

**Victorian
State Disability Plan 2002-2012:
A Summary**

Large Print Version

September 2002



The State Disability Plan brings into focus the Victorian Government's commitment to building better, stronger communities. The Plan focuses on the rights that people with a disability should have, to live and participate in the community as citizens of Victoria.

The Plan has been developed in a spirit that reflects the task before us—a spirit of partnership and participation across government and across the community.

A central tenet of this Plan is its whole-of-government approach. Over the next decade, Government Departments will be forging strong working partnerships with other organisations and with 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 to move us closer to our vision.

I look forward to working with you as we put this Plan into action.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bronwyn Pike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Hon Bronwyn Pike MP
Minister for Community Services and Housing

The Way Forward

The State Disability Plan is a hallmark of the Victorian Government's policy. The Plan has a ten-year outlook to 2012 and outlines the Victorian Government's vision for the future.

The State Disability Plan reaffirms the rights that people with a disability have to live and participate in the life of the Victorian community, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as all other citizens of Victoria.

The State Disability Plan outlines a new approach to disability for the Victorian Government, and the Victorian community as a whole. This is the first disability plan in Victoria to take a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to disability. In doing so, the Plan looks at issues across all aspects of life including disability supports, health and community services, recreation, education, employment, transport, housing and justice.

This is also the first disability plan to address the needs of people with a range of different types of disabilities—including intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities, acquired brain injury and neurological impairments.

The Vision

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

Making the Vision a Reality

Making the Victorian Government's vision a reality involves important changes. These changes will only be achieved by working together—with people with a disability, parents, families, carers, different organisations across government, service providers in the non-government sector, local governments, community groups, businesses and industry leaders, the Commonwealth Government, and members of the broader community.

The Victorian Government is committed to providing leadership to the Victorian community and will lead the way by building more inclusive communities and improving the accessibility and responsiveness of services across Victoria.

The Government has identified five priority strategies to help make its vision a reality. These strategies 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:

1. Reorient disability supports:

- 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 (Kew Cottages), 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.

2. Develop strong foundations for disability supports:

- 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*.

3. Promote and protect people's rights:

- 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.

4. Strengthen local communities:

- 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.

5. Make public services accessible:

- 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.

Putting the Plan into Action

The State Disability Plan is both visionary and ambitious. The challenge for the Victorian Government and for the Victorian community as a whole is to work towards making this Plan a reality for all people with a disability in Victoria.

The Disability Services Division, Department of Human Services will play a lead role in putting the priority strategies into place. The Division has written an Implementation Plan which outlines the processes that will be employed over the next three years to 2005 to start working towards making the Government's vision a reality.

For More Information

The State Disability Plan is available in a range of formats accessible to people with different types of disabilities.

Copies of this summary brochure are available in Easy English with pictures; Easy English Audiotape; Braille; Large Print; and five community languages (Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Turkish and Vietnamese).

Copies of the State Disability Plan are also available in Braille; Large Print; Audiotape; and on CD-Rom.

For a copy of the State Disability Plan or for more information please contact:

Disability Services Division
Department of Human Services
555 Collins Street
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Phone: 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 visit the Department of Human Services' website at:
www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability