

Disability Action Plan

2024-2028





Latrobe Regional Health acknowledges the Gunai Kurnai and Bunurong peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands on which our health services are situated.

We pay our respect to Elders past and present and to young and emerging leaders.

We acknowledge the strength, resilience and survival of Aboriginal people and are committed to providing an accessible and culturally responsive service that works in partnership with community members for better health outcomes.

We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognise and respect their connection to their ancestral lands.



Our vision

Better care, everywhere for everyone

At Latrobe Regional Health, the term 'better' symbolises not just the experience and outcome of care, but also the systems of healthcare that support our staff and our patients.

Our values

Person-centred care

We put our patients first in our care, planning and decision-making.

Excellence

We aim high to ensure our community receives timely and relevant care.

Working together

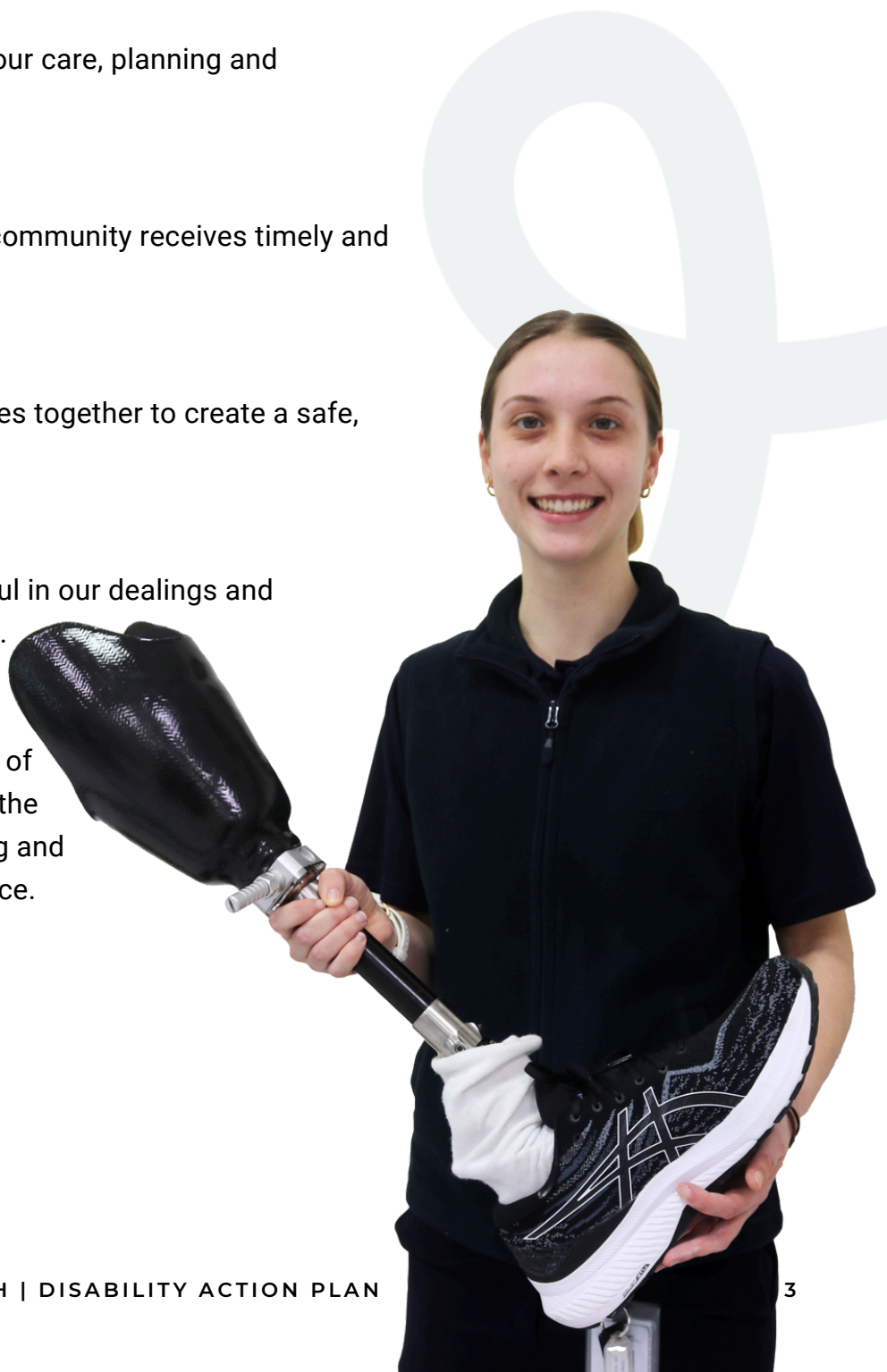
We will respond to challenges together to create a safe, quality health service.

Integrity

We are honest and respectful in our dealings and accountable for what we do.

Respect

We value the diverse voices of our consumers and staff in the creation of a fair, welcoming and compassionate health service.



Where our plan fits

The Latrobe Regional Health Disability Action Plan (2024-2026) is our contribution to the many laws and policies which uphold and protect the rights of people with disability. These frameworks have guided development of our plan and place it in the context of international, national and state priorities and progress.

International

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

National

- Australia's disability strategy (2021–2031)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Victorian

- Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026)
- Disability Act 2006
- The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Latrobe Regional Health

- Disability Action Plan (2024-2026)
- Diversity and Inclusivity Action Plan (2024-2026)
- Gender Equality Action Plan (2021-2025)
- Latrobe Regional Health Strategic Plan (2024-2028)
- LRH Annual Report 2024

Our story

Latrobe Regional Health (LRH) is recognised as the regional provider of specialist health services in Gippsland.

We deliver cardiac care, surgery, medical, renal, emergency and intensive care, aged care, women's and children's services, pharmacy, allied health and rehabilitation. Medical and radiation oncology are offered by the Gippsland Cancer Care Centre on site. Specialist outpatient services are provided by the LRH Consulting Suites. LRH also has a growing research and clinical trials program.

We offer inpatient care to people experiencing mental illness and community mental health services extend across the Latrobe Valley, Sale, Bairnsdale, Yarram, Orbost, Warragul and Wonthaggi. Our Macalister Unit has 10 acute beds for older people with complex needs relating to mental illness as well as 10 nursing home beds.

LRH is a teaching hospital that is closely affiliated with Monash University's School of Rural Health and Federation University. We are one of Gippsland's largest employers, providing job opportunities in a range of sectors including clinical, medical, administration, catering and cleaning.



Message from the Chief Executive

Latrobe Regional Health (LRH) is pleased to present the Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2024-2026.

This plan was produced with the insight and experience of people who live with a disability, key stakeholders and our own staff.

It encompasses a variety of perspectives and plans to meet the needs of our diverse community and improve the accessibility and services we provide to achieve meaningful outcomes for all people, including those with a disability.

It will also contribute to LRH's goal to be an employer of choice and to demonstrate our commitment to being a Disability Aware health provider.

The DAP contains goals and strategies which will deliver meaningful improvements in the health outcomes and experiences of our people engaged with our service. It also focuses on improving the experiences of our staff who have or care for someone with a disability.

LRH's aim for this plan is to be realistic, achievable, and measurable, and we will assess our progress against the plan annually to ensure that we are on track to meet our goals.

Don McRae
Chief Executive
Latrobe Regional Health
December 2024



About disability

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* defines disability as:

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

LRH recognises the human rights and inherent value of each person.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* it is against the law to discriminate on the grounds of disability. People with disabilities often face both physical and attitudinal barriers to accessing goods and services and participating in the community. It is also highlighted that people with disabilities are twice as likely to experience family violence.

Section 38 of the *Victorian Disability Act 2006* makes it a legal requirement for public sector bodies to develop Disability Action Plans (DAPs). It also requires that public sector bodies report on the implementation of their DAP in their annual report.

Under this Act the Victorian Government has identified four outcomes that a DAP should address:

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

This DAP outlines LRH's approach to reducing physical and attitudinal barriers to community members, our patients and consumers, visitors, employees and prospective employees with a disability to ensure they have equal access to our services, employment and community events.

Development of the Disability Action Plan

The LRH Diversity and Inclusion Committee drives the development and review of the Disability Action Plan (DAP). The committee includes community stakeholders as well as staff representatives from multiple disciplines and roles at all levels of the organisation.

In February 2019, a group of stakeholders was appointed to conduct an environmental access audit of the LRH main campus. The aim was to identify any barriers to people with a disability seeking to use our services or facilities.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Victoria Hospital Environmental Audit Tool (HEAT) was used to assess the accessibility of the site and took into account the needs of people with a physical disability, vision impairment or blindness, hearing and cognitive impairments. A summary report of the HEAT audit was prepared in March 2019 which included a number of recommendations. This was subsequently endorsed by LRH's Chief Operating Officer and recommended actions form part of this DAP.

The DAP outlines LRH's approach to implementing initiatives which improve access to our services and health information and the experience of using our facilities.

We consider this plan to be a 'living document' which may be amended or updated according to feedback or progress over the next three years.

Priorities and commitments

The priority areas included within this DAP are:

- **Access:** Reducing barriers to people with a disability accessing quality care, facilities, services and goods.
- **Employment:** Reducing barriers for people with a disability seeking or maintaining employment at LRH.
- **Engagement:** Promoting inclusion for and participation by people with a disability.
- **Awareness:** Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.

LRH's commitments and associated actions to address these priority areas are documented within the next section.

WHAT WE WANT TO DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
<p>We listen to and work with people with a disability to develop policies, services, buildings, and facilities that are accessible and inclusive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Include Ability Disability Access and Inclusion Checklist annually and report results to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. • Review feedback. • Implement changes 	<p>Annually</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding policy in place and reviewed every 4 years • Improvements and changes identified and implemented through Ability Disability Access and Inclusion Checklist. 	<p>Due August 2028</p>
	<p>Review feedback and engagement process by engaging the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and appropriately disseminating feedback to relevant team managers and committees.</p>	<p>Bi-monthly when CAC meets</p>
<p>We communicate using preferred communication methods of individuals engaged with our service</p>	<p>Our information and communications are provided in accessible formats with consideration to the person’s communication preferences</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Information is communicated with relevant support persons where appropriate</p>	
	<p>Increase access, equipment and resources to facilitate creative communication methods such as telehealth Auslan interpreters, cue cards, communication books, social stories, braille</p>	

Employment

WHAT WE WANT TO DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
We provide wellbeing spaces for staff to utilise	Allocate protected wellbeing spaces for staff across all sites	December 2024
	Promote the use of wellbeing spaces by informing staff of their location	Ongoing and included in new staff orientation
Workplace Adjustment Processes	Support the implementation of the Flexibility @ Work initiative	July 2025
	Ensure flexible work policy is continually reviewed to reflect the LRH environment	Ongoing
Increase disability disclosures and staff access to supports	Review of language used during the recruitment process	June 2024
	Explore possibility of current staff disclosure in People Matter Survey or similar	October 2024
Australian Disability Network	Explore opportunity to join the Australian Disability Network	December 2025

Engagement

WHAT WE WANT TO DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
LRH social media platforms, intranet and website promote stories that include topics about our approach to promoting and including people with a disability	Share initiatives with the engagement team for promotion as appropriate	Ongoing
Promote recruitment of people with a disability to the Community Champions Program	Engage local community Day Services and programs to develop opportunities for participants to volunteer as Community Champions at LRH	June 2026
Partner with other community organisations in support of people living with a disability	Actively explore and identify opportunities to collaborate with external partners	As identified



WHAT WE WANT TO DO	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHEN WE WILL DO IT
Promote use of sensory safe spaces that are currently available (eg. Safe Assessment Room (SAR) in the Emergency Department, Reflection Rooms)	Education for staff on use of these spaces and utilising internal engagement strategies to increase awareness (intranet, TV screens)	Bi-annually
Staff training	Disability awareness training and communication and language training offered to all staff	Quarterly
	Training on referral pathways such as Disability Family Violence Crisis Response Initiative Safe Steps (1800 015 188) provided to all staff, as well as short-term access to support workers, equipment and transport	
	Communication access training to staff including how to access an interpreter and use of communication aids	December 2024
	Increase awareness of unconscious bias training opportunities for all staff via the Education page on the Pulse intranet	
Sunflower initiative	Explore the Sunflower Initiative to be adopted	December 2025
Recognition, support and reduction in stigma towards people with a disability	Recognition and celebration of International Day of People with Disability, including promotion on all social platforms.	Annually 3 December

How will we make sure the plan is achieved?

At Latrobe Regional Health, every employee has a responsibility to work in a way that promotes access and inclusion for all people, including those with disability. Implementation of the strategic actions named in this plan will be overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

The Latrobe Regional Health Disability Action Plan will be submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission for inclusion on their Register of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans.

Progress of the Disability Action Plan priorities will be included in the Latrobe Regional Health Annual Report. This report is available to the public via our website.

In addition, progress will be monitored by several Latrobe Regional Health committees with an interest in the plan as follows:

- Diversity and Inclusion Committee
- Patient Experience Committee
- Consumer Advisory Committee
- Latrobe Regional Health Executive Committee
- Workforce Learning & Development Committee
- Education and Training Unit

References

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Australia's disability strategy](#) (2021–2031)
- National Agreement on [Closing the Gap](#) (CTG / ATSI/ First Nations People not really specifically mentioned in this plan)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#)
- [Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan](#) (2022–2026)
- [Disability Act 2006](#)
- [The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018–2023](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)
- [LRH Strategic Plan](#) (2024-2028)
- [LRH Annual Report 2024](#)



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Latrobe Regional Health and its community-based services are located on the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai and Bunurong peoples.