



# Disability Action and Inclusion Plan

Parliament of Victoria



# Introduction

Parliament House is often referred to as “the people’s building”, a place where everyone is welcome, be it for work, to watch democracy in action, engage in community events or to learn about the politics and history of our great state. However, the vagaries of 19<sup>th</sup> century Roman and Greek revival architecture has meant that Parliament House is not always as accessible to people with disability as we would like.

While Parliament House is an architecturally striking building, its imposing front steps, elaborate and winding stair cases and Westminster style chambers can make the building an intimidating or unfriendly prospect for people with disability. While many physical and philosophical improvements have been made over many years to make the Parliament more accessible and inclusive, there is still more to be done.

The Parliament of Victoria strives and aspires to be proactive to the needs of people with disability. Our Disability Action and Inclusion Plan is another step we have taken to assist in making the people’s building more accessible and inclusive. When the Plan was initially envisioned, those given the task of designing it were given the brief to design a plan “to meet obligations under existing legislation, be practical and achievable and promote the Parliament of Victoria as a disability friendly and inclusive organisation.” We believe the plan that has been delivered accomplishes this brief.

The Plan details several actions to be implemented that will assist the Parliament in becoming more accessible to people with disability across four strategic priorities:

1. Enhancing the accessibility of Parliament’s built environment.
2. Providing opportunities for all people to access and engage in Parliament events, public hearings, programs and services.
3. Ensuring Parliament communications and information are accessible to all.
4. Building disability awareness and confidence in Parliament employees.

Over the next three years it will be the responsibility of staff across several of the Parliament’s business units to ensure that these actions are completed. Their work will require collaboration across business units and consultation with experts from outside of our organization. We have every confidence that our people can deliver these actions.

We would like to thank all of those who have been involved in the development of our Disability Action and Inclusion Plan. This includes the Parliament’s 2018 Leadership Program cohort, the internal working group and our external reference panel which has been such a valuable resource of advice, expertise and encouragement.

If you have any questions about the Plan or suggestions as to how we can make the Parliament of Victoria a more accessible and inclusive place for all people with a disability, please use the [disabilityaccess@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:disabilityaccess@parliament.vic.gov.au) email address to contact one of our dedicated team.

As Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and President of the Legislative Council it is our pleasure to endorse the Parliament of Victoria’s Disability Action and Inclusion Plan.

**Hon Colin Brooks**  
**Speaker of the Legislative Assembly**

**Hon Nazih Elasmr**  
**President of the Legislative Council**

# Disability accessibility and inclusion

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states:

**Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes disability that:

- presently exists
- previously existed but no longer exists
- may exist in the future
- is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not).

The Parliament of Victoria (PoV) aspires to be an organisation that is accessible and inclusive to all members of the community, particularly those with a disability, and to be proactive to their needs. This plan ensures the social inclusion of all our community members and sets out Parliament's strategy to proactively support and engage with people with disability to participate in public life and enjoy social and economic inclusion.

The DAIP has been developed by a working group of dedicated PoV employees who are passionate about inclusion and accessibility. They have consulted widely with stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation to develop this plan to enhance the participation of people with disability with Parliament and Parliamentary services.

Significantly, our employees have been assisted by an external reference panel consisting of representatives from a variety of disability support organisations. They have been able to share their knowledge and experience to ensure our plan is as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. These organisations include:

- Australian Network on Disability
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit
- Office for Disability
- Scope
- Victorian Public Sector Commission (Disability Workforce and Engagement Branch)
- Voice at the Table

## Strategic priorities

Those involved in the development of our DAIP have identified the following priorities of the plan:

- Improve the physical accessibility of Parliament to people with disability
- Train and develop Parliamentary employees to be confident in their ability to support people with disability accessing Parliament and public resources
- Promote employment opportunities for people with disability to work at Parliament

These priorities will be achieved through several projected actions to be completed over a three-year period. Various PoV work units will assist in the completion of these tasks with assistance from the internal working group and external reference panel. This plan of actions is not exhaustive and will require regular ongoing review and improvement to ensure the actions are relevant and compliant with legislation. A range of accessibility and inclusion audits will be undertaken throughout the life of this plan to identify and determine the ongoing accessibility and inclusion requirements for people with disability at Parliament.

The proposed actions are listed under four strategic priorities.

1



## People Operations—employment, adjustments, training and culture

- Encourage and support existing employees who may wish to share information regarding a permanent or temporary disability
- Promote awareness of accessibility through PoV internal communication channels
- Compulsory employee training to build disability awareness
- Enlist PoV senior staff as DAIP allies or champions
- Promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities and review systems to ensure recruitment is accessible and inclusive
- Identify opportunities for implementing pathways to employment at PoV for people with disability

2



## Built environment, systems and infrastructure

- Clear signage and support for people with disability accessing the Parliamentary Precinct
- Identify barriers to the Parliamentary Precinct and develop a plan to remove or reduce these barriers

3



## Service provisions—being accessible to visitors

- Design and deliver accessible tours as part of the broader tours program in consultation with people with disability
- Develop and promote disability accessible resources
- Promote accessible communications
- Actively engage with and support visitors and guests with disability to access Parliament

4



## Community engagement—consultations, social media and accessible content

- Ensure publications, media, policies and procedures are accessible and produced in accessible formats
- Work towards Communication Access Symbol accreditation for Parliamentary Precinct

# Monitoring our progress

How will Parliament measure the progress of this action plan?

1. All departments across Parliament will have their own annual plans
2. Parliament will engage with the Australian Network on Disability to advise and provide ongoing guidance to oversee implementing of the plan.
3. Dedicated parliamentary employees made up by the parliamentary management group, cross-departmental working group and responsible business unit managers will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the plan and ensuring the actions within this plan are implemented; and sustainable.
4. Parliament will commit to funding the initiatives within this plan to ensure all action items are implemented wherever possible.
5. The responsible parliamentary employees will continue to include and engage with an external reference panel made up of community disability advocates for the life of the plan serving as community champions of the plan to foster greater community engagement and employee confidence

If you have any questions about the Parliament's Disability Action and Inclusion Plan, please email [disabilityaccess@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:disabilityaccess@parliament.vic.gov.au)