

31 March 2021

Member briefing - State Disability Plan

On 3 December 2020 the Victorian Government announced they were relaunching public engagement for a consultation on the new State Disability Plan, which had been paused in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The Victorian Government first released a consultation paper to help make the next state disability plan on 3 December 2019, which was intended to last from 2021 to 2024. Work on the new plan was paused in March 2020 to allow government and communities to focus on the health and wellbeing of people with disability due to COVID-19, although engagement with disability advocates continued through this period. Work on the latest iteration of the plan restarted on 3 December 2020, with a new consultation topic added and the plan's length extended to 2025.

The current plan, *Absolutely Everyone: State Disability Plan 2017-2020*, will remain in place whilst development of the new plan is underway. The VHA, on behalf of members, developed a submission in 2016 for the consultation on this previous plan.

Summary

The [consultation paper](#) presents ideas for the next plan and asks questions to inform its improvement. Initially launched in December 2019, the consultation paper has 6 topics of focus with proposed ideas for the plan:

- Topic 1: Improving how we describe disability and disability inclusion in the next plan
 - The consultation paper proposes using a social model of disability and utilising a human rights-based approach, with input asked on what the definition of disability should be. A social model of disability argues that disability does not result directly from a person's visible or invisible impairments but, instead, results from social attitudes and environments that exclude people based on these real or perceived impairments.
- Topic 2: Finding better ways to include people with disability in making the next plan
 - This section outlines ways in which the process will draw on and reflect the perspectives of people with disability, including that greater engagement is required with more marginalised groups and the need for codesign of the plan. The questions focus on whether groups of people and their perspectives are being missed, what can be done to support engagement, and what codesign approaches would suit the next Plan.
- Topic 3: Strengthening the state disability plan outcomes framework
 - The focus is on extending and strengthening the outcomes framework introduced in the last plan, including a proposal to add new outcomes around intimate lives, and pride and recognition.
- Topic 4: Introducing overarching approaches to strengthen government commitments under the new plan
 - This section aims to better connect plan commitments and outcomes, proposing two overarching guiding approaches of 'Community attitudes' and 'Universal design'. This will result in all commitments being tested against the extent to which they contribute to community attitudes and reflect universal design principles, which should ensure a consistent approach to action across government for the next state disability plan. The consultation invites feedback on this idea and any broader input on what the next plan requires to strengthen design and accountability.
- Topic 5: Strengthening the NDIS and mainstream interface
 - Following the full roll-out of the NDIS, the focus needs to be on ensuring that Victorians do not fall between the cracks in and between service systems and that it delivers value for money for

Victorians. The NDIS mainstream interface will increasingly come within the scope of future state disability plans, so the next State Disability Plan will be a primary mechanism for outlining this interface and the commitments required. The consultation requests feedback on any potential gaps and how to ensure mainstream service are inclusive.

- Topic 6: Strengthening disability inclusion under the Disability Act 2006
 - The consultation paper articulates the need to undertake a broader review of the Act, focusing on Victoria's role in disability beyond the transition to the NDIS. The review will consider the whole of the Act but is expected to explore in detail how the Act approaches a range of issues including: the promotion of the social, civic and economic inclusion and participation of people with disability; Victoria's responsibilities to provide and fund disability services; and the framework for regulating organisations that deliver services to Victorians with disability. The paper invites feedback on areas the review should explore, and how the Act should change.

The consultation has been altered following the pandemic, including a new topic on 'Responding to Coronavirus (COVID-19)'. A [supplementary consultation paper](#) has been developed which asks for input on experiences during the pandemic. Engagement with people with disability during the pandemic identified some key issues, including:

- accessible and timely public health and emergency communications
- safe and accessible services, including health and disability services
- access to food and essential supplies
- impacts on economic participation and employment opportunities
- increased isolation.

Next steps

The Victorian Government invites input on both the original and supplementary consultation papers. Submissions for the State Disability Plan remain open until 30 April 2021 and we invite members to provide their input to a VHA response.

A series of forums are being held by the Victorian Government in March – April 2021, with more details available [here](#), including forums on regional and rural experiences and health, housing and wellbeing experiences.



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