

Keeping our sector strong

Victoria's workforce
plan for the NDIS





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Minister's Foreword



The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the lives of Victorians with disability, and the lives of their families and carers.

Victoria has always been a leader in disability support, but the quality of our services is only as good as the quality of our people. We are incredibly grateful to have one of the most highly skilled disability workforces in the country, made up of thousands of caring individuals who work tirelessly to support other people achieve their goals.

As the NDIS rolls out across the state, there will be a huge opportunity for the disability sector as demand grows for high-quality, innovative and personalised support. For the workforce, this means developing skills and working in new ways that challenge workers to reach their potential.

At the same time, the introduction of the national scheme is a time of unprecedented change for the sector. Disability workers must be supported to build the capabilities required to thrive in the new NDIS environment.

The sector must also be equipped to change to a more flexible service delivery environment where there are good jobs with fair conditions and better pay.

This plan is about getting our workforce ready for the NDIS and laying the foundations needed to build the workforce of the future. It is supported by a \$26 million* investment package that will transform the workforce in terms of its size, composition and capability.

Most importantly, this plan will make sure Victorians with disability are supported by a skilled and committed workforce that provides the support they need to pursue their goals and live better lives.

Minister Foley MP
Minister for Housing,
Disability and Ageing

Building the workforce of the future

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is transforming the way disability services are funded and accessed to ensure all people with disability get the best support possible.

The disability workforce is on the frontline of the changes needed to deliver this ambitious scheme.

The rollout of the NDIS started in Victoria on 1 July 2016. By the time the scheme is fully operational in 2019, the NDIS will support a total of 105,000 Victorians. The Victorian Government will invest \$2.5 billion per year in the full scheme.

This investment and the expanded choices and opportunities for people with disability under the NDIS will result in the demand for services and support increasing significantly.

Recent estimates by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) predict that the Victorian disability workforce will need to grow by approximately 76 per cent to meet the projected growth in demand over the next three years.¹

Attracting and retaining workers with the right skills, values and attitudes will be crucial to deliver more and better support for people with disability.

The NDIS is transforming the disability system from rationed, block-funded support to an individualised model that empowers people with disability to decide what support they receive, who provides it, and how it is provided.

For the workforce, this shift will demand new skills and new ways of working, with a focus on active support to facilitate inclusion and independence for people with disability.

The same changes will also affect the structure of the workforce and employment arrangements. A crucial opportunity for disability service providers will be to deliver flexible and responsive services to clients, while offering attractive jobs, fair conditions and appropriate training and development for staff.

To take advantage of these opportunities, the NDIS presents a unique opportunity for the workforce. It places the spotlight on disability and the crucial role of the workforce to create better outcomes for people with disability.

The NDIS will give disability workers new skills, greater diversity in job roles, and the opportunity to do exciting and valued work that has a direct impact on the lives of others.

¹ Source: NDIA Victorian Market Position Statement 2016



Our plan

Keeping our sector strong: Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS is Victoria's plan to build the disability workforce of the future: a workforce that is skilled, diverse and dynamic, delivering high-quality, innovative support to achieve the best possible outcomes for people with disability.

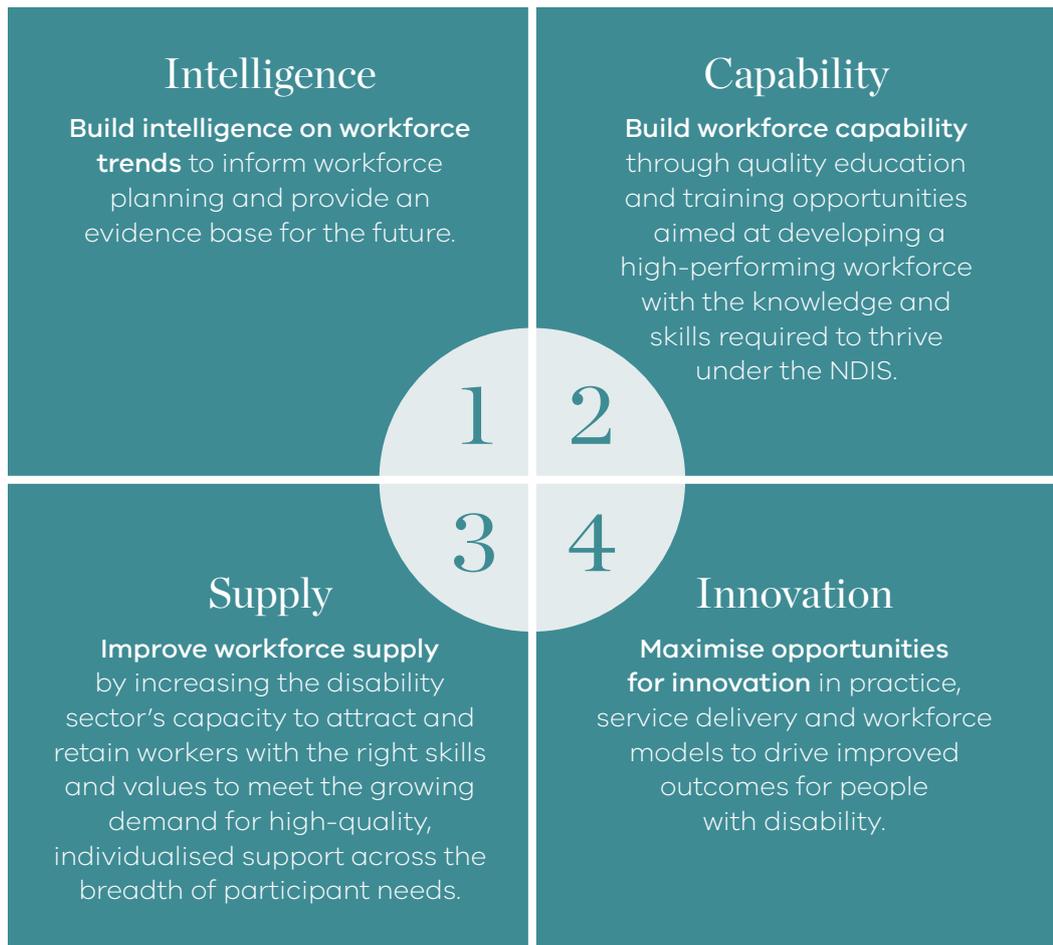
As part of the plan, \$26 million will be invested in workforce development, training and skills initiatives.

The plan is informed by the Victorian Government's NDIS Implementation Taskforce and the Victorian Skills Commissioner's NDIS Skills Forum.

These groups are the government's key NDIS advisory bodies. They include people with disability and their advocates, as well as organisations representing the views of carers, the workforce and service providers.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS has four objectives that will guide our actions for the next three years.



Our priorities

TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES, THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT, IS INVESTING \$26 MILLION* IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

This funding will assist with the following priorities:

- 01** Understanding workforce needs
Work with the disability sector to build a comprehensive picture of the Victorian disability workforce, training and skill needs, and how the NDIS will affect the workforce over time.
- 02** Supporting regions to be NDIS-ready
Resource Victoria's communities to develop place-based responses to local workforce challenges and opportunities.
- 03** Supporting staff through transition
Support the current workforce to transition and thrive in the NDIS context with access to relevant training opportunities, information and resources they need to understand what the NDIS means for them.
- 04** Targeting quality training
Undertake a range of projects to ensure quality in the content and delivery of accredited training, and better student outcomes in disability-related courses.
- 05** Achieving excellence in research and education
Funding for the new *Future Social Service Institute* to drive world-leading education, training and research for the disability and broader social services sector.
- 06** Promoting best practice support
Work with the disability sector and across service systems to promote best practice support for participants with high and complex needs and behaviours of concern.
- 07** Building allied health capacity
Build capacity and capability in the Victorian allied health workforce to meet growing demand for allied health services for people with disability.
- 08** Promoting the sector
Deliver targeted strategies to attract and retain people from a range of backgrounds to careers in the disability sector.
- 09** Measuring our progress
Measure and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the plan to meet our objectives.

* includes \$4.88 million provided by the Commonwealth Government's NDIS Sector Development Fund.

01

Understanding workforce needs

The NDIS is reshaping the nature of work in the disability sector.

While some of the effects the NDIS will have on the workforce can be predicted, a strong evidence base is required to understand how the sector will change over time.

For example, who works in disability and is this changing? How is the shift to consumer-directed service delivery affecting patterns of work and employment conditions? Is our training system meeting the needs of the sector and students?

A lot of information already exists but a more systematic approach is needed. Victorian Government investment will provide for a comprehensive data strategy for the NDIS workforce that will inform policy and workforce planning during transition to the NDIS and into the future.

This includes data on workforce supply and demand, demographics, trends in attraction, retention and employment arrangements, and education and training outcomes, as well as qualitative research to understand the experience of workers during the transition.

The Victorian Government will also work with the disability sector to map training and skill needs across the workforce, and to articulate the core competencies, formal training and qualification requirements and ongoing professional development needs in the evolving NDIS context.

Investment will provide for a comprehensive data strategy for the NDIS workforce that will inform policy and workforce planning during transition to the NDIS and into the future.



OBJECTIVE:

To strengthen understanding of the disability workforce, and its training and skills needs.

ACTIONS:

- Collect, collate and analyse data on workforce supply and demand, demographics, trends in attraction, retention and employment arrangements, education and training outcomes and workers' experiences throughout transition to the NDIS
 - Develop a competency map informed by evidence and stakeholders which outlines workers' training and skills, core competencies and professional development needs for roles within the NDIS context
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02

Supporting regions to be NDIS-ready

Every region faces different challenges in implementing the NDIS.

Victoria's rural and regional communities face particular workforce challenges when transitioning to the new scheme.

These include challenges in recruiting appropriately qualified staff (particularly therapists and specialists), managing the workforce and services across smaller populations and wider geographic areas, and providing staff supervision and access to professional development opportunities.

Recognising the diversity of communities across Victoria, this plan delivers resources for local communities to drive their own responses to the workforce challenges and opportunities they may see on the ground.

Regional NDIS workforce coordinators will bring stakeholders together (including local and state government, service providers, education and training providers, the NDIA and community members) to strengthen local networks, identify local priorities, and develop and implement projects that respond to these priorities.

This could include undertaking detailed local workforce planning, trialling new workforce models and innovative models of staff supervision and support, fostering partnerships between disability service providers and local TAFEs and other training organisations, or developing local attraction and retention strategies.

Consistent with the Victorian Government's commitment to Victoria's regions including a new regional partnerships model, this plan gives local communities the flexibility and autonomy they need to develop local solutions to local needs.

This project is supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government's Sector Development Fund.

Regional NDIS workforce coordinators will bring stakeholders together to strengthen local networks and identify local priorities.



OBJECTIVE:

Strengthen local networks, identify local priorities, challenges and opportunities, and enable place-based responses to local NDIS workforce and service system challenges.

ACTIONS:

- Establish local coordinators in regional rollout areas to bring together service providers, local and state government, the education and training sector, the NDIA and other stakeholders in order to strengthen local networks and identify local priorities
 - Support local communities to design and implement responses to their identified challenges and opportunities
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03

Supporting staff through transition

The NDIS will change the systems, practices and culture of the disability workforce.

The Victorian disability workforce is one of the most highly skilled in the country, with a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting people with disability.

At the same time, the degree of change being driven by the implementation of the NDIS means that staff working the sector may need to develop new skills and capabilities.

This includes understanding the goals of the NDIS and how the new scheme works (including new terminology and systems), and understanding how to shift practice from providing support to facilitating goals. New knowledge and skills will be required to work effectively in an insurance context where frontline staff will be increasingly accountable for participant outcomes.

For managers and leaders in the sector, the NDIS will demand increased commercial and strategic capability for their organisations.

Through this plan, the Victorian Government is providing significant investment to build the capability of frontline staff in preparation for the transition to the NDIS.

As a first priority, the government will make sure that staff receive practical and timely information about the NDIS and what it means for them. As part of this plan, staff will also access training opportunities and practice support so they can work confidently in the NDIS environment.

The training program will be developed in consultation with staff to make sure it is tailored and relevant to their needs.



The Victorian disability workforce is one of the most highly skilled in the country, with a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting people with disability.

OBJECTIVE:

Support the disability workforce to transition and thrive in the NDIS context.

ACTIONS:

- Deliver a self-assessment tool to assist the disability workforce to identify new skills and appropriate development opportunities
 - Develop and deliver a multi-stream training approach for new skills and capabilities that align with service delivery requirements with the NDIS
 - Develop and deliver an online workforce readiness portal with relevant tools, learning resources and practical support for the workforce
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04

Targeting quality training

Victoria is leading the nation in its commitment to providing high-quality training that meet the needs of industry.

The Victorian Government's Skills First reforms set a new benchmark in training quality, with a focus on courses that meet the needs of industry and lead to real job outcomes.

Building on these reforms, this plan delivers targeted strategies to achieve the best possible outcomes for students undertaking courses in disability work.

Qualifications review

The first priority is a detailed review of current disability-related training package qualifications to ensure they are fit-for-purpose for the NDIS environment.

Where necessary, Victoria will work with the Australian Industry and Skills Committee to seek amendments to qualifications if any gaps or deficiencies are identified, and respond with other strategies to ensure quality in training content and delivery.

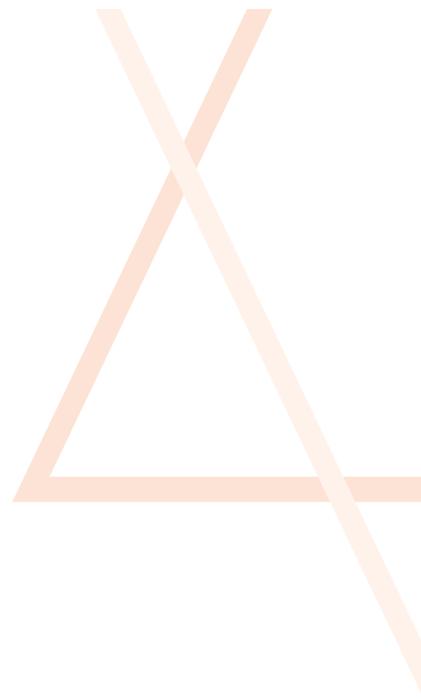
The Victorian Government will work with industry towards outcomes that may include developing shared learning and assessment resources or accredited courses to address new skill requirements, or devising strategies that enable more flexible access to training opportunities in line with individuals' professional development needs.

In response to the recommendations of the 2016 Parliamentary Inquiry into Abuse in Disability Services, the Victorian Government will also review the Certificate IV in Disability to ensure it has an appropriate focus on the recognition, prevention and reporting of abuse.

Development opportunities for trainers

The Victorian Government will also work with the disability sector and education and training providers to understand the professional development needs of Vocational Education and Training (VET) trainers and assessors, and to provide access to learning and development opportunities that equip staff with the knowledge and skills they need to train the NDIS workforce of the future.

The Victorian Government's Skills First reforms set a new benchmark in training quality, with a focus on courses that meet the needs of industry and lead to real job outcomes



Quality work placements

Work placements give students the opportunity to gain valuable hands-on industry experience. Good quality placements that enable students to work alongside trained and experienced staff play a crucial role in preparing students for work.

Drawing on innovative approaches in other sectors, such as allied health, the Victorian Government will support partnerships between disability service providers and education and training providers to trial collaborative work placement models that increase the sector's capacity to offer high-quality, supervised placements in the new NDIS environment.

Ongoing industry engagement

Through the work of the Victorian Skills Commissioner and a new model of industry engagement, the Victorian Government is giving a real voice to the disability sector to ensure the training system responds to the needs of disability service providers.

OBJECTIVE:

Support high quality work placements for students, improve current training available to disability workers, and provide quality training for the NDIS workforce for the future.

ACTIONS:

- Facilitate partnerships between disability service providers and the education and training sector to conduct research and trial collaborative work placement models
 - Undertake a detailed review of relevant disability qualifications within the Community Services Training Package and Health Training Package and identify and respond to any gaps in these qualifications (focusing on the core competencies)
 - Understand the professional development needs of VET trainers and assessors and provide access to learning and development opportunities to equip these staff with the knowledge and skills they need to provide quality training for the NDIS workforce of the future
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05

Achieving excellence in research and education

The Future Social Service Institute will drive world-leading education, training and research in the disability and broader social services sector.

The Institute is a unique collaboration between the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS), RMIT University and the Victorian Government which will prepare Victoria for significant changes that will occur in the delivery of social services in the new NDIS environment.

Building on seed funding provided by the Victorian Government, this additional investment will establish the Institute, which will be fully operational in 2017.

The Institute will design world-best education programs to help train the workforce of the future, research emerging trends and opportunities in social services reform, and empower not-for-profits to reorient to a global market.

The Institute will be built on principles of co-design and will work jointly with the sector and people with lived experience of disability to inform its teaching and research.

The Institute will help our social services sector develop and thrive, increasing its profile as an exciting place to work, and boosting the skills of the Victorian disability workforce.



The Institute will design work-best education programs to help train the workforce of the future.

OBJECTIVE:

Facilitate continued growth of the social support and care workforce, appropriately equip the sector and workforce to deliver services, and promote the range of rewarding roles and opportunities in the sector through education, training and research.

ACTIONS:

The Victorian Government will provide funding to support the *Future Social Service Institute*, to:

- Offer 2 industry fellowships and 2 PhD scholarships aimed at the social and community sector
 - Commission programs and courses designed to fill skills gaps and also further develop the social and community sector
 - Promote social care and support as a valuable career
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06

Promoting best practice support

The NDIS has a strong focus on increasing inclusion and independence for people with disability which is changing expectations for staff working in the sector.

This is particularly the case for staff working with people with high and complex needs, who will need the knowledge and skills to support their clients to engage more independently in community life.

For example, a young person with complex needs living in residential aged care could use the funding and flexibility provided by the NDIS to live more independently.

This plan delivers funding for work across the disability sector and with mainstream services (such as health, mental health and justice) to identify and to implement best practice approaches to supporting participants with high and complex needs.

This includes training and development opportunities, developing effective information sharing and referral systems, and supporting strategies to drive and disseminate best practice across Victoria.

This plan also provides funding to promote best practice approaches to working with people with behaviours of concern which includes positive behaviour support strategies. Building this capability across the sector will prevent restrictive practices and crisis-driven responses.

The Victorian Government will continue to work with national partners to ensure strong protections against the use of restrictive practices.

This project's aim is to promote best practice approaches between the disability sector and mainstream services to support people with high and complex needs. This project is supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government's NDIS Sector Development Fund.

This plan delivers funding for work across the disability sector and with mainstream services to identify and to implement best practice approaches.

OBJECTIVE:

Test best practice approaches, and build the capacity of workforces across mainstream and disability service systems to respond effectively to the diverse needs of people with disability who have high and complex needs.

ACTIONS:

- Test and verify collaborative partnerships and practice approaches across NDIS and mainstream service systems such as justice, health, family services and mental health, to support people with disability who have high and complex needs
 - Provide practice support so more workers have the skills and experience required to respond to complex needs and behaviours of concern
 - Establish a portal with relevant tools, learning resources and practical support for the workforce
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07

Building allied health capacity

Demand for allied health services is expected to increase with the NDIS, particularly in the critical area of early childhood intervention.

Allied health professionals play an important role in conducting assessments, delivering therapeutic interventions, and prescribing and assisting with aids, equipment and other assistive technology solutions for people with disability.

Some allied health professions are already in short supply. Experience from the Barwon NDIS trial shows that maintaining an adequate supply of allied health professionals can be particularly challenging in rural and regional areas, where a change in one or two workers can deplete local supply.

A further challenge is the absence of consistent frameworks to support capability development in complex disability among allied health professionals.

This plan addresses these challenges through complementary projects that will build Victoria's allied health capacity and capability. This includes the development of an allied health workforce capability framework to foster the expertise of allied health professionals working in disability, and to improve service capacity through greater use of allied health assistants and VET-trained workers.

The Victorian Government will also continue to support national initiatives to build allied health workforce capacity across the country and provide better access to allied health services for people with disability.

The allied health assistant workforce project is supported by funding from the Commonwealth Government's NDIS Sector Development Fund.

This plan responds to challenges including short supply of allied health professionals through complementary projects that will build Victoria's allied health capacity and capability.



OBJECTIVE:

Increase the capacity and capability of allied health professionals and use of allied health assistants to support people with disability.

ACTIONS:

- Provide training and assistance to allied health professionals and VET-trained disability workers to increase their ability to support people with complex disability
 - Develop a capability framework and educational resources to support allied health professionals to work with people with disability
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08

Promoting the sector

The NDIS is creating exciting opportunities for people looking for a values-driven career with a direct impact on the lives of others.

The disability workforce needs to expand rapidly to meet growing demand for services and support with the NDIS.

This growth needs to occur alongside challenges including an ageing workforce, competition from similar industries (for example aged care), and historical barriers to recruitment and retention in the disability sector.

The NDIS presents an opportunity to promote the range of rewarding jobs and career opportunities in the disability sector, and to attract people from a range of personal and professional backgrounds to work in disability.

While the largest anticipated growth is expected in direct support roles, the NDIS will also spark the emergence of new jobs. It will encourage engagement of people outside the traditional disability sector as participants purchase supports from mainstream services rather than the specialist disability service system.

The Victorian Government is investing in targeted strategies to actively promote careers in disability across the spectrum of roles, from direct support to management and leadership in the sector.

Strategies will reach out to groups that are typically under-represented in the disability workforce including young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal Victorians. As Skills and Job Centres are located around the state they are ideally placed to reach into cohorts and communities.

A focus on attracting people from a range of backgrounds will build a more sustainable workforce and one that better reflects the diversity of Victoria's communities.

Strategies will build on existing platforms and be developed in partnership with the disability sector.



The NDIS is a unique opportunity to promote the range of rewarding jobs and career opportunities that are available in the disability sector.

OBJECTIVE:

Promote careers in the disability sector and attract people from a range of backgrounds.

ACTIONS:

- Undertake a targeted campaign that builds on existing platforms and resources specialising in disability and training and information
- Target promotion of careers in disability to reach particular cohorts and communities through the Victorian Government's Skills and Job Centres¹, to support the growth of a diverse and representative workforce

¹ Skills and Job Centres, co-located at Victoria's public TAFEs, were created as 'first point of call' for students looking to start training, workers needing to re-skill, unemployed workers needing support for retraining and work placement and new employers.

09

Measuring our progress

Robust evaluation will help measure progress and keep the Victorian Government on track.

The Victorian Government is committed to robust evaluation and ongoing engagement with the disability sector to stay accountable to the objectives that this plan sets out.

The Victorian Government will work closely with the NDIS Implementation Taskforce to identify measures of success, and monitor the progress of the plan throughout transition to the NDIS.

As the NDIS reshapes the disability sector it is likely that new priorities will emerge. The Victorian Government and the disability sector need to stay responsive to the changing environment and workforce needs.

The evaluation of the NDIS Workforce and Skills Plan will provide the information needed to identify what is working, what needs to change, and areas for further work. Lessons learned through the evaluation will provide an evidence base for future policy, both for the NDIS and the wider social services system.

The Victorian Government will work closely with the NDIS Implementation Taskforce to identify measures of success, and monitor the progress of the plan throughout the transition to the NDIS.

OBJECTIVE:

Understand the impact of Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS and enable timely and flexible responses to emerging challenges.

ACTIONS:

- Develop an evaluation plan
 - Undertake ongoing evaluation throughout implementation of the initiatives in Victoria's workforce plan for the NDIS
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What's next?

The next three years will be a time of unprecedented transformation for the disability sector and workforce.

This plan sets out the Victorian Government's ambition to help foster the disability workforce of the future.

It lays the foundations for a strong sector and vibrant workforce with the skills, values and attitudes to deliver the best possible support for Victorians with disability.

The Victorian Government is committed to working closely with the disability sector and communities to implement this plan. The NDIS Implementation Taskforce will have an ongoing role monitoring progress, ensuring changes are on track, and helping to respond to new priorities that emerge during transition.

This plan will keep Victoria at the forefront of quality and innovation in disability support, and assist the Victorian Government to maximise the opportunity presented by the NDIS to transform the lives of Victorians with disability, and the lives of their families and carers.



