

Disability Action Plan 2013–15

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
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Foreword

I take great pleasure in presenting VicHealth's Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2013–15.

We know that Victorians with a disability are more likely to self-report poor health, live in poverty or insecure housing, and experience difficulties accessing employment and appropriate health care. Yet people with a disability are rarely identified as a priority population group in public health policy and practice.

VicHealth's DAP is one of a number of strategies the organisation has implemented to prioritise the health of Victorians with a disability. VicHealth has a long history of fostering inclusion and engagement across Victorian communities and this plan continues to build on our earlier achievements.

Many of the barriers to better health experienced by Victorians with a disability are not due to physical or intellectual limitations, but are instead due to the attitudes, practices and structures in society that are, in fact, disabling. Changes to these societal factors will prevent the disadvantage that results in unequal health outcomes. For VicHealth, this starts with our own practice.

As part of the DAP we have already made a series of building amendments, policy changes and communications modifications to ensure we are truly 'walking the talk' and living the VicHealth values. The following plan provides an overview of the remaining actions VicHealth will undertake over the coming months and years to ensure our organisation and culture is inclusive to all staff, visitors and stakeholders.

VicHealth has identified five Key Outcome Areas where we can continue to reduce barriers and make advancements, therefore not only improving the health of our employees and visitors but also assisting in preventing discrimination and future health problems. These outcome areas are consistent with the legislative requirements of a DAP as stipulated in the *Disability Act 2006* (Vic).

VicHealth's Key Outcome Areas are:

1. accessible facilities
2. accessible and inclusive information and communication
3. staff awareness
4. opportunities to obtain and maintain employment
5. monitoring and evaluation.

I would like to thank all external partners and stakeholders who were consulted during the development of the DAP for their time and contribution. VicHealth will monitor our progress against this plan as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure VicHealth is an inclusive and welcoming workplace and agency for all Victorians.



Jerril Rechter
CEO, VicHealth

About VicHealth

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) is an independent statutory authority that promotes the health of all Victorians. VicHealth's mission is to build the capabilities of organisations, communities and individuals in ways that:

- change social, economic, cultural and physical environments to improve health for all Victorians
- strengthen the understanding and the skills of individuals in ways that support their efforts to achieve and maintain health.

To achieve this mission VicHealth integrates funding activities and research and builds opportunities for all Victorians to be informed, learn new skills and have greater access to activities and resources that promote optimal health.

Working in partnership with governments, organisations, communities and individuals from a broad range of sectors, VicHealth's focus is on health promotion and primary prevention of non-communicable diseases. Fundamental to VicHealth's success is a long and proud history of reducing barriers to better health for all Victorians regardless of ethnicity, age, gender or (dis)ability.

More information on VicHealth's investments and health promotion activities can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au.

Background to the VicHealth Disability Action Plan

VicHealth undertook the development of the Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2013–15 to ensure people with a disability have the same fundamental rights as any other Victorian when accessing and engaging with the organisation. The DAP ensures that the principles of equity and inclusivity are central to VicHealth's practice by creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all employees, partner agencies and stakeholders.

Under the Victorian Disability Act, all public bodies including VicHealth are legislatively required to develop a DAP and report on the plan in their annual report. Best practice stipulates that all plans are lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

It is a requirement of section 38 of the Act that a Disability Action Plan is prepared for the purpose of:

- a) reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- b) reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- c) promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- d) achieving tangible changes in attitude and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

Our DAP is a central VicHealth policy that ensures we meet our legal requirements under the Disability Act as a public sector body. Our organisation is committed to the implementation and ongoing monitoring of this plan. VicHealth has a proud and strong history of supporting Victorians with a disability through program funding streams and advocacy. This plan will continue to formally strengthen internal policies and practices.

VicHealth's DAP was developed between May and December 2012 and involved a range of internal and external consultations. Expert consultants were contracted throughout the development of the plan to assist in the auditing of VicHealth policies, procedures and building accessibility.

In early 2013 the VicHealth Executive Management team met to endorse VicHealth's DAP. Following this endorsement, the plan was presented to the VicHealth Board. The plan was formally implemented with a staff launch in early 2013.

As a funding and partnering organisation, VicHealth is guided by the *VicHealth Action Agenda for Health Promotion*. This Disability Action Plan does not involve an exploration, evaluation or recommendations regarding VicHealth's role within the wider disability sector, its funding approaches or the health promotion strategies being implemented to reduce the burden of disease experienced by Victorians with a disability.

Defining disability

According to the Victorian Disability Act, a person with a 'disability' has an impairment that may be intellectual, sensory, physical, neurological or psychological, or an acquired brain injury. To be considered a disability, the impairment must have persisted for more than six months and cause a substantially reduced capacity in at least one area of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability, which Australia ratified in 2008, defines disability as any 'long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder ... [a person's] ... full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'. This is commonly referred to as the social model of disability. VicHealth's DAP and associated work are guided by the social model of health and the Disability Act.

VicHealth's Disability Action Plan Advisory Group

To ensure organisation-wide input and support for the DAP within VicHealth, an advisory group was convened. This group consisted of representatives from each unit across the organisation, a range of seniority (including Executive Management), and employees with and without a disability (see Figure 1).

The group was ultimately responsible for reporting to the Executive Management team. This was achieved through the inclusion of the Manager–Health Equity and the Executive

Manager–Finance and Corporate Support. The group was chaired and the project centrally managed by the Senior Project Officer–Health Equity.

During the early stages of development, experts from the Office for Disability were requested to provide input to the DAP project plan. Other key sector disability agencies were also engaged to ensure the plan was thoroughly reviewed and met sectoral expectations.

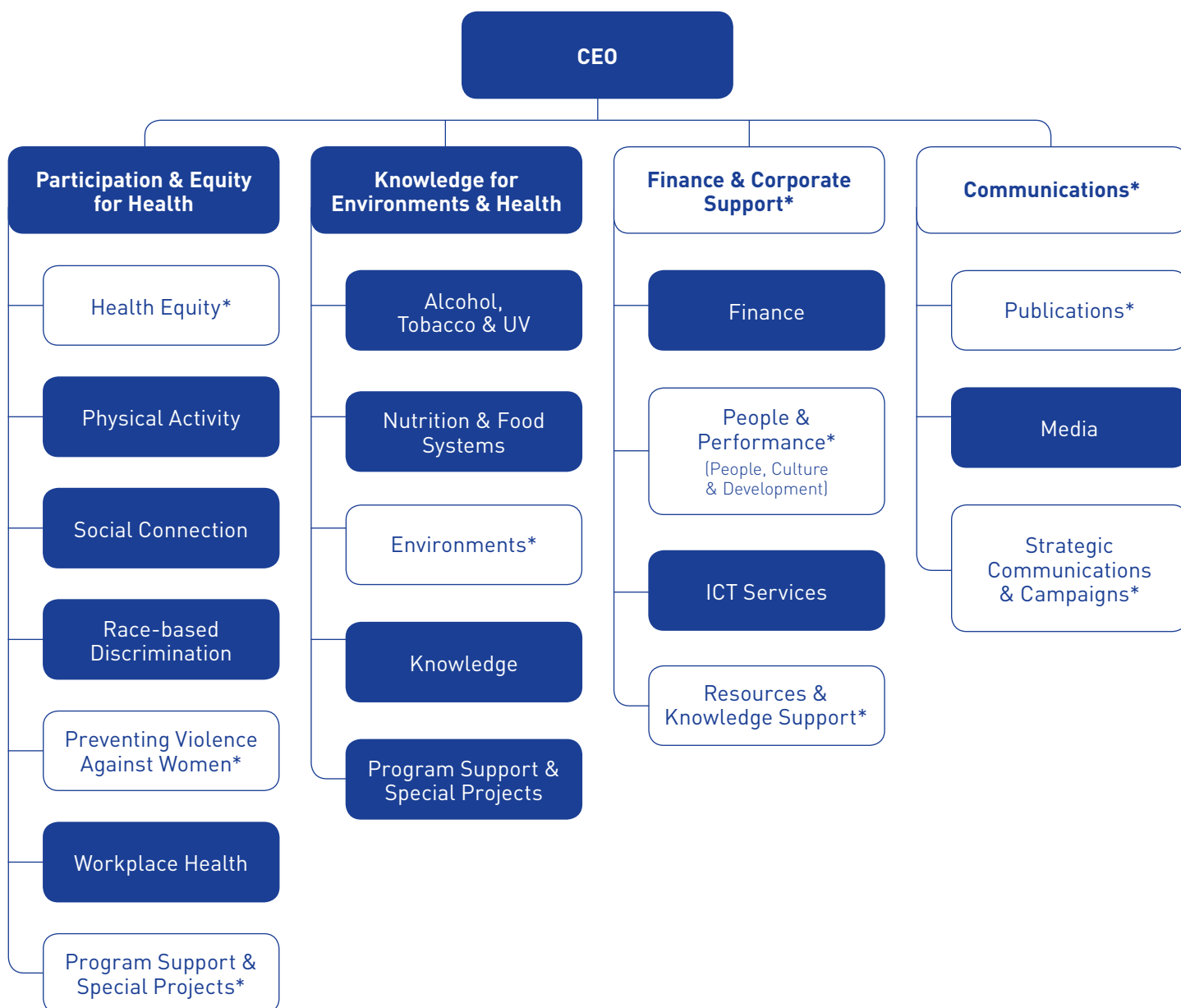


Figure 1. VicHealth's organisational chart as at time of writing [*asterisks indicate teams or individuals represented in the DAP 2013–15 Advisory Group]

Initial achievements

Audits and reviews

In developing the Disability Action Plan 2013–15, VicHealth undertook several actions to identify barriers to accessibility and participation. These included a building access audit, human resources and employment policy review, and website audit and review.

Many barriers were immediately addressed:

- Visual indication glazing was fitted to all tenancy entrances, exits and internal panels.
- Walls and doors were repainted to ensure a sufficient luminance contrast between surfaces.
- Adjustable electric workstations were provided to a cohort of staff.
- Internal fittings such as door handles and security entry/exit keypads were moved and refitted.
- Appropriate seating was provided in the foyer and meeting rooms.
- Modifications were made to the VicHealth reception desk.
- Staff were surveyed about their attitudes towards employees with a disability.

Building access audit

The building access auditor identified 30 accessibility issues within the existing VicHealth tenancy and building common areas. These issues were categorised by the DAP Advisory Group into the following categories:

- short-term issues requiring immediate action (6)
- mid-term issues requiring quotes and possible action (6)
- long-term and high-cost issues requiring quotes and budget approval from the VicHealth Board (10)
- issues requiring action from the landlord (8).

All issues have been included as actions in Key Outcome Area 1 (page 11). This shows indicative timelines, responsibility and monitoring mechanisms for this outcome area.

Employment policies review

An independent consultant was appointed to review 10 key human resources policies. Based on this review, the consultant made 42 recommendations. Of these, 40 recommendations were small wording amendments that did not change the scope or purpose of existing policies. The two additional recommendations included the development of a workplace adjustment policy and recruitment and selection guidelines. All 42 recommendations were endorsed by the DAP Advisory Group.

Website review

An accessibility audit of the corporate website (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au) was commissioned in early 2012. The site (version as at 8 March 2012) was tested against the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.0 Level AA using a combination of manual and automated testing. While compliance to WCAG is not mandatory or a legal requirement for VicHealth, the DAP Advisory Group recommended that accessibility issues are examined for actions.

The audit of the website, focusing on its functionality and content, identified 143 Levels A and AA errors in total. The identified errors were classified into four types:

- critical errors (1)
- high-level errors (74)
- medium-level errors (26)
- low-level errors (42).

Classification was based on frequency of use and importance of features.

Identified issues have been included as actions in Key Outcome Area 2 (page 12). This shows indicative timelines, responsibility and monitoring mechanisms for this outcome area.

Resources and publications

Promoting the inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community is a legal requirement under the Disability Act. VicHealth has a range of publications and resources under development or publicly available that promote participation and inclusion. These include:

- a research summary describing the inequalities in health that currently exist for Victorians with a disability (released September 2012)
- a health promotion framework to guide future investments in health promotion, aimed to reduce health inequalities experienced by people with a disability (to be released mid-2013)
- an evidence-based intervention resource, designed to support policy makers and cross-sector practitioners in developing and implementing activities to reduce health inequalities experienced by people with a disability (to be released mid-2013)
- the *Everyone Wins* resource, designed to assist six funded State Sporting Associations to bring about sustainable organisational change that will increase participation of people with a disability in all roles and at all levels in their sport (released September 2011).

Key outcome areas

Five broad Key Outcome Areas and associated actions were identified as part of the VicHealth DAP 2013–15. All actions have been included in the relevant staff workplans to ensure actions are completed. In total, 28 actions are proposed. Each of these actions can be categorised within one of three strategies. Figure 2 presents the three strategies VicHealth will implement to reduce remaining barriers for people with a disability.



Figure 2. Strategies to remove potential barriers for people with a disability

Outcome Area 1 – Accessible facilities (Partially achieved)

Goal: All programs, services, events and exhibitions, onsite and online, are delivered in ways that meet access requirements of people with a disability.

Action number and type	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Desired outcome
1. Building access	Short-term access barriers to be addressed	Manager–Resources and Knowledge Support (RKS)	January–June 2013 Completed	The building is consistently and easily accessed by all staff, visitors and contractors
2. Building access	Mid-term access barriers to be quoted	Manager–RKS	January–June 2013 Completed	All mid-term access barriers identified in the building accessibility report audit are quoted
3. Building access	Mid-term access barriers to be addressed on a case-by-case basis in relation to affordability	Manager–RKS Executive Manager–Finance and Corporate Support (FCS)	Forecast September 2013 Partially completed	All affordable mid-term barriers to building access are removed
4. Building access	All high-cost building modifications to be quoted	Manager–RKS Executive Manager–FCS Senior Project Officer (SPO)–Health Equity	Forecast September 2013 Not commenced	All high-cost building modifications are quoted and a budget submission/Board paper is submitted to the Board and Executive Management team for consideration Note: to be assessed by Board in August 2013
5. Building access	A map showing building access points and public transport options to be posted in accessible formats on the VicHealth corporate website	Manager–Publications	January–June 2013 Completed	The website map is utilised by VicHealth visitors, staff and contractors to improve access
6. Building access	A checklist for accessibility compliance when booking external facilities to be developed	Manager–Communications	September 2013 Partially completed	Checklist is developed and approved for use by staff
7. Building access	Monitoring is put in place to ensure accessibility checklist is utilised by staff	Manager–Communications	August 2014	Checklist is disseminated to staff and usage monitored by the PCD Advisor
8. Programs and events accessibility	Design and implement an RSVP (response) system for attendees to VicHealth workshops, forums and training events to gauge accessibility needs and access issues	Manager–Health Equity	September 2013 Not commenced	RSVP system is designed, implemented and utilised by staff

Outcome Area 2 – Accessible and inclusive information and communications (Partially achieved)

Goal: Information and communication about programs and services are available in a user-friendly and accessible format for people with a disability, especially those with a visual impairment.

Action number and type	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Desired outcome
9. Accessible information	Address the one critical error (videos) identified	Manager–Publications	April 2013 Completed	All critical errors are removed
10. Accessible information	Address the 63 high Level A errors (images, tables and headings) identified	Manager–Publications	August 2013	All high Level A errors are removed Note: website refresh may eliminate some of these errors
11. Accessible information	Address the 20 medium Level A errors (style sheets) identified	Manager–Publications	December 2013 Partially completed	All medium Level A errors are removed Note: website refresh may eliminate some of these errors
12. Accessible information	Address the 30 low Level A errors (captions, titles and keyboard focus) identified	Manager–Publications	December 2013 Partially completed	All low Level A errors are removed Note: website refresh may eliminate some of these errors
13. Accessible information	Relevant SPOs and Managers are trained in writing for the website	People, Culture and Development (PCD) Advisor	July 2013 Completed	75% of SPOs and Managers complete training Note: training has been completed for existing staff. Where applicable, new staff will be provided training as part of their on-the-job training
14. Accessible information	Conduct an audit of all website functionalities (e.g. IGAM and Review Connect) that were not included in the original audit	Manager–Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	August 2013 Not commenced	Barriers are identified and addressed
15. Accessible information	Apply relevant website accessibility audit findings to the organisational intranet	Manager–ICT Manager–RKS	December 2013 Not commenced	Intranet is updated and accessible to all staff. Based on principles from the website audit, some modifications to the intranet have been implemented
16. Accessible information	Audit and apply findings to all external-facing VicHealth project websites	Manager–ICT	December 2013 Not commenced	All external-facing VicHealth websites are accessible

(Outcome Area 2 continued)

17. Accessible information	Audit and apply findings to all internal electronic systems (e.g. GIFTS and iPRS)	Manager-ICT	December 2013 Not commenced	All internal systems are accessible
18. Accessible communications	Provide support material to public-speaking representatives on using Auslan interpreters	PCD Advisor Manager-Health Equity	Forecast August 2013 Not commenced	Representative speaking staff are skilled at using interpreters

Outcome Area 3 – Staff attitudes and awareness (Partially achieved)

Goal: All staff are aware of the Disability Action Plan 2013–15 and their responsibilities in promoting VicHealth as an organisation inclusive of people with a disability.

Action number and type	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Desired outcome
19. Inclusive workplace	Educate staff in their responsibilities under the DAP 2013–15 and Disability Act	PCD Advisor SPO-Health Equity	Ongoing sessions commencing December 2013 Partially commenced	85% of staff have a basic understanding of their responsibilities under the DAP and Disability Act
20. Inclusive workplace	Investigate staff training needs and develop a staff training strategy for disability inclusivity	PCD Advisor	July 2013 Partially commenced	Staff training needs are identified and an appropriate training strategy is developed and implemented Note: currently investigating adding this to the model of workplace responsibility training
21. Inclusive workplace	Deliver disability awareness training to staff	PCD Advisor	Ongoing sessions commencing December 2013 Not commenced	85% of staff have a basic understanding of disability awareness issues including indirect discrimination and inclusive practice Note: currently investigating the possibility of using an all-staff meeting for this training
22. Inclusive workplace	Staff are surveyed regarding their attitude towards employees with a disability	PCD Advisor SPO-Health Equity	April 2013, 2014, 2015	The staff attitude survey is completed by more than 60% of staff with results indicating a positive shift in staff attitudes

Outcome Area 4 – Opportunities to obtain and maintain employment for people with a disability (Partially achieved)

Goal: Diversity in employment is encouraged and actively facilitated through the provision of equitable employment opportunities for people with a disability.

Action number and type	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Desired outcome
23. Inclusive employment	Policies related to human resources and employment to be updated with a disability focus	PCD Advisor	April 2013 Completed	Human resources and employment policies have been updated with an inclusivity and accessibility focus
24. Inclusive employment	Identify appropriate advertising networks for new positions that attract applicants with and without a disability	PCD Advisor	Forecast September 2013 Partially completed	New employees are recruited through disability networks and usual channels
25. Inclusive employment	Staff involved in recruitment and interviewing are trained in inclusive recruitment standards and issues relating to disclosure of disability	PCD Advisor	June 2013 and ongoing Completed	All managers have an understanding of their responsibilities regarding inclusive interviewing and disclosure Note: PCD staff are present in all employment interviews to ensure standards are maintained
26. Inclusive employment	Managers are trained in best practice regarding working with employees with a disability	PCD Advisor Manager– Health Equity	June 2013 and ongoing Not commenced	All employees with a disability are adequately supported by their manager and treated inclusively Note: initial training to be arranged

Outcome Area 5 – Monitoring and evaluation (Achieved)

Goal: The Disability Action Plan 2013–15 is monitored, annually reviewed and adjusted according to organisational needs.

Action number and type	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Desired outcome
27. Monitoring and consultation	DAP 2013–15 is annually reviewed against organisational needs	Executive Manager–FCS	May 2013, 2014, 2015 Completed for 2013	Any inconsistencies or omissions in the DAP 2013–15 are identified and addressed
28. Monitoring and consultation	If deemed necessary, the DAP 2013–15 is updated	Executive Manager–FCS	May 2013, 2014, 2015 Completed for 2013	The DAP 2013–15 is updated to best reflect the needs of people with a disability and VicHealth’s organisational changes Note: to be updated

Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that the VicHealth Disability Action Plan is adequately monitored, a Monitoring and Evaluation group has been established. This group consists of:

- Executive Manager–Finance and Corporate Support (chair and convener)
- Executive Manager–Communications
- Manager–Knowledge for Health
- Manager–Health Equity.

This group will meet annually in early May. It will be responsible for reporting against the progress of the Key Outcome Areas under the VicHealth DAP.

Reporting will take two forms:

- reporting directly to the Executive Management team, using the DAP reporting template, presenting findings and potentially a report to staff
- reporting on the DAP in VicHealth’s annual report, as stipulated in the Disability Act.



Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
PO Box 154 Carlton South 3053 Australia
T. +61 3 9667 1333 F. +61 3 9667 1375
vichealth@vichealth.vic.gov.au
www.vichealth.vic.gov.au

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