



Absolutely everyone

State disability plan
2017–2020
final report

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Minister's foreword

This is the final report to be published for **Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020**.

Reaching the end of a state disability plan provides an opportunity to celebrate our achievements. It's a time to reflect on the progress that has been made to make Victoria more inclusive.

It's also an important time to pause and think about how we can do more to achieve our vision.

Absolutely everyone spanned a significant time in history for people with disability. Within the life of this plan, we have seen the full transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We have also experienced a global pandemic – the impacts of which we continue to navigate.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has presented significant challenges for people with disability; exacerbating the inequity that many people with disability face every day.

While the pandemic slowed progress in some areas of the plan, the pandemic response drove significant investments and innovations in areas like health.

I am extremely thankful for the trusted advice the Victorian Government received from people with disability throughout the pandemic.

Your advice and advocacy helped us direct our efforts where they are needed most, like making emergency communications accessible for everyone. Your feedback helped to deliver improvements that we will continue to build on to improve the experience of people with disability.

I am proud of the work this government has done to increase opportunities for people with disability, but I recognise there is still much work to be done.

The Victorian Government is committed to continuing this journey with you to realise our vision of a truly inclusive Victoria.

I would like to thank the Victorian Disability Advisory Council for their oversight of **Absolutely everyone**. The council's trusted advice is central to the Victorian Government's work to drive greater inclusion for people with disability.

I would also like to thank all people with disability for the role you play in making Victoria fairer and more inclusive. Your determination and commitment are what drive me to continue to advocate for change.

I look forward to building on the achievements of **Absolutely everyone** as we transition into a new state disability plan and renew our commitment to an inclusive and fair Victoria.

Hon Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to developing and delivering **Absolutely everyone**. This includes every government department and several portfolio agencies that took responsibility for delivering actions under the plan.

In its development the plan drew on the expert advice of people with disability, disabled peoples' organisations, self advocacy groups, peak bodies, advocacy agencies and other experts.

The Victorian Disability Advisory Council's role in providing expert advice on the development, monitoring and delivery of **Absolutely everyone** has been invaluable. We thank the council for its dedication and commitment.

We look forward to continuing to build on the achievements of **Absolutely everyone** in the next state disability plan.

Summary

Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020 and the **Victorian autism plan** list many actions for realising a more inclusive Victoria. This summary will help you gather key insights quickly and navigate this report on our progression towards achieving the intended outcomes of the two plans.

It provides an overview of:

- where we have done well
- where we have learnt lessons
- what key actions we need to take forward into the new four-year state disability plan.

The summary is organised around the four outcomes pillars used in both **Absolutely everyone** and the **Victorian autism plan**.

1. Inclusive communities
2. Health, housing and wellbeing
3. Fairness and safety
4. Contributing lives

Inclusive communities

Community attitudes: We have done world-leading work to improve community understanding of autism and to change community behaviours. We have also established baseline measures of people with disabilities' current experiences of daily life.

Through our new state disability plan, we will need to build a strong evidence-based approach to influencing community attitudes and behaviour.

Places and spaces: We have opened up public spaces across Victoria to people who use enhanced toileting facilities through the Changing Places program. We have also enhanced the **Liveable housing design guidelines** and Victorian intergovernmental advocacy relating to the National Construction Code.

Transport: We have made progress in how we engage people with disability in our work and have developed action plans and strategies to support better transport accessibility. However, we know that transport accessibility is still an area of high concern. It will need to be a focus of activity during the life of the new state disability plan.

Accessibility for kids: We have made major investments in school infrastructure that promotes inclusion, including new blended schools designs such as Armstrong Creek School. We have also increased the scale and range of sport and recreation options, especially for children with disability.

Under the new plan, many of the areas of action listed above will be strengthened by a greater focus across government on embedding universal design principles.

Diverse communities: We have undertaken individual projects that meet the needs of communities that are often not well served by existing policies and services. However, we know that a better way of working is to make inclusive and intersectional approaches everyone's business.

Health, housing and wellbeing

Health: We have improved accessibility of health services to people with disability, particularly as part of our pandemic response (see below).

We need to use the next plan to further build the capacity of our health workforce so it can provide accessible, high-quality care to people with disability. We also need to build our health system's capacity to provide accessible information and to draw on the expertise of people with disability.

Housing: We have progressed long-term work to make more suitable social housing and affordable housing for people with disability, particularly people who need enhanced physical accessibility.

Wellbeing: We have invested in services for people with dual disability and built the system's capacity for providing assessment, diagnosis and other services to autistic people.

There are significant opportunities under the new plan to strengthen and diversify our work to better meet the wellbeing and mental health needs of people with disability including through implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

NDIS and workforce: We have taken actions to make the NDIS work better for people and to build the capacity of our disability workforce.

Continuing to deliver on the promise of the NDIS and building our broader workforce capacity remain key focuses of the new state disability plan.

Fairness and safety

Family violence: We have undertaken a wide number of actions to strengthen family violence prevention and response for people with disability. Victorian people with disability have told us that family violence is still a significant concern, particularly in the context of the current pandemic.

Advocacy: We have expanded support for advocacy services to meet a significant increase in demand during the pandemic.

Justice and corrections: We have put programs in place to help people with disability in contact with the justice and corrections systems. Building workforce capacity and strengthening and clarifying NDIS interfaces will continue to be a focus of our ongoing activity.

Police: We have increased the accessibility of our communications and the capacity of our workforce to engage with people with disability.

Assistance animals: Regulation of assistance animals is an area where Victoria's progress has not matched the original commitment made under **Absolutely everyone**. With work progressing at the national level, it is important that Victoria's approach is consistent nationally. We are committed to a national regulatory framework that will improve access to assistance animals under the new plan.

Contributing lives

Inclusive education: We have invested to create generational change in how our government schools meet the needs of children with disability. How this long-term inclusion work is implemented will be a focus throughout the life of the new state disability plan.

Employment: We have undertaken actions to build the confidence and capacity of potential employers and employees. We have seen a welcome increase in the proportion of employees identifying as people with disability in the Victorian public service. However, we know we still have a lot of work to do to lift employment rates among people with disability. We also need to open up more vocational pathways from school to employment.

Voice and leadership: We have built the capacity of Victorian public boards and other public committees to increase the representation of people with disability. We have supported the participation and retention of people with disability who want to serve on these boards.

We recognise that there is much more that can be done to promote and recognise people with disability as leaders in their communities. In line with this, our new plan will signal more focus on pride and recognition.

'Future opportunities' sets out in more detail how we will build on and expand the work we have undertaken through *Absolutely everyone*.

Introduction

This is the final report for **Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020**. **Absolutely everyone** is Victoria's four-year state disability plan to realise the vision of an inclusive Victoria that supports people with disability to live satisfying everyday lives.

Absolutely everyone outlines the actions needed to make our state fairer and more inclusive.

We have published two annual reports that outline progress made in achieving the goals in **Absolutely everyone**. The 2017 and 2018 annual reports were tabled in parliament.

Because it was not possible to prepare and table an annual report in 2020 due to the pandemic, this final report covers 2019, 2020 and 2021 and, as a final report, is an opportunity to look back at what has been achieved throughout the life of the extended plan.

This final report includes:

- a summary of achievements
- an outline of ongoing and future work
- progress on the first year of the **Victorian autism plan**.

Previous annual reports have included an update of data against the state disability plan outcomes framework measures and indicators. The latest update will be released on the state disability plan webpage www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au.

A note on language

We recognise that people with disability have different preferences regarding how they describe their disability.

Some people prefer person-first language, which puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. This language is used throughout **Absolutely everyone**.

Other people prefer 'identify-first' language, which puts a person's disability identity before the person – for example, 'disabled person'. The **Victorian autism plan** uses identity-first language in recognition of the many autistic and neurodiverse Victorians who told us they had a strong preference for this language to be used.

You will notice a combination of person-first and identify-first language used throughout this final report, depending on the plan that the reporting relates to.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented many challenges and disrupted the progress of some actions outlined in **Absolutely everyone**. However, the COVID-19 response delivered some significant interventions and improvements.

Accessible communications

At the start of the pandemic, the Victorian Government established the COVID-19 Accessible Communications Reference Group. This group was set up to guide production of accessible communications in direct response to feedback from the community. The group's members were drawn from the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, Victorian disability advocacy organisations and the broader disability community.

The group provided expert advice in developing tailored communications that are accessible for people with disability across a range of communication needs. Accessible information is housed on a dedicated disability tile on the state government COVID-19 webpage.

Advice on accessible communications and key messages for people with disability were also distributed through a communications channel for diverse communities and underserved groups.

Disability Liaison Officer program

The Disability Liaison Officer program was set up in 2020 to help people with disability navigate the health system and improve access to appropriate health care. The program supports access to COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccination, as well as other essential services.

Funding was allocated to health services for 32 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in 22 health services across metropolitan and regional Victoria. The program has worked to improve broader systemic health access.

The program will be evaluated to determine next steps and future opportunities to extend and embed the learnings.

Disability advocacy

In May 2020 the Victorian Government provided \$1.9 million to agencies funded through the Victorian Disability Advocacy Program (VDAP) to meet increased demand for support through the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding included a 40 per cent increase in agencies' core funding to support people with disability during the pandemic's response, recovery and adaption phases. Funding also supported the sector to improve its information and communications technology capacity and move to online service delivery. We also set up a flexible and responsive outreach program. The program focused on people with disability from diverse and underserved communities experiencing additional disadvantage. The program was commissioned through an expression of interest process.

Emergency management planning

In 2020 the Victorian Government engaged The University of Sydney to partner with Victorian disability advocacy organisations to design an inclusive approach to emergency management planning in Victoria.

The project aimed to build capacity in the disability, community and emergency services sectors to increase the emergency preparedness of people with disability. This was done through peer-support advocacy and inclusive local emergency management planning. The project is being piloted in East Gippsland Shire, Wellington Shire and Latrobe City.

The University of Sydney partnered with VALID and Gippsland Advocacy to lead the recruitment and training of 14 peer-support leaders in person-centred emergency preparedness. Person-centred emergency preparedness helps people with disability to prepare for emergencies based on their capabilities and support needs.

Inclusive community engagement workshops have promoted shared learning to support the preparedness of people with disability in emergencies. They have also embedded disability-inclusive emergency management planning at the local community level.

Additional investment to support people with disability during the pandemic

Advocacy



Additional funding to support business continuity and strengthen the capacity of the **disability advocacy sector** to respond to COVID-19 through improved information and communications technology and targeted programs for diverse and underserved communities.

COVID-19



Funding for Women with Disabilities Victoria through the **COVID-19 mental health surge funding package** to support women with disability with information and resources, workforce capacity building and consultancy and outreach services.

Sport



Funding for disability-focused sport and recreation organisations as part of the **Community Sport Sector Short-term Survival Package**.

Students



Funding to not-for-profit organisations to support **students with disability** and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes resource development and providing information, advocacy and support to students and families with a focus on student wellbeing and social connectedness.

Justice system



Support for people with disability interacting with the justice system through:

- engaging 14 FTE **Corrections Victoria disability support officers** to support prisoners with disability and complex needs to understand the COVID-19 restrictions
- funding **assistive technology** and digital devices to support people with disability to comply with court orders, bail and parole conditions during COVID-19
- funding three FTE **specialist disability advisor** roles to work across youth justice custodial and community settings to provide expert advice on how to best support young people with disability throughout the COVID-19 response, including one position to support Aboriginal children and young people.

Summary of achievements

This summary of achievements lists actions from **Absolutely everyone** that have been fully or substantially acquitted. Some actions will continue beyond this plan. Other actions changed over the life of the plan as the NDIS and other reforms, such as the Victorian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, were rolled out.

The priority areas and actions are as listed under the four pillars of **Absolutely everyone**.



1. Inclusive communities
2. Health, housing and wellbeing
3. Fairness and safety
4. Contributing lives

1. Inclusive communities



Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Changing attitudes	<p>The Victorian Government held a national community attitudes workshop attended by 85 participants to share results of the government's community attitudes survey. The workshop also identified opportunities and approaches for future national and state/territory work on driving community attitude change.</p> <p>Victoria successfully advocated to the Commonwealth for a stronger focus on community attitudes in the next national disability strategy.</p> <p>The Victorian Government supported the development and release of the documentary series Perspective Shift and funded Amaze's autism awareness campaign Change Your Reactions. More information on this can be found below in reporting on the Victorian autism plan.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Universal design	<p>The Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) released its universal design policy, the first of any Australian government authority. The policy ensures universal design provisions are included in the life cycle of all VHBA projects.</p> <p>Universal design is now an essential requirement of all transport procurement processes, ensuring universal design principles are embedded in the design and delivery of transport projects. This includes public transport projects for the Victorian road network, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities.</p> <p>In 2019–20, 25 new Changing Places facilities were built. These allow better access to recreational and tourist attractions, parks, community spaces, entertainment and sporting venues across Victoria.</p> <p>Universal design principles have been applied to the Inclusive Schools Fund. The fund provides infrastructure to meet the educational and social needs of students with disability.</p> <p>All community sports infrastructure projects delivered through local government authorities adopt universal design principles.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Public transport	<p>Over 2019 and 2020 the Department of Transport regularly engaged with the Public Transport Access Committee (now known as the Accessible Transport Advisory Committee) on accessibility issues.</p> <p>All major transport service operators have developed accessibility implementation plans detailing how they will make Victoria's public transport easier to use.</p> <p>Try Before You Ride events were held in 2018 and 2019 to allow people to trial boarding and alighting a stationary train, tram, bus and regional coach.</p> <p>A new, fully accessible PTV app was released in 2020 to make public transport information more accessible.</p> <p>A regional rail station accessibility program was implemented.</p> <p>In January 2018 a Disability Commissioner was appointed for a term of three years to increase focus on making taxi and hire car services more accessible. This work culminated in Commercial Passenger Vehicles Victoria's first accessibility action plan in December 2020.</p> <p>The Multi-Purpose Taxi Program was expanded beyond taxis to all commercial passenger vehicles, and incentives for wheelchair-accessible taxi operators and drivers were increased.</p>
Inclusive schools	<p>More than \$20 million was invested to improve infrastructure in government schools. In addition to major upgrade and modernisation works, the Inclusive Schools Fund and Accessible Building Program have improved access and amenity for students with disability.</p> <p>The Building quality standards handbook is reviewed annually. The handbook guides architects and builders working on government school building projects, incorporates universal design principles and promotes inclusiveness as a key element of infrastructure development.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Building requirements	<p>The Liveable housing design guidelines silver standard was mandated as the minimum accessibility requirement in Victoria for new social housing constructed through the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.</p> <p>Victoria successfully advocated to strengthen the National Construction Code through the Building Ministers' Forum and the Australian Building Codes Board.</p>
Community infrastructure	<p>Five-year plans for jobs, services and infrastructure (2018–2022) were released in 2019. The plans include investment to support improved access to infrastructure and services for people with disability.</p> <p>The Suburban Revitalisation program replaced the Delivery Partnerships Broker Program. The new program supports inclusive design principles for community infrastructure projects delivered through the Suburban Revitalisation boards or in partnership with local government.</p>
LGBTIQ+ people	<p>LGBTIQ+ people with disability were consulted to develop a whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy and influenced development of the reform directions in the LGBTIQ+ strategy directions paper. The paper was released for community feedback in December 2020.</p> <p>The Victorian Pride Centre engaged people with disability to inform the design of accessible and inclusive spaces within physical premises and of accessible and inclusive communications and promotional material.</p>
Refugees	<p>The Victorian Refugee Health Network was supported to complete a needs assessment on the responsiveness of the disability and refugee health service system in northern Melbourne.</p>
Veterans	<p>All 2019, 2020 and 2021 grant projects funded under the veterans portfolio embedded universal design principles, providing better access to important war memorials for Victorians and visitors with disability.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
NDIS and diversity	<p>The Victorian Government developed and implemented strategies to support regional, rural/remote, Aboriginal and multicultural communities through the NDIS transition.</p> <p>Barriers to people accessing the NDIS as part of their NDIS readiness planning were identified and addressed in consultation with local communities.</p>

2. Health, housing and wellbeing



Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Health services	<p>In 2018–19 the then Department of Health and Human Services partnered with the Victorian Healthcare Association to develop a series of interactive e-learning modules to support health services to prepare and implement disability action plans and build the capacity to meet the needs of people with disability.</p> <p>In 2019 Deaf Victoria was funded through the Victorian Disability Advocacy Futures Grants program to identify core components of a service model to support high-quality, accessible health care for Victorians who are Deaf or hard of hearing.</p>
Health promotion	<p>Twelve ‘Supporting Every Smile’ oral health promotion workshops were delivered in 2019 to disability support workers and managers across three disability residential care service providers (genU, Uniting Care and Windarring), reaching 82 staff.</p>
Housing	<p>The Victorian Government announced the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build in November 2020. The program will deliver more than 12,000 new social and affordable homes across the state. New social housing will be prioritised for those in urgent need, including people with disability, through the Victorian Housing Register. Incorporating Liveable Housing design standards to meet the needs of people with disability, at least 5 per cent of new social housing will have a high level of physical accessibility to enable the social housing portfolio to meet the needs of Victorians with disability.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Dual disability	<p>Two Mental Health Intellectual Disability Initiative teams (one for adults and one for children and adolescents) were established at Monash Health. The teams provide specialist services for people with intellectual disability and a suspected mental health concern. They also provide capacity and capability development to the broader mental health service. These sites now receive recurrent funding. Evaluations show a significant positive impact for the consumers, carers and staff of these services.</p> <p>Each of the 13 child and adolescent mental health services in Victoria now has recurrent funding for an autism coordinator. The coordinator works within the service to organise and conduct assessments, provide capacity building and work with external providers to develop a network of professionals. These coordinators are supported by a statewide coordinator based at Mindful (The University of Melbourne).</p> <p>Mindful was funded to develop and implement two commitments from the Victorian autism plan under domain 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve access to autism assessment, diagnosis and early intervention • increase understanding of health and wellbeing needs, including mental health needs, of autistic Victorians. <p>The Mindful: Autism Assessment Capability and Capacity Project launched in 2020 and will run for two years. Project deliverables include developing online training modules that will be an introduction to autism assessment as a precursor to the workshops and a screening module for adult autism spectrum diagnosis. This is intended to increase accessibility and the number of participants who can be trained. In 2020 and 2021 Mindful developed a face-to-face training package for adult autism assessment, with these sessions beginning in February 2021.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Vulnerable children and families	<p>The Victorian Government has set up the Children with Complex Disability Support Needs program, delivered by community-based family services agencies. The program supports families with children with complex disability support needs who are at risk of requiring care outside of the family home. The agencies provide targeted interventions and a case management approach to build parental capacity and resilience. They also work collaboratively with the NDIS to optimise disability supports for the child and parents.</p> <p>Case management plays a key role in helping families develop an understanding of their support needs and build capacity to access and navigate supports.</p>
Parks access	<p>Access to Parks Victoria information has been improved with visitor trail advisory guides for park walking trails suitable for all-terrain TrailRider wheelchairs. Improved visitor information on accessible park activities has been provided on the Parks Victoria website and the AAA Play website. This includes 10 short videos, more inclusive imagery and more information for visitors with assistance animals.</p> <p>Parks Victoria engaged Get Skilled Access to provide disability awareness and engagement online training to staff and volunteers in 2019. Staff also took part in five face-to-face sessions held across Victoria, including a session for members of the Parks Victoria senior management team. In 2020 Parks Victoria engaged Blind Sports and Recreation Victoria to deliver online inclusion training to 37 staff and 10 volunteers.</p> <p>Volunteer opportunities were created for people with disability in parks in the Geelong area. A horticulture training program for young people was delivered at Werribee Park.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>Amaze was engaged to conduct environmental audits of the Quarantine Station (Point Nepean National Park) and Werribee Mansion (Werribee Park) in 2020. The audits provided recommendations on how these parks could be made more autism-friendly and led to developing social scripts for autistic children visiting these sites.</p> <p>The first round of the new \$2 million Volunteering Innovation Fund was launched in September 2020. Many of the successful applications for round 1 funding included initiatives, engagement and partnership approaches that will enable people with disability to volunteer.</p>
NDIS transition	<p>The Victorian Government provided \$10 million in funding over two years to deliver a range of initiatives through Transition Support Packages. For example, Mental Health Victoria delivered the Psychosocial Capabilities Project. The project trained NDIS providers and workers offering psychosocial disability supports, supporting a recovery-oriented focus.</p>
NDIS and health services	<p>The Victorian Government supported the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to shape and roll out the hospital liaison officer role. The role focuses on supporting solutions for individual participants, working alongside other supports.</p> <p>The Victorian Government provided funding to clinical mental health services and supported implementation of the NDIS by employing specialist mental health leaders, who have been responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building NDIS literacy in health services • working with NDIS providers to coordinate care • building partnerships with the NDIA, Local Area Coordination partners, hospital liaison officers and service providers • continuing to build workforce capability to support people with psychosocial disability throughout the NDIS pathway • engaging with the NDIA to inform NDIA policy and practice.

3. Fairness and safety



Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>The Victorian Government funded training and support for health services to set up as NDIS providers, develop processes and prepare for audits in 2019. A community of practice for health and NDIS staff to work together on interface issues was also established.</p> <p>The Summer Foundation received Transition Support Package funding to work with health services, supporting them to prepare tools and resources for NDIS interface.</p>
NDIS and mainstream services	<p>The Peer Facilitated Self Advocacy Project, funded through Information Linkages and Capacity Building, was delivered in 2019–20. The project developed resources such as the Self-advocacy for the NDIS (mental health) resource and delivered train-the-trainer programs for peer support workers to deliver NDIS self advocacy workshops to people experiencing mental health issues.</p>
Disability workforce	<p>Keeping our sector strong: Victoria's workforce development plan for the NDIS completed in 2021. Since 2017, 17 projects have been delivered under the four priority areas of intelligence, capability, supply and innovation. More than 80 outputs were developed to support the disability workforce in transition to the NDIS.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Family violence	<p>Seventeen communal family violence refuges are being replaced with new core and cluster facilities. This includes facilities built to a gold standard, with at least one unit per facility built to a platinum standard to increase the physical access for people with disability.</p> <p>The 2020–21 Victorian State Budget allocated \$848,000 over four years (\$243,000 ongoing) to continue the Disability Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative based at Safe Steps. The initiative supports people with disability who are experiencing family violence with essential services and supports such as personal care, accessible transport, disability aids and equipment and other specialist goods, as well as information and referral to other support services.</p> <p>A workshop between Victorian Government representatives, the NDIA and disability stakeholders was held in 2019 to support better integration of our family violence and disability reforms, particularly around crisis responses.</p> <p>The NDIS Capacity Building Initiative, jointly led by Domestic Violence Victoria and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, was undertaken in 2020 to increase the capacity of the family violence and sexual assault service systems to work with the NDIS.</p> <p>The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework was released in 2019, replacing the Common risk assessment framework. It is designed to increase the safety and wellbeing of Victorians by helping services to identify, assess and manage family violence risk effectively. Using an intersectional approach, the experiences of people with disability are addressed across the MARAM practice guides. The department's disability workforce (those remaining after the transition to the NDIS) have been trained to recognise and respond to family violence. Training is also available as part of the phased rollout of the MARAM framework for workers in prescribed organisations. A Skills First-funded accredited family violence training short course consistent with MARAM screening and identification began online in 2020 through the Vocational Education and Training system.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>A practice guide on people with disability and family violence was published along with a suite of other practice guides in June 2019. It was updated in 2021 to align with the MARAM practice guides: foundation knowledge guide, as well as unique indicators of abuse and barriers to reporting faced by people with disability.</p> <p>Victoria Police implemented a new tool for family violence risk assessment and management in June 2019. Called the Family Violence Report (FVR), it includes improvements to accessibility issues and supports needed to assist parties to engage in reporting family violence, targeted mandatory referrals and greater access to disability data.</p> <p>Public access to police data from the FVR, including disability-specific data, is via the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency website.</p> <p>The Victoria Police Centre of Learning for Family Violence has ensured that training identifying the complexities experienced by people with disability and the potential barriers to reporting family violence-related crimes is embedded in police training. This begins from recruit training during phase 1 (week 8) and phase 3 (week 25) at the Victoria Police Academy and goes through to specialist investigator training.</p> <p>Members are also trained directly on the content of the FVR risk assessment, including the need to ensure victims have all the supports they need to answer family violence risk assessment questions. Question 33 is: 'Do you have any disabilities police need to be aware of?'. The FVR requirements have also increased to ensure police assess and document any supports needed for participating in the investigation.</p> <p>Immersive scenarios for these factors are also included in the curriculum.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has received \$1.48 million for the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program since it began in early 2018. This included \$360,000 per annum to deliver the program in 2019–20 and 2020–21. The program focuses on building the capacity of disability and social service sectors to embed primary prevention in their workplaces and to build the evidence base on the drivers of violence against women with disability. In July 2021 WDV received further funding of \$720,000 to continue this program through to August 2023.</p> <p>Funding of \$400,000 over four years was also provided to WDV in 2018–19 and 2021–22 under the Women’s Health Services Workforce Capacity Building Program to deliver disability-inclusive capacity building and training in preventing violence against women for Victoria’s women’s health services sector.</p> <p>The Intermediary Pilot Program was delivered to assist vulnerable witnesses to give evidence, including those with a cognitive disability.</p> <p>In 2019 the program centred on conducting a Ground Rules Hearing and was delivered with an accompanying video resource. In 2020 the program focused on identifying communication issues with vulnerable witnesses with an accompanying video resource.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Disability advocacy	<p>The Victorian disability advocacy futures plan 2018–2020 was released to improve the VDAP, ensure access to advocacy (particularly for people with disability from diverse and underserved communities) and determine a longer term approach to funding disability advocacy in Victoria beyond 2020. A total of \$4.3 million was invested in the plan over two years from 2018 to 2020 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support a two-year 25 per cent core funding increase to all 24 VDAP organisations to respond to demand for advocacy and growth in the sector • investigate improvements to VDAP and support development of a new intake model and advocacy outcomes framework. <p>Funding of \$3.15 million was allocated to support 25 projects through the Victorian Disability Advocacy Futures Grants program. The program aims to improve access to advocacy, build partnerships and strengthen self and systemic advocacy.</p> <p>Funding of \$800,000 was provided in May 2020 to establish disability advocacy outreach services to support diverse and underserved communities that may have experienced additional disadvantage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding was also allocated to assist disability self-help groups to find new ways of operating and connecting in a COVID-19 environment.</p> <p>Additional funding of \$549,000 was provided in December 2020 to five agencies funded through the VDAP to provide additional outreach support.</p>
VCAT accessibility	<p>VCAT increased accessibility through implementing a Disability Liaison Officer program, redesigning its website and delivering disability awareness training to all staff.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Victoria Police	<p>Victoria Police produced a wide range of accessible publications including Easy English and Auslan products on family violence and sexual crime.</p> <p>Staff at Box Hill and Geelong police stations received training to work with people with communication difficulties and, following assessment, received accreditation from Scope to display the Communication Access symbol. Box Hill was the first police station in Australia to receive this accreditation.</p> <p>A disability liaison officer portfolio role was scoped, planned and approved and will begin when Victoria Police reaches a 'COVID normal' environment.</p> <p>Education and training resources were developed and made available for police, including a focus on bystander response, human rights and prejudice-motivated crime.</p>
Corrections	<p>A pilot was delivered at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre women's prison to trial a specialised disability pathway focused on female prisoners with cognitive disability and complex needs. The pilot generated lessons about how systems and processes for people with disability can be improved in prisons.</p> <p>Victorian State Budget funding of \$2.5 million was allocated in 2020–21 to better identify prisoners with disability and complex needs and to further support access to the NDIS. The service will be provided across the Victorian prison system to enhance the placement, case management and rehabilitation of prisoners with disability.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is working to improve systems and processes for people with disability interacting with the justice system. This work includes improving the integration of supports for people with disability to better respond to individual needs across multiple life domains and considering people with disability in terms of their individual needs.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>Various workplace training and support programs were provided to corrections staff including a focus on the implications of the NDIS, working with people with cognitive disability, new starter training in working with offenders with disability, and case management training centred on working with people with intellectual disability and acquired brain injury.</p> <p>Four justice liaison officers operating within the NDIA are now available to all of Victoria's prisons and youth justice centres. The role of the officers is to work in partnership with Corrections Victoria and youth justice staff to coordinate support for NDIS participants who are in custody, in particular those who require NDIS supports on release.</p> <p>Until the end of 2020, Victoria chaired the Justice Working Group, which comprises representatives from the Commonwealth and all states and territories. The group aimed to respond to multilateral systemic policy issues at the interface between the NDIS and the justice system. The working group ceased following the disbandment of the Council of Australian Governments and the Disability Reform Council and its governance structures in 2020. It is proposed that three priority tasking groups be established to inform the new Disability Reform Ministers' meeting, which replaced the former Disability Reform Council and will drive national reform in disability policy and implementation.</p>
Assistance animals	<p>Existing frameworks for assistance animals across other jurisdictions have been evaluated, including the risks and benefits of each. Animal Welfare Victoria is engaging with the Commonwealth to achieve national consistency for assistance animal recognition and accreditation. Victoria's Minister for Agriculture will consider options for assistance dog regulation, including council registration of assistance dogs in Victoria.</p>

4. Contributing lives



Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
Inclusive education	<p>The 2020–21 Victorian State Budget included a nearly \$1.6 billion Disability Inclusion funding and support package for education, including a series of complementary, multidisciplinary activities to support our workforces to build capability in inclusive education. The implementation of Disability Inclusion will remain a key focus throughout the life of the new state disability plan.</p> <p>A functional needs assessment was trialled in more than 100 schools in 2018. The strengths-based tiered funding and support model for students with disability will be rolled out across Victorian government schools from mid-2021 to 2025 as part of the Disability Inclusion package, including the Disability Inclusion Profile, which is based on the functional needs assessment trial.</p> <p>To improve outcomes for students with dyslexia and learning difficulties, professional development was implemented for government school workforces over 2018–19. Additional resources were also developed and delivered as part of phase two of the literacy and numeracy strategy commitment to build school workforce capability to support students with learning difficulties. Further initiatives to improve educational outcomes and supports for students with learning difficulties will be rolled out through the Disability Inclusion package, including through the new Diverse Learners Hub.</p> <p>The Victorian Autism education strategy forms part of the broader Disability Inclusion reform package. The strategy was launched in December 2020 and aims to improve educational outcomes and supports for autistic students and foster inclusive school communities.</p>

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>The strategy's flagship initiative is establishing a Diverse Learners Hub. The hub will be a centre of excellence supporting system-wide capability building of education workforces to equip them to meet the educational needs of students with neurodevelopmental differences, with a focus on autism.</p> <p>A suite of blended professional learning and online modules called Inclusive Classrooms began in 2019. Since mid-2019, six blended learning courses and one e-learning module have been developed and piloted. Statewide rollout has begun, supporting 2,236 participants in the education workforce. An extension of the Inclusive Classrooms course development will form part of the Disability Inclusion package.</p>
Employment	<p>Developed as a subplan of Absolutely everyone, Every opportunity: Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018–2020 was released to enhance the economic participation of people with disability.</p> <p>Every opportunity provided a focus for the Victorian Government to drive better economic outcomes through leveraging effort across policies and programs, as well as the broader Victorian economy. Key achievements over 2019 and 2020 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building the evidence base of good practice in disability employment through supporting research and using the Jobs Victoria Innovation Fund • shifting perceptions and changing attitudes of employers • establishing partnerships to drive economic participation opportunities across government and the broader Victorian economy.

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
	<p>Employment of people with disability in the public service increased to 5.2 per cent in 2020 from 3.8 per cent in 2018.¹ Efforts to reach employment targets set in Every opportunity will continue to be driven through Getting to work: Victorian public sector disability employment action plan 2018–2025.</p> <p>Key achievements through Getting to work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a dedicated pathway in the Victorian Government graduate program that saw 10 per cent of graduates entering the public sector in 2020 being people with disability • establishing the Deputy Secretary Disability Champion Round Table, a network of senior public sector leaders driving change from the top through promoting and enabling inclusive employment practices • a range of tools and resources to help public sector leaders, managers and employees raise awareness of, and share information about, inclusive employment practices • work to improve data collection about disability in the public sector.

¹ Participation in the 2020 survey was voluntary, and several large departments and agencies did not take part. As a result, the 5.2 per cent figure may be an over- or underestimate of the true representation of people with disability in the public service.

Key priority/ action	Key achievements in 2019 and 2020
<p>Voice and leadership</p>	<p>As of June 2019, 0.9 per cent of all Victorian Government board appointees identified as having a disability.</p> <p>Work on lifting this rate continued over 2019 through the People with Disability on Victorian Public Sector Boards and Committees pilot. Efforts focused on shifting attitudes and raising awareness across the Victorian public sector, removing barriers and strengthening pathways for people with disability to apply for and sustain board appointments.</p> <p>The pilot included funding partner organisations to offer professional development to Victorian public sector staff involved in board appointments, as well as for people with disability.</p> <p>Of all appointees to energy, environment and climate change portfolio boards, 5.3 per cent identify as people with disability. This is a result of targeted strategies in this area.</p> <p>Funding was provided to the Self Advocacy Resource Unit to establish Voice at the Table, a user-led initiative to increase the civic participation of people with cognitive disability. Voice at the Table participants received individual coaching and mentoring to apply for and sustain new board or committee positions. Additionally, training was delivered by people with cognitive disability to organisations on inclusive board practices, with a focus on resources, guidance and support for chairs and committee members.</p> <p>Young people with disability were targeted to take part in consultations to inform the new youth strategy in 2020. This included partnering with the Youth Disability Advocacy Service to deliver an online forum for young people with disability. In 2018 the Youth Summit 'Harmony through Diversity' also included a focus on hearing from young people with a disability. The youth summit was an action under the previous Youth policy: building stronger youth engagement in Victoria.</p>



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Future opportunities

Areas to build on in the new plan

There are some areas where progress slowed against some of the actions in **Absolutely everyone**. In some instances, this was due to a shifting of priorities to focus on the pandemic response.

One example of this is government communications. While a specific action plan to improve the accessibility of government communications was not delivered during the life of **Absolutely everyone**, the COVID-19 response included a stronger focus on accessible communications that will be carried over into the next state disability plan. The Victorian Government allocated \$1.4 million through the 2021–22 Victorian State Budget to improve communications with Victorians with disability before, during and after an emergency or natural disaster.

Aboriginal self-determination is another area that requires more dedicated focus in the next plan. There is a shared commitment across government to apply Aboriginal self-determination principles in developing and delivering policies, programs and services for Aboriginal people with disability.

We believe we can address these and other areas in the next plan by committing to six systemic reform directions:

- co-design with people with disability
- Aboriginal self-determination
- intersectional approaches
- accessible communications and universal design
- disability confident and inclusive workforces
- effective data and outcomes reporting.

Across the Victorian Government, all departments will embed the six systemic reforms in their policies, programs and services to drive real change and build genuine inclusion.

A focus on increasing accountability

In the consultations for the next plan, people said they want us to be more accountable and clearer in how we report on how the plan is going. To address this feedback, we have committed to a more robust and transparent reporting process.

Commitments and actions

The next state disability plan will put forward a more streamlined approach to setting out the actions that government will undertake to achieve change over the life of the plan.

First, we will include commitment statements so there is a clear goal for each priority area. We will also include a set of clearly framed actions so reporting against them can be more transparent. To ensure actions stay current, we will also review the plan at the midway point and add actions where they are needed to work towards the commitments.

Monitoring and reporting

To make sure the plan is progressing and delivering improved outcomes for people, we will be tracking progress against the plan throughout its life. We will do this by using both informal and formal reporting mechanisms.

Informal reporting and engagement

Throughout the life of the next plan, we will engage more effectively with the community to report on progress and ask for feedback on what else we need to be doing. We will do this through the state disability plan website, online public forums and other mechanisms. We will also draw on the expertise of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council.

Formal reporting

We will publish two reports to monitor progress in completing actions and achieving our commitments.

We will publish a midway report that will outline the progress achieved in the first half of the plan and will include refreshed actions where they are required. We will also publish a final report that will summarise progress made in the second half of the plan.

Both reports will be tabled in parliament and will include reporting on performance indicators linked to the outcomes framework that measure real and lasting change.

Victorian autism plan

Victorian autism plan reporting

The Victorian autism plan was launched in December 2019. The plan shares the same four outcomes pillars as the state disability plan.

A number of key initiatives have been funded and implemented over the past two years. Some of these early key achievements are outlined below.

Some activities set out in the plan were paused due to the pandemic. At the same time, the Victorian Government has drawn on key advice from autism advocates and organisations that has made the application of health directions fairer and more accessible for not just for autistic people but for many other Victorians with and without disability. This has included advice around the exemptions for masks and travel restrictions that would otherwise unfairly limit the care and routines of many autistic people.

Inclusive communities

Change Your Reactions campaign

The Victorian Government funded Amaze to develop the Change Your Reactions campaign. The vision was to create an inclusive community that better understands, accepts and engages with autistic Victorians.

The campaign was the first of its kind in Australia and one of the first of its kind internationally.

Three campaign concepts were developed and tested with autistic people and their families and carers. This was to identify the most authentic representations of the autistic experience and to avoid representations that might cause harm or offence to autistic people and their families and carers.

More than 200 members of the autism community provided feedback on the three campaign concepts, from which Change Your Reactions was selected to go to production.

The first wave of the campaign was run through television, social media, print, paid media and shopping centre advertisements from 17 February 2020 to 15 March 2020. Additional online advertising continued until mid-2020.

A second wave of the campaign ran through television and other media in April and May of 2021. Materials were adapted to comply with the health directions that then applied in Victoria to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A full evaluation of the first wave of the campaign was undertaken. Key results and insights are listed below.

- 85 per cent of general population respondents surveyed indicated that they intend to refrain from judgement if they see a situation similar to those in the advertisements.

- Respondents who had been exposed to the campaign were more likely to report that they have a good understanding of how to support autistic people (68 per cent) compared with those who had not been exposed to the campaign (40 per cent).
- The consultative development process that informed the campaign is reflected in the fact that 90 per cent of surveyed autism community members believed that the campaign would make a positive difference for autistic people.

Increased access to sport and recreation

Sport and Recreation Victoria continued to expand the range of sporting activities open to children with disability through the Access All Abilities program.

This includes foundational activities like swimming and gymnastics that build gross and fine motor skills. It also includes an increasing range of other sports and recreation including AFL, tennis, golf, hockey and cycling.

Key achievements include increasing autism understanding from 50 per cent to 98 per cent among tennis coaches and work to identify barriers for families with autistic children when enrolling in gymnastics.

Health, housing and wellbeing

Improving Support for Autism and Intellectual Disability (ISAID) project

This project is trialling and evaluating a new model of care to help young people with autism and/or intellectual disability and their families. Its aim is to meet the needs of young people and their families when they present with behaviours of concern to the Royal Children's Hospital emergency department. Families are often in crisis when they present to emergency departments for behaviours of concern, and one in four return within three months. A key measure of success is lowering the proportion of young people and their families who return within three months.

Young people and their families are invited to take part in the model of care when they present at the emergency department. The mode of care is coordinated by a clinical nurse consultant. It connects families to paediatrics and psychology and aims to build their capacity to seek appropriate care before experiencing crisis.

Patients, families and clinicians are surveyed about their experience of the model. Quantitative data is collected for participating families and analysed in real time to inform iterative improvements to the model.

The project is operating until late 2021 and, at the time of writing, is still completing its evaluation. Early data analysis, including reports from families and clinicians, indicate significant benefits:

- More than 70 per cent of families rate model components as 4 or 5, where 5 is very helpful.
- At two weeks after visiting an emergency department, 93 per cent of families say the model has addressed or is addressing the concerns or behaviours they presented for.
- 88 per cent of participating clinicians rated their satisfaction with the ISAID model as 4 or 5, where 5 is very satisfied. Before ISAID, 4 per cent rated the previous model as 4 or 5.
- Re-presentations to the Royal Children's emergency department have reduced by 26 per cent among participating families.

Family stories from the ISAID project

Family of a **five-year-old**

Child's mother **two weeks** after ISAID participation:

“ ‘Talking with [the ISAID psychiatrist] was the missing link in a process that has been going on for 12 months. He connected all the professionals together.’ ”

Child's mother **six weeks** after ISAID participation:

“ ‘The program was successful; you should all be really happy with it. It was refreshing to speak so effortlessly in conversation with a paediatrician and psychiatrist who just get it.’ ”

Family of a **13-year-old**

Child's mother **two weeks** after ISAID participation:

“ ‘The biggest help has been having someone to guide our family through the process and explain the who, what and when of follow-up.’ ”

Child's mother **three months** after ISAID participation:

“ ‘Our lives have changed for the better times 20. We just support each other a lot more now. It's really beautiful.’ ”

Increased access to assessment and diagnosis

Increasing access to assessment is a key element of the **Victorian autism plan**.

The work described below drew on funding of \$2.1 million provided in 2018–19. An additional four years' funding (\$7.4 million) was provided through the 2019–20 Victorian State Budget and will be the subject of future public reporting.

This initial phase of work has had three main focuses:

- increasing the number of public assessments
- establishing adult mental health autism spectrum disorder (ASD) coordinators
- building the capacity of public mental health clinicians to meet the needs of autistic people.

Increasing the number of public assessments

An additional 475 public autism assessments are being offered through this initial phase of work. There is a focus on providing these assessments to people in regional Victoria. To date, around half of these additional assessments have been delivered in regions.

Adult mental health coordinators

Historically, autistic adults have had very limited access to assessment and diagnosis, except through private providers, which can be very costly. To address this need, six adult mental health ASD coordinators have been appointed in public mental health services. Some are developing secondary consultation processes, while two have established adult autism assessment clinics. These coordinators are also instrumental in building the capacity of mental health clinicians to provide appropriate and high-quality services to autistic adults.

Brief ASD training package

Training packages have been provided to around 800 clinicians. In a recent survey of clinicians who used the training packages:

- 86 per cent reported an increase in autism knowledge
- 97 per cent reported improved confidence in providing services to autistic people, compared with 46 per cent of the same group reporting as not confident before the training
- 73 per cent reported that they would definitely apply the knowledge learned in this workshop to their current clinical work
- 72 per cent reported increased awareness of comorbid conditions.

Additional reporting on impacts and short-term outcomes of this work will be reported following a full evaluation of the project.

Contributing lives

Autism education strategy

The **Victorian Autism education strategy** aims to improve educational outcomes and supports for autistic students and foster inclusive school communities that welcome autistic students and their families, and value their contribution.

The strategy recognises that specific support is required to better assist autistic students with their education. This strongly aligns with the Disability Inclusion package.

The strategy shows how autistic students will be supported at school to realise their aspirations. It places autistic students at the centre, empowering schools, specialists, parents and the students themselves to work together to meet their full potential.

The strategy has been developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders including experts, researchers, autism advocacy organisations and autistic students and their families.

Victorian Disability Advisory Council afterword

It's my pleasure to present the afterword for the final annual report for **Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017–2020**. I present this afterword on behalf of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, which I have had the privilege to chair since the resignation of previous chair Brent Philips in October 2020. I also want to acknowledge Brent's leadership of the council in the year leading up to his departure.

The Victorian Disability Advisory Council is passionate about representing the concerns of people with disability to government. We feel a great responsibility to you in doing this work.

The final year for implementing **Absolutely everyone** wasn't as anyone would have wanted. We express our condolences to those who lost loved ones.

Direct and indirect impacts of the global pandemic paused progress on several key inclusion initiatives as government and community resources were redirected.

The pandemic has been especially hard for people with disability. It was difficult for us to get tested and to access education, transport and support. At the same time, opportunities emerged for more inclusive ways of doing things. Our members want to see these grow – things like more flexible work arrangements, increased access to care through telehealth, and better responses to the impacts of isolation.

Despite the challenges, there are many things that we can be proud of. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the council and other disability advisory groups acted as trusted sources of information and advice for the Victorian Government.

We drove development of accessible communications to ensure everyone has access to public health information. We are at the beginning of important work to make the state's management of future emergencies work better for people with disability.

We worked closely with the previous Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, the Hon Luke Donnellan, to raise and address concerns via a priority COVID-19 working group. These discussions contributed to initiatives such as establishing the Disability Liaison Officer program, which continues to provide people with disability support to navigate the health system.

Outside of the pandemic, the council's diverse skill set enabled portfolio leads to contribute to key policy work and influence meaningful change. One such example is through the Victorian parliamentary inquiry into anti-vilification protections. The final report recommended that anti-vilification provisions be extended to include disability – this is a direct outcome of our submission to the inquiry. We have also seen significant investments in education and housing, and we look forward to being involved in further developing these initiatives, ensuring they are accessible and inclusive.

Looking forward, we developed a statement of priorities to direct efforts to where they are needed most through the COVID-19 recovery. We have recommended a focus on:

- engagement and social connection
- embedding co-design and universal design into infrastructure projects
- optimising use of new disability liaison officer positions
- inclusion of people with disability in emergency and disaster responses
- employment of people with disability.

Absolutely everyone has steered Victoria's inclusion agenda through one of the most turbulent periods in recent history. However, we still have a long way to go. We are committed to building on the progress that has been made to date. We will continue to ensure your voice is heard through the development of the next state disability plan and beyond.

George Taleporos
Chair
Victorian Disability Advisory Council

