

Part 3: Divisional policy

3.1 The government's policy framework

The Victorian Government believes that people living 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 in this State.

The *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–2012*, which articulates the government's vision, has been developed in consultation with the Victorian community. This includes consultation with people living with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers, community groups, local government, State Government and Australian Government departments, statutory authorities and other members of the broader community.

The Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–2012 states:

'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.'

To achieve this vision, the plan sets out three primary goals:

Goal 1: Pursuing individual lifestyles

To enable people living 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, to ensure that people living 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 living with a disability by developing more inclusive and accessible public services, and by promoting non-discriminatory practices.

3.2 Divisional Plan 2006–07

To achieve the vision of the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002–2012*, during 2006–07 the Disability Services Division will focus on the following five priority strategies and key actions, in addition to the delivery of the division's core services and activities.

Priority 1: Reorient disability supports

To ensure that disability supports focus on assisting people living with a disability to live in the community and participate in activities of their choice, in ways that are meaningful to them, we will:

- improve the active participation of parents, families and carers of people living with a disability in the planning and delivery of disability services in Victoria through the development of a carer participation plan
- implement the key recommendations contained in The Next Steps for Support and Choice review
- develop new housing options for people living with a disability through the Disability Housing Trust
- in conjunction with the Australian Government, jointly establish and fund a five-year initiative aimed at assisting younger people in residential aged care
- continue to develop a vibrant and contemporary range of supports for people living with a disability through the Victorian Industry Development Plan
- review Flexible Support Packages to maximise the effectiveness of supports
- trial the use of direct funding to people living with a disability as a mechanism to increase control and flexibility over their individualised funding
- modify the Signposts program, which aims to help families of children with an intellectual or developmental disability and difficult behaviours, for delivery to people who would have difficulty accessing Signposts in its generic form
- progress the redevelopment of Kew Residential Services through the construction of on-site community houses.

Priority 2: Develop strong foundations for disability supports

To support people living with a disability to participate in the community and pursue a lifestyle of choice we will:

- initiate planning for the renegotiation of the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement due to expire on 30 June 2007
- implement the *Disability Act 2006*, including introducing reforms for people living in residential services and developing key policies to support the legislation
- improve quality in department-managed shared supported accommodation through an integrated strategy including the development of internal monitoring and review mechanisms aligned with the revised *Quality framework for disability services*
- improve outcomes for people living with a disability by completing the revision of the *Quality framework for disability services*
- enhance accountability of disability support providers in Victoria by building sustainable processes for independent monitoring of support providers

- implement the Enhancing Good Governance initiative to enhance the governance capability of organisations that deliver services for people living with a disability to deliver high quality services
- develop a revised model for the Aids and Equipment Program to provide an effective service to people requiring access to aids and equipment
- develop a three-year learning and development strategy that prioritises the development of the workforce in line with client needs
- develop and implement a strategy to improve IT capabilities in department-managed shared supported accommodation
- develop and implement improved maintenance processes applying to Secretary-owned shared supported accommodation
- continue the rollout of the Strategic Replacement and Refurbishment Program to enhance the quality of Secretary-owned shared supported accommodation, including the development of a business case for Stage 2 of the program
- finalise and implement the outcome of the project applying pricing principles to the HomeFirst price
- improve occupational health and safety across regions by identifying key risk areas and implementing strategies to improve outcomes for staff and people living with a disability.

Priority 3: Promote and protect people's rights

To ensure support providers and the community as a whole respect, promote and safeguard the rights of people living with a disability, we will:

- establish the Office of Senior Practitioner to lead best practice in behaviour management and protect the rights of people subject to compulsory treatment and restrictive interventions
- establish the Office of the Disability Services Commissioner and a framework to address complaints as required by the *Disability Act 2006* and the revised Victorian Disability Services Standards
- in partnership with Corrections Victoria, establish a therapeutic treatment program for people living with a disability in the prison system by providing a continuum of care to offenders with a disability entering and exiting the criminal justice system
- promote the rights and strengthen the participation of people living with a disability in government, service and community decision making.

Priority 4: Strengthen local communities

To promote communities that are more welcoming, accessible and inclusive of people living with a disability we will:

- promote community understanding of the needs and aspirations of people living with a disability
- increase community capacity to respond to the needs and aspirations of people living with a disability.

Priority 5: Make public services accessible

To ensure people living with a disability have access to a range of services that support quality of life, including access to education and employment opportunities, we will:

- provide people living with a disability greater access to pre-employment and meaningful daytime activities in broader community settings
- establish a joint statewide process for early planning for young people living with a disability within the Department of Education and Training, Catholic education and independent schools systems.

Service growth and development

To emphasise a more balanced approach to meeting the needs of people living with a disability and their carers, and the provision of earlier, community-based assistance we will:

- provide an additional 170 Support and Choice packages to people living with a disability and their carers
- provide 200 new support packages for Futures for Young Adults participants to transition to ongoing day activities
- provide a new mobile care attendant program to assist 36 people with their night-time care needs.

3.3 About the Disability Services Division

The Disability Services Division aims to improve the quality of life of Victorians living with a disability through supports that enhance independence, choice and community inclusion. Working in partnership with people living with a disability, their families, carers, departmental regional officers and community service organisations, the division plans and funds a range of supports for people in Victoria with intellectual, physical, sensory and dual disabilities, neurological impairments and acquired brain injury.

Role of the Disability Services Division

In addition to the key priority actions identified in Part 3.2, a range of activities are undertaken to pursue the goals of the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012* and support efficient business practices.

Promote inclusion and participation of people living with a disability by:

- resourcing and supporting communities and providers to realise the aspirations and citizenship of people living with a disability
- leading and facilitating change management strategies to ensure all stakeholders are engaged in the implementation of the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012*
- including people living with a disability in all aspects of the planning, delivery, monitoring and review of the disability service system.

Ensure a flexible service system by:

- providing strategic advice and leadership in the development of a comprehensive, flexible and responsive disability support system
- managing a range of service development and redevelopment initiatives at a statewide level to facilitate change and ensure continuous quality improvement in the support system
- developing policy directions, frameworks, specifications and program guidelines for specific Disability Services Division funded support activities
- ensuring effective communication and liaison with other government departments, Department of Human Services' divisions and regions, and key stakeholders to assist in the development and implementation of policy and program directions.

Monitor and improve service quality by:

- establishing and implementing mechanisms to monitor and review organisation and regional performance in delivery of supports to people living with a disability
- establishing and implementing strategies for quality systems development across disability services
- developing a risk management approach for disability services including an integrated system for managing and reporting adverse events
- developing a learning and development culture across the government and non-government workforces that results in competent staff able to deliver quality supports to people living with a disability.

Obtain and manage resources for best outcome and value by:

- strategically influencing the budget processes at State and Australian Government levels
- improving the skills, capacity, and management of our staff
- undertaking rigorous planning, budgeting, reporting and asset management to enhance the effectiveness of divisional resource allocation
- developing and implementing information systems to improve the use and access to data to inform our decision making and business monitoring
- continually monitoring and reviewing business practices to ensure the delivery of our objectives.

To achieve our goals, the division works in partnership with and funds the eight departmental regions to directly deliver disability supports to people living with a disability and to purchase supports from community service organisations on behalf of the division.

3.4 Our partners

Our key partners include:

- people living with a disability and their parents, families and carers
- the people of Victoria
- Department of Human Services regional offices
- community service organisations
- Victorian Government departments and statutory authorities
- Australian Government and other state or territory governments
- local governments
- the health and human services sector
- community groups
- professional associations
- unions
- universities and research groups.

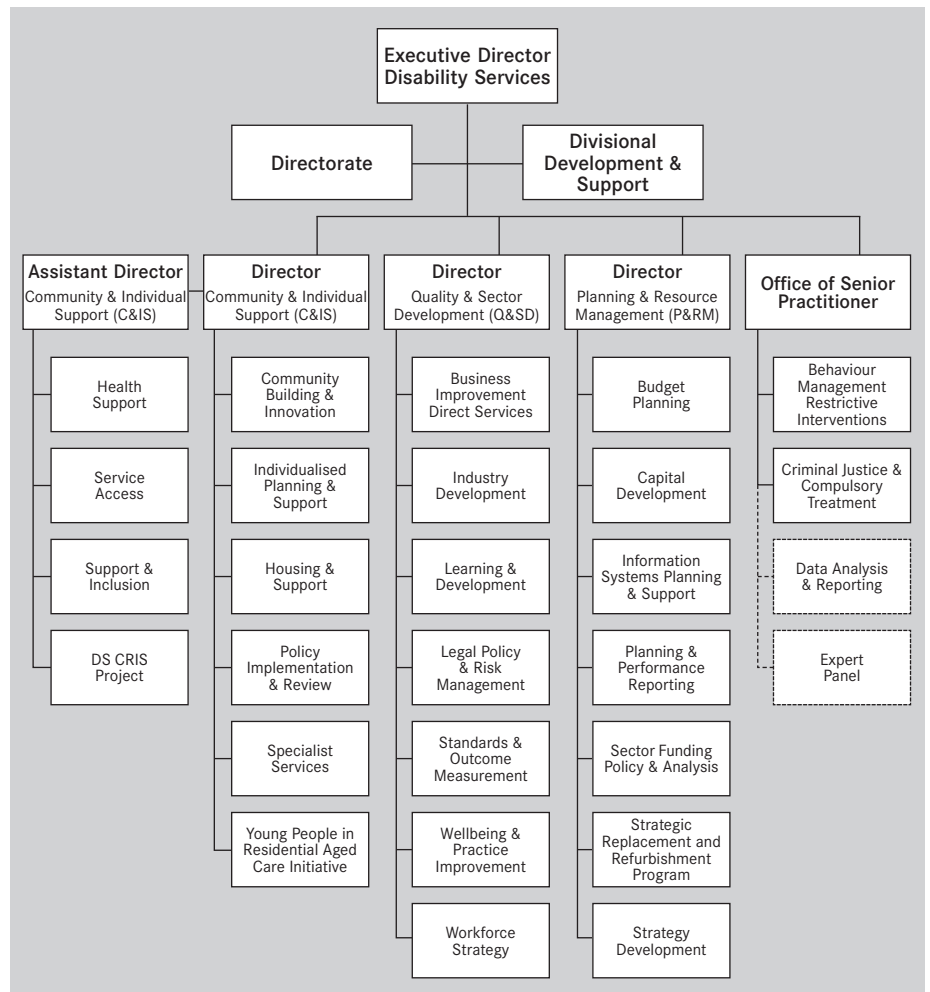
3.5 Our people

Within regions, the department employs more than 5,000 staff who provide a range of disability supports. These include supporting residents in community residential units and congregate care settings, as well as providing in-home support, specialist services and client services. Our employees have a range of experience in a variety of disciplines and settings and are also responsible for working in partnership with community service organisations, which also provide a range of supports to people living with a disability.

The division will continue to promote the skills, knowledge and wellbeing of staff, recognising that its people are crucial to the success of the program and improving outcomes for people living with a disability.

Within the division, staff are dedicated to creating new opportunities for people living with a disability that are consistent with the objectives of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012, the Victorian Government's social policy statement A Fairer Victoria, and Growing Victoria Together.

Figure 3.1
Our organisational structure



3.6 Office for Disability

During the year, the department will work with the Department for Victorian Communities to establish the Office for Disability. The following functions of the Disability Services Division will be transferred to the Department for Victorian Communities in 2006-07:

- Active Participation Strategy
- Advocacy
- Disability Action Plans
- Transport
- Companion Card
- Community Awareness
- Disability Advisory Council
- International Day for People with a Disability
- Disability Online
- Inter-Departmental Committee
- Grants
 - Access for All Abilities
 - Municipal Association of Victoria
 - Self Help Funding

Changes to the content of this plan as a result of the transfer of functions, including policies, procedures and priorities, will be provided in the 2007-08 and 2008-09 Policy and Funding Plan annual updates.