

Partnering for the future:
The Victorian Industry Development
Plan for the provision of support
for people with a disability

a new way • new choices • YOUR FUTURE

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Executive summary

The industry that provides support to Victorians with a disability has a reputation for service quality, continuous improvement and innovation.

One action nominated in the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-12* was the development of a disability industry plan as a blueprint for reshaping the industry. It was designed to ensure that supports and services achieve the best outcomes for people with a disability, their families and carers, yet are able to take advantage of new developments that promote quality and sustainability during the change process.

The *Disability Act 2006* is guided by the principles of human rights and citizenship and this is a key feature of *Partnering for the Future: The Victorian Industry Development Plan for the provision of support for people with a disability*. In addition, the industry must put into practice the civil and political rights outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

The plan focuses on the provision of support for people with a disability, and is for all industry stakeholders – people with a disability, their families and carers, the workforce, unions, training bodies,

support providers, volunteers, peak bodies and government. In addition, the ‘generic’ service sector will become more important and relevant in the provision of support for people with a disability. Developing linkages between disability support providers and generic health and community supports will highlight the emergence of new stakeholders.

This is a joint industry and government plan, containing initiatives to take the industry forward and enable effective, sustainable and contemporary results into the foreseeable future. It commits both industry and government to achieving results in five key areas.

Key result area one: Creating individualised support response

To focus on contemporary supports that effectively respond to individual lifestyle choices and circumstances.

Key result area two: Workforce planning and development

To address industry and labour market trends that clearly indicate that disability service providers will come under significant pressure as the population ages and the supply of labour reduces.

Key result area three: Increasing community awareness and valuing of diversity

To address attitudes of individuals and the community at large which inhibit inclusion in general community life. Further, to re-focus attitudes and behaviour toward disability, so that it does not identify with concepts of disadvantage, but rather recognises and acknowledges the value of diversity.

Key result area four: Community strengthening through partnerships

To strengthen partnerships between the industry and government agencies, as well as develop a whole of government approach to the issues affecting people with a disability and their families and carers.

Key result area five: Industry governance, management, planning and investment

To improve the effectiveness of services and ensure a sustainable network of supports and services are maintained, offering both choice and quality.

Introduction

Within the context of the *Growing Victoria Together* objectives, later refreshed and further elaborated in *A Fairer Victoria*, the Victorian Government developed the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–12*, based on extensive consultation with the Victorian community.

The *State Disability Plan*, together with the *Disability Act 2006*, are guided by the principles of human rights and social justice – people with a disability, as citizens of Victoria should enjoy the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities as all other citizens, fully and equally participating in community life.

The vision of the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–12* is:

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 citizens of Victoria.

There is recognition amongst key stakeholders – people with a disability, their families and carers, disability service providers, government and community service organisations, other human service providers, unions and

industrial associations and government representatives – that implementing the *State Disability Plan* must herald new ways of working and of providing more inclusive support.

One action nominated was the development of a disability industry plan to provide the blueprint for reshaping the industry, bringing about the changes needed, while still ensuring the support system was sustainable.

The development of the *Partnering for the Future: The Victorian Industry Development Plan for the provision of support for people with a disability* was guided by the expertise of a Reference Group, chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary of the Community Services. A number of workshops and regional consultations were undertaken as part of the verification process and provided the platform to develop a draft Plan. Verification consultations were subsequently undertaken with community service organisations and people with a disability and their families and carers. The latter consultation phase highlighted the need to distinguish between a *strategic* plan for the development of the industry and an *implementation* plan to support it.

Industry definition

In the context of this document, ‘industry’ refers to government-provided supports (through the Secretary of the Department of Human Services) and supports provided by community service organisations and agencies funded by the Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services. Furthermore, the integral role of family and carers in supporting people with a disability should be recognised.

In the future, the generic service sector will become more important in providing support to people with a disability. The definition of ‘industry’ will become more diffuse and involve a broader range of support providers. At the same time, this will provide the opportunity to further engage with businesses, the community and the three tiers of government in responding to the aspirations, goals and needs of people with a disability.

The present situation

People with a disability

People with a disability comprise approximately 20 per cent of the Victorian population (*Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004*). However, the target group for Disability Services is less than one third of these individuals – those with profound or severe limitations in their ability to undertake core activities including communication, mobility and self-care.

In addition to these limitations, many people with a disability also have more restricted access to opportunities in their day-to-day lives than other members of the community. Barriers to participation may include physical, social and linguistic, and will determine the supports people with a disability may choose. For some, even access to disability services is problematic.

Barriers exist within the Victorian community that mean people with a disability have less choice and less access to opportunities than their peers. For example, people with a disability do not have the same access to education as others within the community. Approximately 20 per cent of people with a disability over the age of 15 years have not attended school or have only progressed to year 8, compared to five per cent of the general population.

Similarly, only 55 per cent of people with a disability are employed, while over 81 per cent of the total Victorian population is in paid work. Furthermore, the proportion of people with a disability who are seeking employment is 1.8 times that of the total Victorian population.

In terms of people with a disability accessing disability support services, in

2002 the majority of service users were more likely to:

- have an intellectual disability
- receive some form of income security (Disability Support Pension, or if aged less than 16 years, the Carers Allowance)
- be aged between 20-44 years
- live in community settings
- be born in Australia and speak English at home.

Provision of support

Close to \$1 billion per annum (2005-06) is made available by the Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services. Of this amount, 53 per cent is directed to government-provided services and 47 per cent to the community services sector. In total, 392 agencies received funding from the Disability Services Division to provide support for people with a disability.

In 2005-06, 50 per cent of the disability services budget was targeted at accommodation support, with a further 30 per cent for community support and access programs. The remaining funds were distributed across respite, advocacy, information and other support services.

This pattern of investment typically shows a disproportionate balance of resources, weighted heavily towards accommodation support services. This is not only due to the higher unit cost of provision, but also an historical preference for this form of service response.

The skewed nature of investment in the service continuum has inadvertently pushed service recipients towards the more traditional service responses.

There is a pressing need to create a greater balance across the service continuum, if timely and more relevant support responses are to be available for people with a disability (consistent with the directions outlined in the *State Disability Plan*).

In recent times, new funding has been primarily targeted to individualised planning and support, providing access to flexible packages tailored to personal lifestyle choices. This trend is consistent with best practice and will continue into the future.

The *Productivity Commission Report on Government Service Provision 2004* identified that the cost of service delivery in Victoria is influenced by both the nature of support provided and the service provider. In Victoria, when compared to other jurisdictions, there is:

- a higher than average estimated expenditure per service user
- decreasing expenditure on administration
- a higher than average cost per government-provided institutional/residential and group home settings per service user
- a lower than average cost per non-government provided institutional/residential and group home setting per service users
- a higher than average cost for 'other' settings per service user, in the community service sector.

In an environment of increasing demand and limited resources, greater effort will be focused on actions to optimise efficiency and effectiveness of expenditure.

Industry vision

A *Fairer Victoria* provides a policy platform to progress the vision of the *State Disability Plan*, where a whole of government approach is integral to establishing a culture of collaboration that supports the sharing of knowledge, experience, and expertise.

The vision of *Partnering for the Future: The Victorian Industry Development Plan - for the provision of support for people with a disability* is:

Support providers will embrace and embed the vision of the State Disability Plan into their day-to-day operations and practices to create a vibrant, sustainable and rewarding industry delivering high quality supports that are responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The vision will also be underpinned by an implementation commitment to support people with a disability to lead decision-making that affects their lives and to encourage them to become leaders in their communities.

The following diagram provides a visual representation of how the industry plan can be seen to cascade from the *State Disability Plan*.

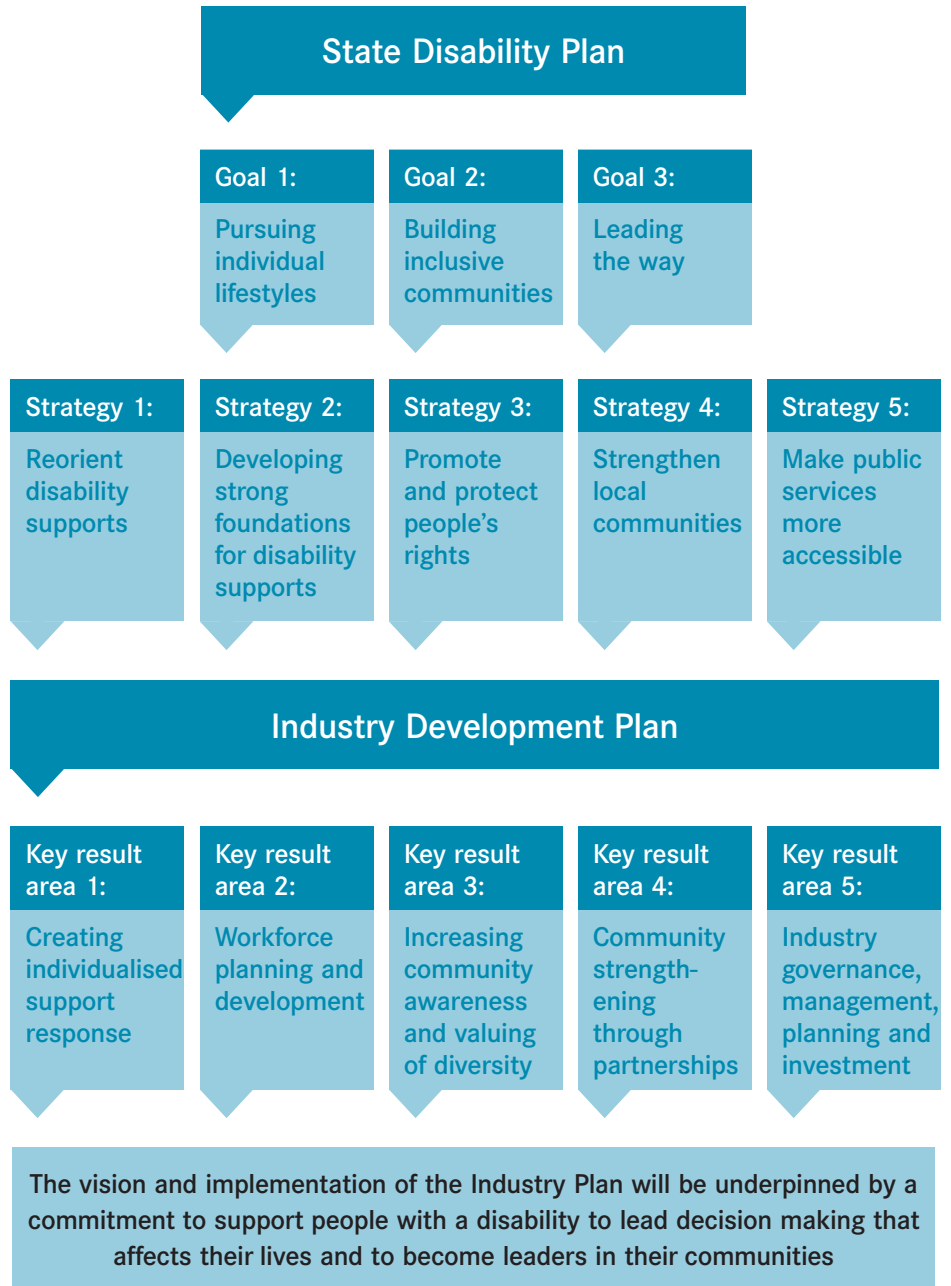


Figure 1

Future opportunities

To re-structure the nature of support provision, as envisioned in the *Partnering for the Future: The Victorian Industry Development Plan for the provision of support for people with a disability*, specific drivers for change are needed. These are:

- promotion and protection of civil and political rights in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibility Act 2006 and the principles of human rights and citizen which guide the Disability Act 2006
- people with a disability:
 - directing the planning and nature of support provision so that it effectively supports their circumstances and their engagement in their local community
 - taking a lead role in their community, with support as required
 - being welcomed as equal members within their community
 - being recognised and acknowledged as partners in support provision
- the targeting of new funds to flexible and individualised support options
- an evolution of traditional service models to more flexible and individualised support approaches, reflecting individual choice
- establishment of new flexible funding arrangements, including direct payments to people with a disability and the use of financial intermediaries
- considering the role of government as planner, service provider, fund source and regulator, in the context of an increasing focus on individual options and new flexible funding arrangements
- an increased focus on the cost efficiency of support provision, to ensure that individuals are able to maximise their purchasing power
- an increased recognition of the value of diversity and its contribution in strengthening the capacity of communities to effectively respond and support the needs of those who live within it
- a reorientation of support to facilitate the individual's lifestyle choices in their community
- a greater focus on capacity building and community strengthening, to encourage acceptance of diversity, engage people with a disability and improve access to public services
- access to a range of other health, education and community services for people with a disability, to meet their individual goals, aspirations and needs

Key result areas

In order to develop an effective, sustainable and contemporary disability industry, focused effort needs to be directed to:

- continue developing individualised support responses
- building the capacity to deliver tailored responses to individuals
- increasing awareness and facilitating attitudinal change to value diversity
- strengthening partnerships across the sector, to achieve whole of government and whole of community responses to issues faced by the sector.

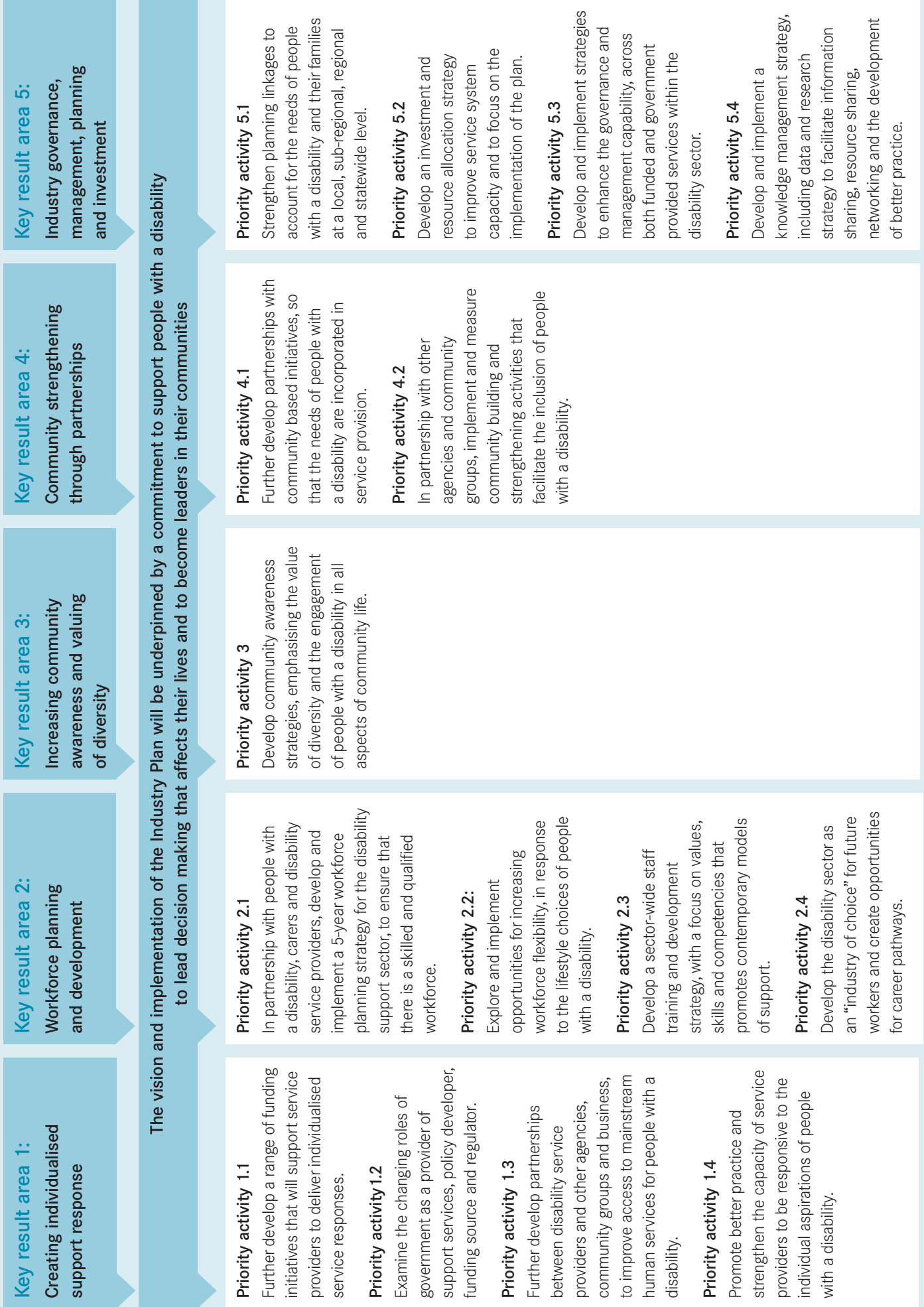
An ever-broadening range of support providers will be encompassed, as people with a disability access a range of other health, education and community services to meet individual goals, aspirations and needs.

Partnering for the Future: The Victorian Industry Development Plan for the provision of support for people with a disability will be underpinned by a commitment to support people with a disability to lead decision making that affects their lives, encouraging them to become leaders in their communities.

Supporting the vision and implementation commitment, the industry, together with the Department of Human Services, has agreed that there are five key result areas that should be given highest priority.

Victorian Industry Development Plan

Figure 2



Key result area 1: Creating individualised support responses

Inherent in the *State Disability Plan* is the need to establish new approaches for support provision. The focus of contemporary support will be on approaches that effectively respond to the lifestyle choices of the individual and their circumstance. The rise of new support approaches, characterised by flexible support packages tailored to individual needs, may also mean that traditional models may not be the preferred choice of some individuals.

The objective of this key result area is to establish and implement a new framework for support provision that is person-directed, focused on lifestyle choices and provides the individual with the purchasing power to secure the support they require.

There are three priority activities:

- 1.1 Further develop a range of funding initiatives that will support service providers to deliver individualised, culturally appropriate service responses.
- 1.2 Examine the changing roles of government as a provider of support services, policy developer, funding source and regulator.
- 1.3 Promote better practice and strengthen the capacity of support providers to be responsive to the individual aspirations of people with a disability.

Key result area 2: Workforce planning and development

One of the most significant issues confronting the industry is that of workforce planning and management. Industry and labour market trends clearly indicate that disability service providers will come under significant pressure as the population ages and the supply of labour reduces. As an industry, it ranks poorly on a number of criteria in attracting and retaining the workforce it requires for the future. There is a need to re-position the industry, so that it can become an ‘industry of choice’. By becoming an ‘industry of choice’, support providers will be better able to address labour shortages and attract and retain skilled workers.

The objective of this key result area is to establish and implement a workforce planning strategy that will facilitate the provision of contemporary and quality support responses, tailored to the requirements of people with a disability.

There are four priority activities:

- 2.1 Partnership with peak organisations, unions, training bodies and disability service providers to develop and implement a 5-year workforce planning strategy for the disability support sector to ensure that there is a skilled and qualified workforce.
- 2.2 Explore and implement opportunities for increasing workforce flexibility, in response to the lifestyle choices of people with a disability.
- 2.3 A sector wide staff training and development strategy, with a focus on values, skills and competencies that promote contemporary models of support.

- 2.4 Develop the disability sector as an ‘industry of choice’ for future workers and create opportunities for career pathways.

Key result area 3: Increasing community awareness and valuing of diversity

People with a disability, families, carers and support providers consistently identify the most significant barrier to inclusion as being the attitudes of individuals and the community at large. In addition, social, physical and linguistic barriers further compound inclusive participation in the community. There is need to recognise and act on these views in a planned and coordinated way, by challenging commonly held stereotypes and perceptions within the community about disability. There is a need to re-focus the thinking around disability, so that it does not identify with concepts of disadvantage, but rather celebrates and acknowledges the value of diversity. Strong coordination between various government departments and the community is needed to achieve this fundamental change in attitude.

The objective of this key result area is to increase the awareness, understanding and acceptance of diversity within the wider community in Victoria.

The one priority activity is to:

- 3.1 Develop community awareness strategies, emphasising the value of diversity and the engagement of people with a disability in all aspects of community life.

Implementing this plan

The Victorian Government, community service organisations, people with a disability and their families and carers have worked together to formulate this strategic plan. The consultation process highlighted the importance of a partnership approach throughout, including the implementation planning process. This is a partnership between all industry stakeholders: people with a disability, families and carers, support providers, peak organisations, unions, government and representatives from the generic service and business sectors.

These same groups must work together to oversee its implementation. A representative group will be created to develop the implementation plan, facilitated by the Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services. This group will prioritise actions and set up monitoring and review mechanisms.

Key result area 4: Community strengthening through partnerships

For people with a disability to be able to realise their rights as citizens, there is a need for the industry, communities and government to work together to better understand and support people with a disability. By building on the community strengthening work that is underway across Victoria, opportunities will emerge to positively engage people with a disability.

The objective of this key result area is to increase the capacity and strength of communities to positively respond to the diversity within them.

The two priority activities are to:

- 4.1 Further develop partnerships with community based initiatives, so that the needs of people with a disability are incorporated in service provision.
- 4.2 In partnerships with other agencies and community groups, implement and measure community building and strengthening activities that facilitate the inclusion of people with a disability.

Key result area 5: Industry governance, management, planning and investment

To re-shape and grow a robust industry of support for people with a disability, there is a need to identify changing needs and demand for support from within the community. The implications of the demographic changes related to ageing carers, an ageing population and urban migration to the coast and rural areas will require a change in the way resources are invested. At the same time,

a robust industry should be supported in its governance and management capability to meet the challenges of today and of the future. Well-governed and managed services are integral to effective and responsive service delivery. Opportunities for knowledge sharing and joint problem solving will strengthen the industry to effectively address emerging challenges.

The objective of this key result area is to establish a planning and investment framework to guide the development of cost-effective support responses, through a strengthened approach in governance and management.

The four priority activities are to:

- 5.1 Strengthen planning linkages to account for the needs of people with a disability and families/carers at a local, sub-regional, regional and statewide level.
- 5.2 Develop an investment and resource allocation strategy, to improve the capacity of the service system and to focus on the implementation of the plan.
- 5.3 Develop and implement strategies to enhance the governance and management capability across both funded and government disability service providers.
- 5.4 Develop and implement a knowledge management strategy, including data and research, to facilitate information and resource sharing, networking and the development of better practice.

