

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2018–2021



Education  
and Training

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# INTRODUCTION

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**The Victorian Government has a vision of an inclusive Victoria. This would see people with disability given the opportunities and support they need to be better included in the community and better able to contribute to it.**

The Victorian Government set out its vision for an inclusive Victoria in *Absolutely Everyone: State disability plan 2017–2020* which recognises the critical role that education and training play in supporting Victorians with disability to live safe, inclusive and productive lives.

The foundations for a more inclusive state start with education.

**Together we give every Victorian the best learning and development experience, making our state a smarter, fairer and more prosperous place**

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) delivers and regulates statewide learning and development services for at least one-third of all Victorians every year. Its services are delivered across the early childhood, school education, and training and skills sectors.

The Department has a responsibility to do this well – but it must do it even better for children, students and learners with disability.

This *Disability Action Plan* (the plan) demonstrates the Department's work to support the Victorian Government's vision of an inclusive Victoria. It sets out the actions the Department will take to support people with disability to use its services, engage with it or work for it.

The plan acknowledges everyone will experience disability in a different way, depending on their individual circumstances, life experiences, and the nature of their needs and abilities. It also recognises that early childhood education, schools, training and skills systems need to respond to these individual needs in order to support every Victorian to reach their potential and live the life that they want.

The Department is building an education system that is inclusive and produces excellence. Work is underway to ensure an inclusive education system that allows every learner to learn in a safe and supportive environment – and provides settings that are best suited to the learners' needs. This will ensure that all Victorians have access to quality education and training that meets their needs and enables meaningful participation in society.

**The Victorian Government is focused on ensuring that Victorians with disability are well prepared, and have increased opportunities, for employment.**

Specific approaches are needed to assist people with disability to overcome the significant barriers they face to gain employment.

*Every opportunity: Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018–2020* outlines the Victorian Government's approach to enhance the economic participation of people with disability in this state. This includes work to:

- reduce discrimination and stereotyping that affect the community and employers' understanding and awareness of disability
- recognise the compounding impact of multiple disadvantages some people with a disadvantage face to secure employment, such as Aboriginal Victorians with disability, women with disability and mature-aged people with disability.



*Every opportunity* highlights that education and training are critical enablers to employment for people with disability, and reinforces that the education system needs to prepare children and young people for further study and employment. This is a key responsibility of the Department.

The benefits of employment for people with disability are significant, allowing the opportunity for participation, improving standards of living and social inclusion.

The Victorian Government's *Public Sector Disability Employment Action Plan* is under development to enhance employment opportunities for people with disability in the public sector. This plan responds to the public sector employment targets laid out in *Every opportunity* and will coordinate whole-of-government actions to ensure all departments can meet these targets. These are ambitious targets – but the Government has committed to them because, as employers, it is important that departments take the lead and act as models for other employers.

## Victorian Public Sector Employment Targets



Increase to  
**12%**  
by 2025


As one of the largest employers in Victoria, the Department has a significant opportunity to increase the number of people with disability that are directly employed within it. The Department also has additional opportunities to encourage employment of people with disability in the services it funds.


The Department's *Disability Action Plan 2018–2021* was developed in alignment with the *Department of Education and Training 2018–2022 Strategic Plan* and links to the Department's outcomes: Achievement, Wellbeing, Engagement and Productivity. These outcomes are closely aligned with the State Pillars in *Absolutely Everyone State Disability Plan 2017–2020*.





## **THE DEPARTMENT HAS A STRONG RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR LEARNERS**

The Department has a strong record of achievement in providing services to people with disability across the early childhood, school education, and training and skills sectors. It also recognises that there is more work to do. This is the third *Disability Action Plan* for the Department and it sets out how it is working towards changes to improve the lives and experiences of children, students and learners with disability. It is informed by the Department's significant work so far and draws on its knowledge that:

 **1** the first years of life are crucial to lifelong learning, wellbeing and success. For children with disability it is an even more critical time. It is essential that any developmental or learning difficulties are identified early and supports are provided to assist children and families to understand their needs and reach their potential (see the work underway in the Education State *Early Childhood Reform Plan* released in 2017).

 **2** it is essential that every child and young person has a safe, positive and supportive learning environment in which to learn and that is suited to their individual needs. Inclusive education means that all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture. Education for all is Victoria's school policy that gives schools a clear definition of inclusive education and what the legal obligations are for supporting students with disabilities (see the work underway in the Special Needs Plan for Victorian Schools and the Inclusive Education Reform Agenda).

 **3** additional support for students who need it and investment in the education workforce's training and professional learning are critical to ensure that children's and students' learning and development needs are met (see the work underway in response to the Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities).

 **4** it is essential that every student receives the support to gain the skills industry needs and employers expect. For more people with disability to gain employment it is critical that they are well prepared and that the training system can support their learning and development needs (see the work underway through the Skills First reform agenda for Victoria's training and TAFE system).

# DET DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

This diagram shows how the Department of Education and Training *Disability Action Plan* aligns with national and state disability plans and the Department's strategic intent and outcomes.



<b>The Department's Strategic Intent</b>		<b>Together we give every Victorian the best learning and development experience, making our state a smarter, fairer, more prosperous place</b>		
<b>The Department's Strategic Plan Outcomes:</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Productivity</b>
<b>State Disability Plan Pillars:</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Individual's experience</b>	<b>I feel included</b>	<b>I live well</b>	<b>I get a fair go</b>	<b>I contribute</b>
<b>The Department's Actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal design</li> <li>• Inclusive schools</li> <li>• Building requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS transition</li> <li>• Vulnerable children and families</li> <li>• Disability workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive education</li> <li>• Employment</li> </ul>

# SNAPSHOT



The Department provides approximately 9,000 students with disability with transport assistance to travel to and from their specialist school



**96.4%**

In 2017, 4,859 out of 5,083 applications were approved by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) for Special Examination Arrangements



In 2017 there were 595 completed Auslan interpreter bookings for DHH<sup>1</sup> Vocational Education and Training (VET) students

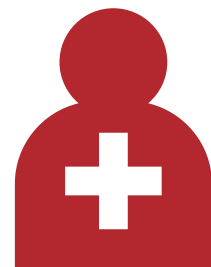


**1,531**

In Victoria there are over 1,500 government schools



The Program for Students with Disabilities funds 93 per cent of Victorian government schools to support students with high needs



In 2017 the Schoolcare Program provided training to 374 school staff members to support the medical needs of students with disability



In 2016 30 per cent of enrolments in training and skills pre-accredited programs were by people who identified as having disability



In 2017, 18.8 per cent of students nationally received an adjustment for disability



**10.4%**

In 2016 students with disability represented 10.4 per cent of government-funded Victorian VET enrolments



**14%**

In 2016, 14 per cent of Victorian parents reported their child had a speech or language difficulty when they started school<sup>2</sup>

1. DHH – Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

2. Department of Education and Training (2016). *Victorian Student Health and Wellbeing Survey 'About You'*.



# THE PLAN'S STRUCTURE

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## The Department's *Disability Action Plan* is organised under the four pillars of *Absolutely Everyone*.

Under each pillar there are key priorities that highlight the actions which will be taken to improve the lives of people with disability. *Absolutely Everyone* represents a comprehensive approach across government to create meaningful change for individuals, families and communities.

The four pillars of *Absolutely Everyone* represent a whole-of-government, whole-of-life approach. As the Department's focus is education and training, its contribution to *Absolutely Everyone* concentrates on the pillars representing this work. These are:

- **Pillar One:** inclusive communities
- **Pillar Four:** contributing lives.

The following sections summarise the focus of the Department's work under these two pillars. The Department is also undertaking work that connects and supports other pillars in *Absolutely Everyone* and these are shown in the action tables later in this plan. The other pillars have actions that are also supported by the work of other Victorian Government departments and our Department works closely with them to support these actions.

The Department is delivering an inclusive education agenda to give schools extra resources and guidance to support the delivery of high-quality schooling for all students. This includes initiatives from the

*Special Needs Plan* for Victorian government schools, the recommendations from the Review of the Program for Students with Disabilities, and a recently announced \$42 million funding package of additional supports for schools. The initiatives focus on developing the knowledge and skills of school employees and giving schools clearer guidance and specialist support to better respond to the needs of students with disability and additional learning needs. These initiatives will increase the participation, achievements and wellbeing of students with disability and additional needs in government schools.

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## CONSULTATION PROCESS

A working group was appointed to develop the *Disability Action Plan* and ensure that each area across the Department is represented and has the opportunity to contribute to its development.

The input from each area was incorporated into the *Disability Action Plan*.

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## MONITORING AND REPORTING


The *Disability Action Plan* will be monitored and regularly reported through the Victorian Government disability plans:

- *Absolutely Everyone*
- *Every opportunity*
- *Public Sector Disability Employment Plan*.



# ACTIONS: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## PILLAR ONE: INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Victorian Government Plan		Department Plan
<b>Pillar</b> 	<b>Inclusive communities</b> I feel included	<b>Inclusive learning environments</b> Learning environments that consider the needs of learners with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles and abilities in which students feel equally valued. The Department is committed to upgrading building facilities across all Victorian schools.
<b>Key priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing attitudes</li> <li>Universal design</li> <li>Public transport</li> <li>Inclusive schools</li> </ul>	<b>List of priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Universal design</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Schools 2020 Program</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Inclusive schools</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive Schools Fund</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Action areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building requirements</li> <li>Community infrastructure</li> <li>Government communications</li> <li>Aboriginal self-determination</li> <li>LGBTI people</li> <li>Refugees</li> <li>Veterans</li> <li>NDIS and diversity</li> </ul>	<b>List of actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Building requirements</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible Buildings Program</li> <li>Inclusive Kindergartens Facilities Program</li> <li>Update Building Quality Standards Handbook</li> </ol> </li> </ul>


### Government priority/action

Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
<b>Universal design</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the <b>New Schools 2020 Program</b> which, in addition to universal design being applied to all new schools, includes two new schools using a '<b>Supported Inclusion Hub</b>' model, which will provide an inclusive education environment for a substantial cohort of students with disability within mainstream primary and secondary school settings.</li> </ol>	This initiative will ensure students with disability will be able to attend their local school and is in accordance with the principle that every student has the right to attend their designated neighbourhood government school. Supported Inclusion Hubs further integrate stand-alone special schools into mainstream settings and will provide a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for every student who enrolls.	All students with varying levels of disability.  Teachers that work with students with disability	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
<b>Inclusive schools</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue delivering the <b>Inclusive Schools Fund</b> program. This \$30 million initiative promotes inclusive learning environments and supports the educational and social needs of young people with disability.</li> </ol>	The program helps Victorian government schools implement innovative projects that increase participation and improve outcomes for students with disability by strengthening and developing inclusive learning environments.	All students with disability	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; background-color: #c00000; color: white;">ONGOING</div> </div>

Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
<b>Building requirements</b>	<b>3</b> Continue delivering the <b>Accessible Buildings Program</b> to provide building access to as many students with disability as possible. This initiative includes ramps and handrails, modifications to toilets and showers, and support for those with vision or hearing impairments.	This program improves access to buildings for all students with disability. It meets their needs where accessibility issues occur as a result of deteriorating health conditions, and the program also supports access for employees and visitors.	Students, school staff and parents with injuries or disability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 2 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 3 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 4 YEAR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ONGOING
<b>Building requirements</b>	<b>4</b> Rollout the <b>Inclusive Kindergarten Facilities Program</b> to upgrade early childhood infrastructure and equipment, including playgrounds. This \$6.4 million program provides grants enabling kindergartens to develop safe and more inclusive environments.	This program will increase engagement and improve learning outcomes for children with disability by strengthening inclusive early childhood environments.	Young children with disability or additional needs. Kindergarten teachers who work with children with disability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 2 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 3 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 4 YEAR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ONGOING
<b>Building requirements</b>	<b>5</b> Monitor and revise the <b>Building Quality Standards Handbook</b> as required, and ensure that this recently updated resource is used by architects and builders for all government school building projects. The Handbook incorporates seven universal design principles, and promotes inclusiveness as a key element of infrastructure development.	This Building Quality Standards Handbook ensures that school facilities across Victoria reflect a commitment to remove barriers and promote inclusion.	All school leadership teams involved in school infrastructure projects	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 2 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 3 YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> 4 YEAR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ONGOING



## PILLAR TWO: HEALTH, HOUSING AND WELLBEING

Victorian Government Plan		Department Plan
<b>Pillar</b> 	<b>Health, Housing and Wellbeing</b> I live well	<b>Supporting vulnerable communities</b> The Department recognises the additional disadvantage of vulnerable families and will support children and parents with disability to access the services they need to improve their health, education, economic and social outcomes.
<b>Key priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health services</li> <li>Housing</li> </ul>	The Department will continue to partner with other government departments to support them to deliver the State's key priorities which fall under this pillar.
<b>Action areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health promotion</li> <li>Dual disability</li> <li>Vulnerable children and families</li> <li>Parks access</li> <li>Sport and recreation</li> <li>NDIS transition</li> <li>NDIS and health services</li> <li>NDIS access</li> <li>NDIS and mainstream services</li> <li>Disability workforce</li> </ul>	<b>List of actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NDIS transition</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victorian-approved NDIS provider status</li> <li>TAFE NDIS Action Plans</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Vulnerable children and families</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Childhood Intervention Services and Flexible Support Packages</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>Disability workforce</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course in Introduction to the NDIS</li> <li>Professional development for trainers and assessors</li> <li>Expand the delivery of qualifications in Auslan</li> <li>Support the TAFE Network</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

### Government priority/ action

Government priority/ action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
<b>NDIS transition</b>	<b>1</b> Implement transitioning arrangements to the NDIS, including granting <b>Victorian-approved NDIS provider</b> (VANP) status to organisations and sole providers wanting to deliver early childhood support under the NDIS.	Monitoring the NDIS providers who have been granted VANP status ensures children with disability or developmental delay continue to receive high-quality services and are protected by strong safeguards until the full rollout of the NDIS has been achieved.	NDIS providers who deliver early childhood support to children with disability or developmental delay.	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
<b>NDIS transition</b>	<b>2</b> The TAFE Network will continue working with the Department to develop <b>TAFE NDIS Action Plans</b> to support NDIS implementation in their regions.	This initiative assists TAFEs to provide education and training for the NDIS workforce into the future.	People with disability, Disability workforce	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
<b>Vulnerable children and families</b>	<b>3</b> Continue delivery of <b>Early Childhood Intervention Services and Flexible Support Packages</b> that support children with disability or additional needs and their families. This includes the provision of opportunities that address the current learning, developmental needs and special education. These programs will transition to the NDIS by end of June 2019.	These programs provide parents and families with the knowledge, skills and support to meet the needs of their child and to optimise the child's development and ability to participate in family and community life.	Children with disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #c00000; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
<b>Disability workforce</b>	<b>4</b> Develop and deliver tailored training including the development of a new <b>course in Introduction to the NDIS</b> .	This initiative will assist with providing high-quality workforce training tailored to the needs of the NDIS, and will contribute to attracting new entrants to meet increased workforce demand.	Disability workforce <sup>3</sup>	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>

3. Disability workforce – People that are skilled in providing specialised care for people with disability.


Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
Disability workforce	<b>5</b> Deliver <b>professional development for trainers and assessors</b> in TAFEs, Learn Local organisations and other training providers, to support high-quality training of the NDIS workforce and people with disability more broadly, as part of <i>Keeping our sector strong</i> .	This initiative will maximise the opportunity arising from NDIS implementation for TAFE and training providers, fostering innovative practice while providing safeguards for people with disability.	Disability workforce. People with disability, their families and carers. TAFE and training workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Disability workforce	<b>6</b> <b>Expand the delivery of qualifications in Auslan.</b> (Funding of \$2.5 million through the Regional and Specialist Training Fund.)	This funding will allow Melbourne Polytechnic to use the latest digital technology to deliver certificate and diploma-level Auslan courses to over 400 additional students across Victoria.	Disability workforce. People with disability, their families and carers. TAFE and training workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Disability workforce	<b>7</b> <b>Support the TAFE Network</b> to take a lead role in Victoria's TAFE and Training System to deliver quality training to meet disability sector workforce demand.	This initiative will help TAFEs to tailor and target training delivery to meet industry needs, as well as work with other specialist providers across Victoria.	Disability workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>

## PILLAR THREE: FAIRNESS AND SAFETY

Victorian Government Plan		Department Plan
<b>Pillar</b> 	<b>Fairness and safety</b> I get a fair go	<b>Promoting fairness and safety</b> The Department supports advocacy programs and groups to promote fairness and safety for people with disability, including staff members, children and young people, and their families.
<b>Key priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family violence</li> <li>Disability advocacy</li> </ul>	<b>List of priorities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Disability advocacy</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in partnership with disability organisations</li> <li>Central complaints team</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Action areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguards</li> <li>VCAT accessibility</li> <li>Victoria Police</li> <li>Corrections</li> <li>Assistance dogs</li> </ul>	The Department will continue to partner with other government departments to support them to deliver the State's key priorities which fall under this pillar.

Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
Disability advocacy	<b>1</b> Continue <b>work in partnership with disability organisations</b> to provide advocacy and information services for families of children with disability.	This initiative will continue to support public policy and service system delivery. This will influence improvements in educational outcomes for children with disability through strengthening supports for families and the provision of information and resources.	Families and children with disability or developmental delay. Parents and support employees	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Disability advocacy	<b>2</b> Appointment of a Departmental <b>central complaints team</b> responsible for responding to and resolving complaints, disputes and inquiries from parents, including parents of children with disability.	This initiative seeks tailored assistance from the central complaints office, where appropriate, to support students with disability, improve engagement with internal and external stakeholders including parent associations, professional associations and disability advocates, as part of the complaints resolution process.	Parents and mature students. Department staff involved in complaint handling	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>

## PILLAR FOUR: CONTRIBUTING LIVES

Victorian Government Plan		Department Plan
<b>Pillar</b> 	<b>Contributing lives</b> I contribute	<p><b>Inclusive education</b></p> <p>Inclusive education is part of our vision for Victoria as the Education State. A major reform of the provision of services and support to schools and students with disability is currently underway. This reform aims to transform the culture, policies and practices of Victorian schools to be fully inclusive for all students.</p> <p>Equitable access to lifelong learning and education for people with disability is critical to enabling meaningful participation in society. The Department is committed to establishing Victoria as the Education State – where every Victorian has access to a quality education that supports them to gain knowledge and skills to reach their full potential.</p>
<b>Key priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive education</li> <li>• Employment</li> </ul>	<p>The Department provides a range of ongoing programs and services that provide essential support across early childhood and school years, including Kindergarten Inclusion Support, the Program for Students with Disabilities and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Special Provision Policy.</p> <p><b>List of priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parent/carer support</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Strengthening parent support program</li> <li>2 ParentingNow</li> <li>3 Maternal Child Health autism professional learning</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Early Years</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Early Childhood reform plan: ready for kinder, ready for school, ready for life</li> <li>5 Early Abilities-Based Learning and Education Support</li> <li>6 Professional development grants for Preschool Field Officer Program</li> <li>7 Transition: A Positive Start to School</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>School</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 Students with Disabilities Transport Program</li> <li>9 Inclusive education practices</li> <li>10 Learning difficulties resources</li> <li>11 Professional development in autism</li> <li>12 Functional Needs Assessment Pilot</li> <li>13 Glasses for Kids program</li> <li>14 Outside School Hours Care Demonstration Program</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Skills</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 Skills-First Community Services funding</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Employment</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16 Disability Liaison Officers' network</li> <li>17 Strengthen inclusion for students with disability</li> <li>18 Skills and Jobs Centres and TAFE Victoria's TAFE NDIS Training Campaign</li> <li>19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter</li> <li>20 Disability awareness sessions</li> <li>21 Disability Employment Actions</li> <li>22 Review the Department's recruitment and disability employment policies</li> <li>23 Improve disability confidence</li> <li>24 Develop reporting mechanisms</li> <li>25 Social Procurement Framework</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Action areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice and leadership</li> <li>• NDIS participation</li> <li>• Creative industries</li> <li>• Inclusive tourism</li> </ul>	<p>The Department will continue to partner with other government departments to support them to deliver the State's key priorities which fall under this pillar.</p>

Government priority/ action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
Inclusive education	1 <b>Strengthening parent support program</b> delivered across Victoria to support parents and carers of children with disability or developmental delay.	This program ensures that parents and carers of children with disability or additional needs are supported in providing high-quality care to their children that support their learning and development.	Parents and carers of children aged 0–18 years with disability or developmental delay	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	2 Rollout of <b>ParentingNow</b> provides free parenting support focusing on families with children with disability or developmental delay, using webinar technology.	This initiative increases accessibility of evidence-based parenting support for parents of children with additional needs or developmental delays. It increases parenting skills and confidence in managing their child’s behaviour.	Parents or carers of a child with disability or developmental delay	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	3 Develop and deliver <b>Maternal Child Health autism professional learning</b> that will build nurses’ skills in developmental surveillance for autism in children under three and providing appropriate referrals and support for children with early signs of autism.	This professional development package will increase the early identification of autism in young children and enable them to be referred to access early intervention and supports.	Maternal and Child Health nurses, children with autism, their families and carers	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	4 Continue to implement the <b>Early Childhood reform plan: ready for kinder, ready for school, ready for life.</b>	This reform will assist children to feel included by improving the social and physical environment of the kindergarten to make it more accessible and open to participation. It will enhance children’s capacity for social and emotional regulation.	All three to four-year-old kindergarten children experiencing educational disadvantage	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	5 Rollout of the <b>Early Abilities-Based Learning and Education Support</b> resource that provides a comprehensive set of tools to support the development of individual learning plans for two to five-year-old children with disability or developmental delay.	This initiative will improve early assessment of learning and development for children with disability or developmental delay.	Early childhood professionals who work with children with disability or developmental delay.  All children with disability	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	6 Rollout of <b>professional development grants for Preschool Field Officer Program</b> includes strengths-based training, coaching and capacity-building skills disability-specific training.	This program will improve the capacity of kindergartens to be inclusive and support the attendance and participation of children with additional needs.	Preschool field officers. Kindergartens and early childhood educators. Children with additional needs	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	7 Implementation of the revised <b>Transition: A Positive Start to School</b> initiative and resources including development of resource kit section regarding Equity and Diversity for children requiring enhanced transition. Implementation of the online Transition Learning and Development Statement (TLDS) with a strengthened section for children requiring enhanced transition.	This initiative improves collaboration and consistent sharing of information about children’s learning and development to assist with continuity of learning and support transitions for all children.	Early childhood and school professionals	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>

Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
Inclusive school	8 The <b>Students with Disabilities Transport Program (SDTP)</b> provides travel assistance for eligible students attending their designated government specialist or integrated school. The SDTP is an ongoing program; however, student transport is in scope of NDIS and the SDTP is therefore expected to transition to the NDIS in the future.	The SDTP aims to facilitate substantive equality for students with disability and is an acknowledgement of the additional costs families may incur because their child attends a specialist or integrated school.	Students with disability who attend a designated government specialist or integrated school	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	9 Develop a suite of resources to enhance the understanding of <b>inclusive education practices</b> and human rights knowledge by teachers, as well as providing advice on appropriate supports available to student and their families.	This initiative will enable teachers, parents, and students to develop shared understandings of inclusive practices in schools. It will enable them to identify appropriate adjustments and strategies to support all students' strengths and needs.	School staff, students and their families	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	10 Deliver <b>learning difficulties resources</b> and professional learning for teachers and school leaders. The resources will enhance teacher confidence and competence to identify and respond to the needs of students with learning difficulties.	This initiative will benefit teachers and school leaders with tailored and accessible professional development tools to identify the learning needs of students with learning difficulties. It will increase the knowledge and skills of teachers and carers around learning difficulties.	Teachers, school leaders, students and student support service officers	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	11 Deliver additional <b>professional development in autism</b> to school staff to provide more tailored learning experiences for students with autism. Appoint autism-specialist coaches across the state to guide best practice in supporting students with autism.	This will ensure that schools are better equipped to include and support students with autism.	School staff and students with autism.	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	12 Pilot a new <b>Functional Needs Assessment</b> approach to support students with disability and additional needs by focusing on the strengths and functional needs of these students, and promoting inclusive education practices at an individual, school and system level.	Phase one pilot will contribute to the development of a Functional Needs Assessment for students with disability and additional needs, which aims to increase inclusion of all students in Victorian government schools.	Students with disability and additional needs	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	13 Rollout of <b>Glasses for Kids program</b> which tests children's vision. Free glasses are then given to students who need them.	This program will identify and address vision problems early to ensure students do not fall behind in their learning.	Prep to Year 3 students in 250 targeted schools in disadvantaged areas across Victoria	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
Inclusive education	14 Implement the <b>Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Demonstration Program</b> addressing the gap in OSHC services for children and young people with disability.	This program will ensure that children and young people with disability receive additional support to contribute to improving academic performance, promote physical health, and social and emotional wellbeing.	Children and young people with disability	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>



Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
Inclusive education	15 Rollout of <b>Skills-First Community Services funding</b> specifically targeting initiatives to help TAFEs deliver services to disadvantaged students. Additional support for the <b>Reconnect Program</b> to enable TAFEs and Learn Locals to provide wrap-around services, such as extra literacy, health and accommodation support to high needs learners.	These programs will assess the learning and non-learning needs and career goals of eligible people aged 17 to 64 and develop an agreed development support plan to commence pre-vocational or vocational training and complete an accredited course.	Disadvantaged or vulnerable cohorts in vocational education and training	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Inclusive education	16 TAFEs to continue supporting students with disability, e.g. through the <b>Disability Liaison Officers' network</b> .	This will assist learners with disability with advice and support to engage and succeed in training.	People with disability	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Inclusive education	17 The TAFE Network will work with the Department to apply lessons learned from the Inclusive Education Agenda in schools to <b>strengthen inclusion for students with disability</b> .	TAFEs will provide inclusive environments for staff and students with disability to access and participate in training and employment	People with disability	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Employment	18 <b>Enhance employment pathways</b> and promote rewarding careers in the disability sector to encourage uptake of training and career opportunities by people with disability including through the <b>Skills and Jobs Centres and TAFE Victoria's TAFE NDIS Training Campaign</b> .	Through the NDIS implementation, this initiative promotes opportunities to people with disability to increase participation in training.	Disability workforce, people with disability, their families and carers	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Employment	19 Implement the Department's actions under the <b>Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter</b> to actively demonstrate the Victorian Government's commitment to having an engaged workforce that is physically and mentally safe and healthy.	This initiative will promote positive mental health under the Charter which is closely aligned with our Investing in Our People strategy, Victorian Public Sector values and Victoria's 10-year Mental Health Plan.	All Department workforce	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Employment	20 Rollout <b>disability awareness sessions</b> across the Department's corporate workforce to improve disability confidence to support employees with disability.	This initiative will build capability and disability confidence in recruitment and people management to enhance employment experiences for people with disability across the Department.	VPS workforce	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>
Employment	21 Develop the Department's <b>Disability Employment Actions</b> in partnership with Department employees. This will include actions that will enable the Department to boost the employment of people with disability.	This initiative will focus on the Department-specific actions that will boost the representation of people with disability in the Victorian Public Sector (VPS) workforce, including meeting the targets of 6 per cent by 2020, and 12 per cent by 2025.	VPS workforce	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 2px;"> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div> </div>

Government priority/action	Department activity, initiative or program	Outcome	Target group	Implementation timeframe
<b>Employment</b>	<b>22 Review the Department's recruitment and disability employment policies</b> and make improvements.	This initiative will promote understanding around unconscious bias and support the development of an inclusive workplace culture. It will also include research about the barriers to success for people with disability in the Department and use this evidence to inform change.	VPS workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>23 Improve disability confidence</b> by providing training and information sessions to hiring managers and employees to reduce bias.	This initiative will remove barriers by ensuring that hiring managers understand the strategies they can use in recruitment processes to support candidates with disability, and can access and use reasonable adjustment processes successfully.	VPS workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>24 Develop reporting mechanisms</b> to provide leadership teams with reports on the proportion of people with disability in Department's workforces.	This initiative will improve data collection, monitoring, and reporting of disability employment at the Department with the aim to increase performance against employment targets.	VPS workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>25 Implement the Social Procurement Framework</b> to promote employment of people with disability.	This initiative will help increase employment of people with disability through the Department's procurement and service delivery arrangements.	Suppliers and VPS workforce	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">1 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">2 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">3 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">4 YEAR</div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px;">ONGOING</div>



# CASE STUDIES

## SPECIAL PROVISIONS – SUPPORTING A STUDENT WITH DYSLEXIA

**Matthew has a history of reading and handwriting difficulties. In secondary school, he was diagnosed with dyslexia.**

He was identified for classroom-based interventions in primary school. Early in Year 7, his secondary school organised a meeting involving his parents, teachers and special needs coordinator to discuss suitable classroom arrangements. A range of possible interventions were determined by reviewing clinical evidence from a range of sources including his development and educational history, and diagnostic assessment results.

Matthew's school then contacted the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) about proposed interventions for classroom learning and future school-based assessments. The school wanted to implement these before Matthew enrolled in his Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE).

Matthew is now in Year 11. The school has submitted a formal application for Special Examination Arrangements for his VCE external assessments. The application included the required diagnostic and academic evidence, school observations, and history of provisions used by Matthew in the classroom and for school-based assessments.

The evidence included: a psychologist's report saying Matthew has dyslexia; a Year 10 reading test showing that his comprehension was below average; and essays he completed under test conditions with illegible handwriting which was confirmed by an occupational therapist's report.

The school applied for Matthew to use a computer to address his handwriting issues and an electronic reader for his severe dyslexia. Both provisions were approved by the VCAA and he was also granted extra working time to compensate for his use of assistive technology during external assessments.

The evidence contained in the school's application for Special Examination Arrangements clearly demonstrated Matthew's reading and handwriting difficulties would have a functional impact on his ability to demonstrate his learning during timed VCE external assessments. Having a special provision in place provided Matthew with better opportunities to succeed in his VCE assessment at secondary school.





## STARTING SCHOOL – SUPPORTING A CHILD WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

**Jeri was excited about starting school. It was a major milestone in her life and for her family. However, Jeri's additional needs meant it was a challenging time as well.**

For Jeri, or any child with disability or those experiencing vulnerability, to feel included in her first year of school it was essential that all the professionals involved with her worked with her family to create positive transitions. Recent consultations<sup>4</sup> with families of children with additional learning needs, show that there are several factors that contribute to a positive transition, including:

- information provided by the early childhood service
- primary school teachers who read the 'transition to school' statement and listened to the family
- flexibility to tailor the approach to the child's abilities.

The early childhood teacher worked with Jeri and her family to write a Transition Learning and Development Statement. The statement helped Jeri's new school and outside school hours care program understand her and continue to build on her abilities, to understand her strengths and proactively support Jeri as she settled into school.

The transition statement includes a section for the teacher to complete which identified Jeri's learning and development outcomes and what specific strategies would help her as she settled into school.

For example, it was noted that she would benefit from some adult help, especially at times of distress or confusion in busy, crowded spaces.

The early childhood teacher noted that one successful strategy was to include Jeri in small group discussions. Jeri was introduced to new activities in small groups until she became comfortable.

Since Jeri's first Early ABLES<sup>5</sup> report in April and the fourth term report which mapped her learning and development outcomes to the Victorian curriculum, the indications are that Jeri has improved across all outcomes areas.

Jeri's statement also included a section from Jeri herself together with suggestions from her family. The statement has been invaluable to both the prep teacher and outside school hours educators. It has helped support Jeri settle into school quickly, happily and with confidence.

4. Semann & Slattery, 2015, Transition: A Positive Start to School Initiative – Consultation 2015, Department of Education and Training, Melbourne (page 29)

5. Early ABLES: Early Abilities-Based Learning and Education Support

## EXTRA SUPPORT AT SCHOOL – SUPPORTING A CHILD WITH A VISION IMPAIRMENT

**Samantha is in Year 2 at a local primary school. At school, she likes playing with her friends and her favourite subjects are art and music. She gets along with her teachers and feels supported inside and outside the class.**

Samantha has Leber's congenital amaurosis, which means that she has extremely limited sight in both eyes and is legally blind. She is not able to access printed text or most visuals in pictures or videos, even when they have been modified or enlarged. She needs support to confidently navigate around her school environment, particularly when there are unexpected physical changes in her classroom.

Samantha is supported every week by Sue, a visiting teacher who specialises in supporting students with vision impairments. Sue has helped Samantha read and understand braille, and has supported her classroom teachers to include her in school activities. Sue uses information gathered from a vision assessment made by a paediatric ophthalmologist at the Education Vision Assessment Clinic at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre (SVRC) in order to ensure Samantha is ready and supported in her current and any future environments.

The SVRC supports Samantha's teachers by transcribing her learning materials into braille format. Samantha's teachers send these materials to SVRC in time for them to transcribe and return them to the school. SVRC also provides Samantha with a Braille Note laptop through their technology lending library, so that she can access electronic information via a refreshable braille display. For one day each term, Samantha attends SVRC's 'Dot Power' braille immersion program. Her teachers and parents are invited along to these days, in order to see high-quality braille instruction in action. SVRC also provides a range of other professional learning days each year, including specialist training for Samantha's art, music and physical education teachers.

Samantha faces a different range of challenges compared to other girls her age. However, because of the support she receives, she feels included and can learn, have fun and participate in her school community.



## SUPPORTING AN EMPLOYEE WITH VISION IMPAIRMENT

**Helen has worked at the Department of Education and Training for more than 20 years.**

She is a Service Desk Analyst in the Information Management and Technology Division where she is a valuable member of a team that responds to about 120,000 requests for support each year. Helen has a vision impairment and requires workplace adjustments to support her in her role.

As Helen's needs continue to change, Helen and her manager Christine have an ongoing assessment in place that results in further workplace adjustments and adaptive equipment. These include a high-resolution screen with larger and easier-to-see text. In addition, team members provide Helen with assistance to move around the workplace.

Recently, Helen's team relocated to a new building, which presented navigation and familiarisation challenges for Helen. She and Christine worked together to come up with solutions to help Helen navigate the building. This included the mobility assessor from Guide Dogs' Victoria working with Helen, and increased and continued support from her colleagues.

Helen says her team members are like a family to her and often help with tasks. Christine said the whole team benefitted from Helen's enthusiasm and commitment to her work. The team has also built its confidence in supporting colleagues with disability and have a greater understanding of the challenges that people with disability can face in the workplace. As Helen's needs change, the Department will continue to work with Helen and her team her to ensure she is supported in her role.

People with disability bring a wide range of skills, talents and qualifications to the Department. Helen is a reliable and committed employee who builds strong relationships with her customers and engages her team members. By supporting employees with disability like Helen, the Department is retaining a skilled staff member, reducing staff turnover, recruitment and retraining costs, and contributing to overall organisational diversity.



# CONCLUSION

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**Victorians living with disability are going through a period of significant transition and change. The foundations for a more inclusive state start with education.**

The Department's *Disability Action Plan* lists a series of actions which were developed to ensure the Department is able to deliver inclusive education for all Victorian children and young people. Education is the pathway to participation in civic processes and the economy and the Department has developed actions to ensure Victorians with disability can and do contribute.

# GLOSSARY

Acronyms	What it means in the plan
<b>Early ABLES</b>	Early Abilities-Based Learning and Education Support
<b>Auslan</b>	Australian sign language
<b>Department</b>	Department of Education and Training
<b>DHH</b>	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
<b>MCH</b>	Maternal and child health
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>OSHC</b>	Outside school hours care, which includes before school care, after school care and holiday programs
<b>PSD</b>	Program for Students with Disabilities
<b>SVRC</b>	Statewide Vision Resource Centre
<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and further education
<b>VANP</b>	Victorian Approved NDIS Provider
<b>VCAA</b>	Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
<b>VCE</b>	Victorian Certificate of Education
<b>VDEI</b>	Victorian Deaf Education Institute

