specific programs, such as personal care, day programs and accommodation. Many of the system's resources are also directed towards responding to crises in people's lives.

The Victorian Government wants disability supports to focus on supporting people with a disability in flexible ways, based on their individual needs, so that each person can live the lifestyle that they want to lead.

The Government recognises that many support providers are already providing supports to people with a disability in innovative ways that maximise people's opportunities to participate in the community.

The Government will be looking at ways to acknowledge these innovations and to share them with others, so that everyone can benefit from the changes that are taking place.

Some of the changes that are taking place:

2002

2012

People living in the community	➔	People being included and participating in the community
Creating lives of dependence	➔	Enabling lives of connectedness with the communities in which people live
People as recipients of services	➔	People as partners in developing supports
Centralised control of decision-making	➔	More personal control of decision-making
Individuals allocated to a service provider	➔	Individuals having choices about support providers
Focus on health and community services	➔	Focus on the full range of services which support people's quality of life
Focus on programs	➔	Focus on people as individuals
Making placements in programs	➔	Enabling people to have lifestyle choices
Standard services and programs	➔	More flexible and tailored supports
Reactive, crisis-driven services	➔	More proactive planning and support
Government Departments and programs working in isolation	➔	Active partnerships and more integrated, whole-of-government approaches
Government as regulator	➔	Government as leader and demonstrator

Priority Strategy 1: Reorient Disability Supports

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that disability supports focus on assisting people with a disability to live in the community and participate in activities of their choice, in ways that are meaningful to them.

This means changing the way that the disability support system operates as a whole. It means developing a framework that enables disability supports to be more flexible, to work with people with a disability as partners, to respond to people's individual needs, and to support them to pursue a lifestyle of choice.

These changes will ensure that disability supports are in a better position to respond to people's needs at different ages and stages in their lives—such as children, young people and adults who have a disability, parents who have a disability, people with a disability who are ageing, and people's families and carers (including ageing carers).

Disability supports will also be better placed to respond to the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have a disability, as well as to people with complex communication needs, and people who have complex support needs.

Individualised Planning and Support

The Government believes that people's individual decision-making about their needs and the choices that they make about their lives, should be the most important considerations when planning with and supporting people with a disability.

The Government will therefore introduce an individualised planning and support framework. This framework will enable disability supports to be tailored to people's individual needs.

Individualised planning and support will enable people with a disability to live in the community and receive the support they need within the ordinary structures of education, health, employment, and community services. It will focus on supporting people with a disability to develop and maintain their informal and formal networks.

This approach recognises the importance of earlier planning and support to achieve the best possible outcomes at all ages and stages of a person's life—as children, young people, adults, and as people with a disability age.

Perhaps most importantly, this approach will put people with a disability at the centre of support delivery, working together with people with a disability and their families as equal partners to enable people to exercise choice in getting the support they need to pursue their own lifestyles.

Having More Choice about Housing

The Government believes that, as much as possible, people with a disability should be able to choose where they live, with whom and in what type of housing—just like most other members of the Victorian community.

The Government will develop more housing options, so that people with a disability can exercise more choice. This will involve more emphasis on public housing, private rentals, supported accommodation, and support to enable people with a disability to live independently in the community, if they choose to do so.

The Government is also committed to supporting people with a disability to live in settings that are best suited to their individual needs and wishes.

The Government will also continue work to close Kew Residential Services (Kew Cottages), and will develop plans to close other older, large-scale institutions in Victoria.

In closing these institutions, the Government recognises that people with a disability need to be supported when they move to other accommodation settings. This will be achieved by working with the people currently living in these institutions, and their families and carers, as well as with local communities across Victoria.

Strengthening Partnerships

The Government will assist disability support providers to work together with their local communities and to build stronger linkages with generic services.

This will enable people with a disability to access a range of different activities in their local communities, together with any supports and services that they may need. This will include building stronger linkages with local governments, a range of local arts, cultural, sport, and leisure organisations, community services provided by the non-government sector and other health and community services funded by the State and Commonwealth Governments.

Targeting Disability Supports

The Victorian Government is committed to maintaining a strong and secure financial base as the foundation for Victoria's long-term economic, social and environmental well-being. Therefore, the use of government resources will always need to be considered carefully.

Disability supports will be targeted to people with a disability based on their assessed needs. Disability supports will provide support beyond the services that are generally available in the community, so that people with a disability can live in their local communities. Disability supports will also be targeted to those who are most in need.

What the Government Will Do

- Develop stronger links between disability supports and generic services in local communities.
- Introduce an individualised planning and support model that is based on people's needs and the choices that they make about their lives.
- Provide earlier planning and support to people with a disability, paying particular attention to people at different life stages and transition times. This will include children, young people and adults with a disability, as well as people with a disability who are ageing.

- Improve supports for parents, families and carers.
- Provide more housing options for people with a disability, to give people greater choice and enable them to participate in their local communities.
- Continue work to close Kew Residential Services, and develop plans to close other older, large-scale institutions.
- Develop more effective strategies to address the demand for disability support in the future.
- Enhance support for people with a disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

What the Government Has Already Achieved

- ✓ Increased funding for disability supports and services by \$194.4 million (or 34 per cent) to \$766.6 million over the last three years.
- ✓ Improved support for more than 350 people with a disability by providing individualised support to enable them to live more independently in the community.
- ✓ Provided additional respite breaks for more than 900 people with a disability and their families and carers over the last two years.
- ✓ Provided funding of \$12.1 million over four years to promote the inclusion of children with special needs in preschool settings.
- ✓ Begun work to close Kew Residential Services and to build new homes for residents.
- ✓ Enabled children with a disability aged 5 to 15 years to access continence supports, by providing an additional \$2 million over the last two years.
- ✓ Increased funding for the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program by \$1 million over the last two years to enable people with a disability to live more independently in the community.
- ✓ Increased support for people who have an acquired brain injury by improving rehabilitation and case management support through the Slow-to-Recover program.

Demonstrating Future Progress

- The proportion of people with an individualised planning and support package will increase.
- Support for families and carers through flexible respite options will improve.
- The number of people with a disability living in institutional settings (of 30 beds or more) will reduce.
- The number of people with a disability accessing support from flexible community options will increase.

Priority Strategy 2: Develop Strong Foundations for Disability Supports

More dynamic disability supports need to have strong foundations on which to support people with a disability to participate in the community and pursue a lifestyle of choice.

Central to these foundations are mechanisms to ensure that disability supports can respond to people's needs—both at the individual level and at the system level.

This means that the new focus on individualised planning and support will need to be balanced with the development of disability supports that are sustainable into the future.

An Industry Plan

The Government will work in partnership with support providers in the government and non-government sectors to develop an Industry Plan. The Industry Plan will provide the blueprint for reorienting disability supports, while continuing to ensure that the support system is sustainable in the longer term.

The Industry Plan will identify key elements of the disability support system that need to be re-shaped to bring about change, including workforce planning and training, purchasing mechanisms, outcome measurement, demand management, agency governance and quality mechanisms.

Importantly, the Industry Plan will also provide the foundation on which to build stronger links between disability supports and generic health and community services.

Improving Quality

As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to provide high quality services to the Victorian community, it is important to put mechanisms into place to monitor and continually improve the quality of support for people with a disability.

This will involve developing systems to review outcomes of disability supports for people with a disability. People with a disability will play a central role in processes to plan, monitor, review and evaluate disability supports.

The Government will also introduce a provider approval program for disability support providers. This program will ensure that support providers meet minimum standards and are committed to continually improving the quality of the supports that they provide.

Strengthening the Workforce

Strengthening the workforce—across both government and non-government sectors—is key to improving outcomes for people with a disability. A number of strategies will be put into place to support employers and their staff.

The Government will ensure that staff working with people with a disability are well-positioned to provide high quality support that responds to people's individual needs and choices.

This will be achieved by promoting a culture that values and encourages innovation, and that values staff by providing opportunities for learning, development and growth through training, scholarships and career pathways.

Strengthening the workforce also involves ensuring that employers have sound recruitment, selection and learning development strategies to ensure that there is a skilled and stable workforce now and into the future.

Reviewing Legislation

Underpinning all of these strategies is a review of legislation—the *Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986* and the *Disability Services Act 1991*. This review will provide the basis for an integrated approach to disability in Victoria, and will also support the reorientation of the disability support system.

Any new legislation that is developed will be consistent with this State Disability Plan, and will reflect the shared and unique needs of people with a range of different types of disabilities.

What the Government Will Do

- Work in partnership with support providers to develop an Industry Plan.
- Continue to develop systems to monitor and improve the quality of supports and services.
- Introduce a provider approval program for disability support providers.
- Strengthen the workforce, across the government and non-government sectors, to ensure a skilled and stable workforce into the future.
- Review the *Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986* and the *Disability Services Act 1991*.

What the Government Has Already Achieved

- ✓ Begun work on a Learning and Development Strategy for staff working in both government and non-government sectors.
- ✓ Recruited and trained peer facilitators to assist people with a disability to participate in quality improvement processes for disability supports and services.
- ✓ Established a program of service review.
- ✓ Provided funding to promote innovation and highlight successful examples of continuous quality improvement in disability supports.
- ✓ Awarded study scholarships to 350 students and staff over the last two years, as part of the Government's commitment to building a skilled workforce.

- ✓ Provided training on working effectively with people who have complex communication needs to more than 1,000 staff working in the government and non-government sectors.

Demonstrating Future Progress

- More staff will have access to learning and development opportunities.
- The number of people with a disability and their families or carers who are satisfied with the quality of disability supports will increase.
- More people with a disability and their families will be involved in planning, monitoring and reviewing disability supports.
- The proportion of staff with training to Certificate IV Level in Community Services (Disability Work) will increase.

Priority Strategy 3: Promote and Protect People's Rights

The Victorian Government is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of all Victorians, including people with a disability. Promoting and protecting people's rights is about ensuring that support providers, and the Victorian community as a whole, respect, promote and safeguard the rights of people with a disability.

This includes people's rights as they are written down in law. It also includes people's rights to:

- Be respected and valued for who they are.
- Have the same opportunities as all other members of the community.
- Have the same responsibilities as all other citizens of Victoria.
- Exercise choice and have control over their lives.
- Have equal access to a range of services to support quality of life.

Promoting people's rights means making sure that people with a disability have the same opportunities as all other Victorians to participate in the life of the community. The Victorian Government has already established the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria to help do this. The Disability Advisory Council of Victoria will continue to consult with people with a disability, their parents, families and carers and provide reports to Government about the issues that people face.

Strengthening Advocacy

As part of its commitment to promoting and protecting people's rights, the Government will build a stronger, more accessible and more proactive advocacy sector. The Government will encourage self-advocacy programs, to assist people with a disability to be more independent and have maximum control over their own lives.

The Government will also continue to support and strengthen advocacy services in local communities across Victoria, for those people with a disability who need the support of advocacy organisations to help protect their rights.

The Government recognises that local advocacy organisations may also need support to provide effective advocacy services to people with a disability. This may involve specialist advice or support on particular issues, or support from other advocacy organisations in local communities. The Government will establish a statewide advocacy resource unit and will provide networking opportunities for local advocacy organisations.

Ensuring Supports are More Accountable to People with a Disability

The Victorian Government believes that disability supports should be more accountable to people with a disability, as service users. To support this process, the Government will develop a complaints and dispute resolution mechanism that is independent of the disability support system and the Department of Human Services.

This mechanism will enable people with a disability and their families to make complaints about disability supports, and to be heard equally, objectively and without fear. Information on the number and type of complaints will be made public, so that people with a disability and their families can make informed choices about the supports they want and need.

Enhancing Protections and Safeguards

There are a number of practices that are designed to protect people's safety, but which significantly restrict people's rights. These include restraint, seclusion and imposing a service against a person's wishes, to name a few. The Government is committed to developing independent and transparent mechanisms to monitor and regulate these practices.

The Government will also work to ensure that people's rights are not unreasonably restricted when they are unable to make their own decisions. The Government will do this by looking at the ways that decision-makers are appointed under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 1986*.

The Government also recognises that better protections and safeguards are needed for people with a disability who are experiencing, or who are at risk of experiencing, physical, emotional or sexual assault, or sexual harassment.

The Government will be enhancing community supports and services (such as Centres Against Sexual Assault and victim support services) so that they can better respond to the needs of people with a disability who have experienced violence.

This will involve building closer working relationships between the Department of Human Services and justice agencies, such as Victoria Police, the courts and other community services. These partnerships will also enable the criminal justice system to better respond to the needs of people with a disability.

What the Government Will Do

- Continue to support the development of advocacy services for people with a disability in local communities across Victoria.
- Support the Victorian Electoral Commission to make sure that people with a disability can maximise their entitlement to participate in elections.
- Develop an independent complaints and dispute resolution mechanism for disability supports and services.
- Develop an independent, open and transparent means of authorising, reviewing and regulating practices that restrict people's rights.
- Ensure access to appropriate support for people with a disability who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing, physical, emotional or sexual assault, or sexual harassment.
- Support the criminal justice system (police, courts, corrections and other organisations) to better respond to the needs of people with a disability.

What the Government Has Already Achieved

- ✓ Provided \$209,000 for innovative advocacy initiatives in local communities across metropolitan and regional Victoria.
- ✓ Established the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria to promote people's rights, to give a voice to people with a disability, and to provide advice to Government.
- ✓ Developed a Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy and the Women's Safety Strategy which include outcomes and strategies for people with a disability.
- ✓ Begun a demonstration project to better support women with a disability who are experiencing violence.
- ✓ Asked the Victorian Law Reform Commission to examine compulsory care and treatment for people with an intellectual disability who are at risk to themselves and to the community.
- ✓ Ensured that all uses of restraint and seclusion by services funded under the *Disability Services Act 1991* must now be reported to the Intellectual Disability Review Panel.

Demonstrating Future Progress

- Access for people with a disability to advocacy services in their local communities will improve.
- Access to community supports and services for people with a disability who have experienced violence will improve.
- Justice agencies' (police, courts, corrections and other organisations) awareness of the needs of people with a disability and disability issues in general will improve.

Priority Strategy 4: Strengthen Local Communities

The Victorian Government is committed to strengthening communities across Victoria so that they are more welcoming, more accessible and more inclusive of people with a disability. Inclusive communities are safe and healthy environments. They are places where:

- People have a sense of belonging.
- People can contribute to the community with a shared sense of the responsibilities of citizenship.
- People can participate in all aspects of community life.
- People are valued for the contributions they make to the community.
- Families are valued and supported.
- People have their rights respected and can take action if they are discriminated against.
- People have strong social, cultural and volunteer networks.
- People are listened to for their views on local issues.
- Supports and services respond to the needs of the local community.

The Government recognises that the meaning of 'community' may be different for different people. A person may be a member of one community, but they may also be members of many 'communities', depending on where they live, their interests, family background or religion. These communities, and an individual's sense of belonging to them, may change over time, and over the course of a person's life.

Building More Inclusive Communities

The Victorian Government is committed to building more inclusive communities. More inclusive communities benefit all members of the community, by reducing the inequalities and disadvantages that unfairly undermine some people's opportunities to take part in community life.

Building more inclusive communities is about using the resources and efforts of governments and communities to strengthen the capacities of entire communities. In this way, people with a disability are supported—not only by supports and services, but also by their local communities.

As part of its commitment to building more inclusive communities, the Victorian Government will undertake a campaign to raise the community's awareness of disability. This broad campaign will reach all Victorians, and will also be targeted to specific groups, such as workers in government programs, health professionals and police.

The Government will also build on the success of the RuralAccess initiative, which is a partnership initiative between the Department of Human Services, local governments and local communities.

RuralAccess is developing new ways of including people with a disability in the life of their communities through a range of arts, cultural, sport, tourism and leisure activities, as well as by improving access to education, health and other services in local communities.

Participating in the Community

Recreation and leisure are important parts of everyone's lives. Through initiatives like RuralAccess and Access for All Abilities, the Victorian Government has already increased opportunities for people with a disability to take part in arts, cultural, sport, tourism and leisure activities in their local communities.

Participation in activities like these provides social, health, economic and environmental benefits for the whole State.

The Government will continue to promote opportunities for people with a disability to take part in community activities in line with its Physical Activity Framework, by building on the many achievements of RuralAccess and Access for All Abilities in local communities.

The Government will also improve access to community transport for people with a disability, particularly those living in regional and rural areas. Many local communities already have successful community transport programs and the Government will build on these when looking at new programs for the future.

Integrated Planning

Community strengthening initiatives like RuralAccess and Access for All Abilities provide the framework for an integrated approach to planning by Government Departments, local governments, local health and community services, and a range of other stakeholders in local communities, to ensure that all planning activities focus on the needs of people with a disability.

The Government will draw on major events like the 2006 Commonwealth Games to ensure that the needs of people with a disability are considered in all areas and in all aspects of planning and service delivery.

What the Government Will Do

- Develop and implement community awareness campaigns.
- Strengthen partnerships with State and local governments and community-based organisations to build more accessible and more inclusive communities.
- Build on the success of RuralAccess, and other community strengthening initiatives, and expand these initiatives to all areas of Victoria.
- Develop community transport options, particularly in regional and rural Victoria.
- Increase opportunities for people with a disability to participate in arts, cultural, sport, tourism and leisure activities.
- Introduce a companion card scheme to assist people who have a severe or profound disability to access recreation and leisure opportunities.

- Ensure that the needs of people with a disability are considered in all aspects of planning for the Commonwealth Games to be held in Melbourne in 2006.

What the Government Has Already Achieved

- ✓ Begun to strengthen local communities and improved access to a range of local services, through complementary initiatives like RuralAccess and Access for All Abilities.
- ✓ Encouraged and assisted local governments to be more accessible and inclusive of people with a disability, by working in partnership with the Municipal Association of Victoria.
- ✓ Recognised the contributions that people with a disability make to the lives of their local communities, through a range of community-based activities held on International Day of People with a Disability.
- ✓ Recognised local government initiatives to promote the inclusion of people with a disability in their local communities, through the Accessible Communities Awards.
- ✓ Expanded community transport services for people with a disability, by providing an additional \$3.7 million for more than 100 new vehicles.
- ✓ Undertaken research on ways to enhance the friendship networks of people with a disability.

Demonstrating Future Progress

- Community awareness of disability issues and the needs of people with a disability will increase.
- Access to arts, cultural, sport and leisure activities will improve for people with a disability.
- There will be more partnership initiatives between governments, communities and providers of health and community services in local communities.

Priority Strategy 5: Make Public Services Accessible

The Victorian Government believes that people with a disability, like all members of the community, should have access to a range of services that support quality of life—including education, public transport and health services—and access to employment opportunities, as well as access to buildings and other venues.

The Government will make public services more accessible and more inclusive so that people with a disability can participate in the social, economic, cultural, political and spiritual life of their local communities.

Promoting Inclusive Education

The Government is committed to promoting the inclusion of people with a disability in education environments. The Government will do this by making sure that schools, higher education settings (TAFEs and universities) and adult community education work to support and include children, young people and adults with a disability.

More inclusive education environments will be achieved for children and young people with a disability by enhancing support for teachers and other school staff through ongoing learning and development opportunities.

The Government will also make sure that children and young people with a disability and their families are supported when they make the transition from preschool to school, and from school to higher education, training and employment.

Access to Public Transport and Buildings

The Government recognises the important role that public transport and taxi services play in the lives of all Victorians.

Faster, better and more accessible public transport and taxi systems will be built, in line with the Government's detailed 20-year plan for trams, trains and buses—the *21st Century Accessible Action Plan*.

The Government will also improve access to buildings and other venues in communities, by assessing existing building standards and their impact on people with a disability.

Improving Health and Well-being

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that all people have access to high quality health and community services in their local communities.

Access to health services for people with a disability will be improved by ensuring that doctors, nurses, and other health professionals are better placed to respond to the health needs of people with a disability, at all stages of life.

The Government will also improve access to important health screening programs (such as breast, bowel, PAP and prostate screening tests), and to sexual and reproductive health services for women with a disability.

The Government will also promote mental health and well-being for people with a disability through Community Arts Participation projects, and VicHealth sport and recreation projects.

Increasing Employment Opportunities

Having a job (paid, voluntary, part-time, full-time, professional or not) is one of the highest aspirations of people with a disability in Victoria.

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring that people with a disability have the same employment opportunities as all other Victorians, particularly in public services and in local government.

The Government will work with all sectors to promote employment opportunities. This includes government organisations, private businesses, local governments and industry peak bodies. The Government will also support State Government Departments, statutory authorities and local governments to improve employment opportunities for people with a disability.

For people with a disability who want to work in Business Services (formerly known as supported employment programs), the Victorian Government will work with the Commonwealth Government to enhance access to supported employment that fits with people's own personal interests.

Working Together

If we are to build a better future for all Victorians, including people with a disability, services across Government and across the community need to work together to make their programs, services and facilities more accessible.

The Department of Human Services will take a lead role in supporting government organisations to make their programs, services and facilities more accessible and more inclusive. One of the ways that the Department of Human Services can do this is by providing advice to other government organisations on how to develop and implement their own Disability Action Plans.

In doing so, the Government will be providing leadership to the Victorian community, to ensure that over time, people with a disability have the same opportunities as other Victorians to participate in all aspects of Victorian life—socially, economically, culturally, politically and spiritually.

What the Government Will Do

- Support Government Departments to develop and implement Disability Action Plans.
- Make sure that government information is accessible to people with a disability.
- Promote inclusive education for children, young people and adults with a disability in education environments.

- Promote employment opportunities in the public sector for people with a disability.
- Improve access to public infrastructure (public transport, taxis and buildings).
- Improve access for people with a disability to a range of health services.

What the Government Has Already Achieved

- ✓ Listened to the issues that are important to Victorians with a disability, their parents, families and carers.
- ✓ Improved access to public transport, for example, by introducing low-floor trams to Melbourne and state-of-the-art Superstops for trams.
- ✓ Developed a Women's Health and Well-being Strategy to continue to improve the health and well-being of Victorian women, particularly those most disadvantaged.
- ✓ Announced the expansion of the Communication Aids and Equipment Program to school-aged children.
- ✓ Undertaken a review of education services for students with special needs.
- ✓ Begun a review of multi-purpose taxi services, with the aim of improving taxi services to Victorians who have a disability.

Demonstrating Future Progress

- There will be an increase in the range of options to support children and young people with a disability to participate in education environments.
- Access to public transport (trains, trams, buses and taxis) will improve.
- Access to health screening programs (including breast, bowel, PAP and prostate screening) will improve.

Next Steps

The Victorian Government is committed to monitoring its progress and evaluating the outcomes of the priority strategies that it puts into place. This will ensure that real progress is made towards achieving the Government's vision over the next ten years.

The Victorian Government will do this by:

- Making the priority strategies and key actions part of the Implementation Plan for the Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services.
- Undertaking a yearly review of the priority strategies.
- Publishing reports that show the Government's progress.
- Providing regular updates to the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria.
- Continuing to get reports from the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria about the issues that are important to people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, and considering these issues as they arise.
- Evaluating the outcomes of the priority strategies before developing new strategies for 2006–2008 and for 2009–2012.
- Ensuring that the views of people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers and members of the broader community are listened to and taken into account.

The Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services will coordinate the implementation of the priority strategies. The Division will also support other organisations in making their supports and services more accessible and more inclusive of people with a disability.

The Government recognises that new issues, challenges and opportunities will arise, and that priorities may change over time. Responding to these new issues and monitoring the implementation of the priority strategies in this Plan will be essential to ensuring that the Government remains on track to deliver its vision in 2012.

Appendix One: How the State Disability Plan Was Developed

The State Disability Plan was developed in consultation with the Victorian community, including people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers, community groups and other members of the broader community.

The State Disability Plan was developed over four phases:

Phase One—Public Consultation Phase

From September to November 2000, the Government undertook an extensive consultation process to seek the views of the Victorian community in developing the State Disability Plan.

More than 1,700 people actively participated in this process. The things that people told the Government, and the issues that they raised, were collated into a *Consultation Report* (January 2001).

Phase Two—Solution Development Phase

During Phase Two, the Government worked with a range of stakeholders to develop strategies and recommendations to be included in the Draft State Disability Plan.

These stakeholders included people with a disability, representatives from the Department of Human Services and other government departments (Commonwealth, State and local), individuals from the disability services sector, academics, and eminent people in the disability field, both within Australia and overseas.

Phase Three—Draft State Disability Plan

The *Draft State Disability Plan* was released in October 2001. The Draft Plan served as a basis for further feedback from the Victorian community. More than 1,350 people provided feedback on the Draft Plan. The Government considered the many comments that people made when developing this State Disability Plan.

Phase Four—Implementing the Priority Strategies

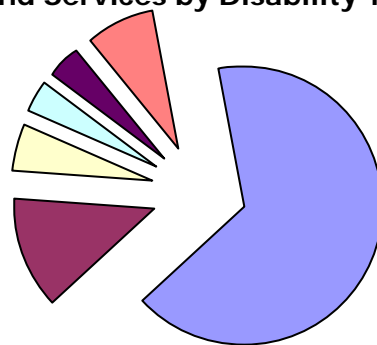
The release of this Plan marks the beginning of Phase Four. This phase will continue as the priority strategies are implemented, and as the Government measures its progress against these strategies.

Appendix Two: Current Supports and Services for People with a Disability

People with a disability currently access a range of different supports and services to meet their needs, including accommodation, day programs, personal care, respite, aids and equipment. These supports and services aim to improve the quality of life of Victorians with a disability, by enhancing people's independence, choice and community inclusion.

These supports and services provide continuing care for people with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities, acquired brain injury and neurological impairments.

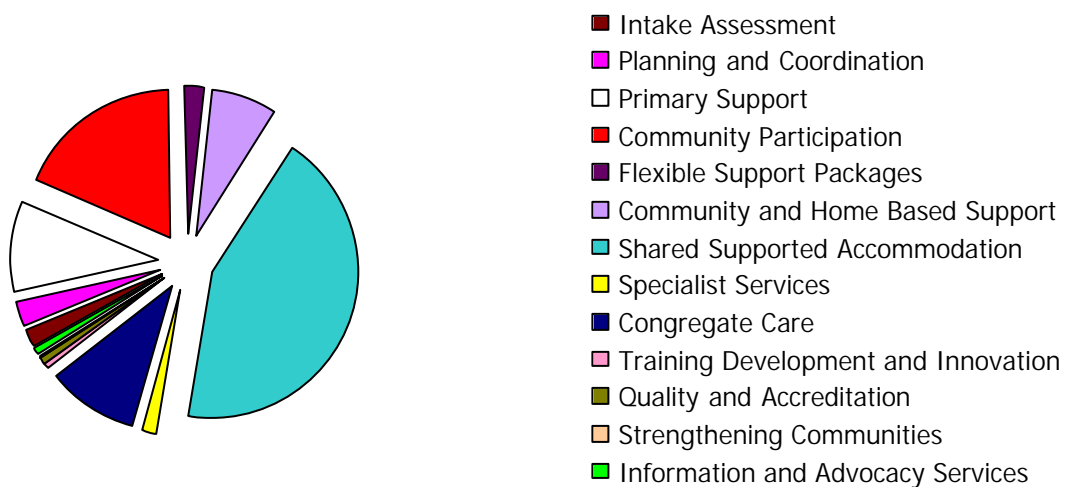
Percentage of People Accessing Disability Supports and Services by Disability Type 2001



Intellectual Disability 66%
 Physical Disability 13%
 Sensory Disability 5%
 Neurological Impairment 4%
 Acquired Brain Injury 4%
 Other Disability 8%
 Total = 14,382

The range of supports and services for people with a disability are currently provided by a range of government and non-government organisations. This includes Government Departments and authorities, service providers in the non-government sector (including for-profit and not-for-profit organisations), local governments, community groups, and a range of other community-based organisations.

Disability Services Expected Expenditure by Output 2001/2002



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Mr Adam Berry	Mrs Dorothy Locke
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Mr Gavin Brideson	Ms Tamara Maillard
Broadmeadows Disability Services	Ms Denise May
Mr Paul Burns	Mr John McKenna
Mr Tony Clark	Mr Joe Micallef
Coburg Softball Club (in association with Special Olympics Victoria and Moreland City Council Access for All Abilities)	Mrs Joesphine Micallef
Mr Peter Cole	Mr Joseph Micallef
Communication Aid Users Society	Norlane High School
Cranbourne Community House	Northern Care and Share Inc
Dial-A-Lunch	Mr Ernie O'Dwyer
Eurest Australia	Mr Doug Pentland
Ms Marcia Ferguson	Mrs June Perrin
Ms Maria Figueiredo	Mr Wayne Perrin
Mr Timothy Foster	Ms Margaret Quinn
Ms Narelle Gardiner	Mr Eric Rebernik
Ms Jill Graham	South Eastern Disability Services Inc
Ms Tina Gulino	Ms Stephanie St. John
Mr Mark Gullery	St Laurence Community Services (Barwon)
Mrs Pat Hickford	Ms Jacqui Stevens
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Katrina from Guide Dogs Association of Victoria	United Cricket Club Emu Valley League

Victorian Championship Basketball
Competition for Players with an
Intellectual Disability

Village Cinemas Australia

Vision Australia Foundation

Mr Sang Vo

Mr Tam Vo

Mr Miles Wilkes

Ms Kate Woolfe

Mr Neville Worthington

Ms Stella Young

Zory's Sandwich and Cappuccino Bar

The State Disability Plan is available in a range of formats accessible to people with a different types of disabilities. These are: Braille; Large Print; Audiotape; and CD-Rom.

A summary brochure of this State Disability Plan is also available in English; Easy English with pictures; Easy English Audiotape; Braille; Large Print; and, in five community languages (Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Turkish and Vietnamese).

For further information about the Victorian State Disability Plan, please contact:

Disability Services Division
Department of Human Services
555 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 1300 366 731 (for the cost of a local call)

Fax: 03 9616 7272

TTY: 1300 131 525 for people who are Deaf or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment (for the cost of a local call)

Email: statedisabilityplan@dhs.vic.gov.au

Further information and copies of the Victorian State Disability Plan are also available on the Department of Human Services website at: [**www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability**](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability)