

WorkSafe Victoria

Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan

2021–2024



Acknowledgements

WorkSafe Victoria (‘WorkSafe’) is the state’s regulator and authority for occupational health and safety, and return to work. Our purpose is to reduce workplace harm and support those who are injured to return to work and return to health. We play a fundamental role in promoting accessibility and inclusion for our workforce, customers, visitors and the community at large.

WorkSafe acknowledges and respects Victoria’s First Nations Peoples as Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge all employees who contributed their experience, passion and ideas to develop this action plan.

Accessible version of the document

Please email the Diversity and Inclusion Team to obtain an accessible version of this document inclusion@worksafe.vic.gov.au

From our Chief Executive

June 2021

Welcome to WorkSafe's three-year Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan. This plan has been developed with input from many parts of WorkSafe, and reflects our commitment to ensuring all our people feel connected, safe and valued at work.

It also reflects our commitment to ensure every person in the community who interacts with WorkSafe is treated with dignity and respect. And that every person has the same opportunity and access to services, information and facilities – regardless of their ability.

We understand that to achieve our core purpose of preventing workplace harm and improving outcomes for injured workers, we need to draw on the different strengths and abilities of our people.

It is important to have diversity, but it is *how* we make people feel included, valued and comfortable that enables each person to bring their best self to work every day.

With a fifth of Victoria's population reported to be living with disability, the purpose of this plan is to ensure every action we take and every decision we make has accessibility and inclusion front of mind.

Key to this will be building on the foundations and lessons learned from our first Disability Action Plan in 2017 and our continuous partnership with the Australian Network on Disability.

The Australian Network on Disability has helped us capture new approaches and practices in this plan that are based on the latest evidence and research. Their insights have been invaluable and I want to thank them for their contribution.

To everyone at WorkSafe, I encourage you to familiarise yourselves with this plan, in particular the actions relevant to you and your team. Each action is targeted and achievable, and has been developed by the relevant WorkSafe area to create a meaningful impact.

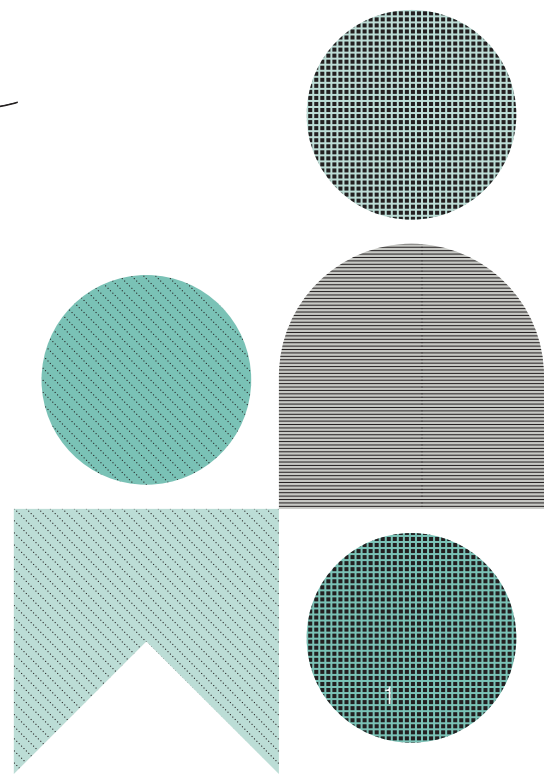
The plan is just the beginning. It is now up to all of us to bring the actions to life. To ensure we create a workplace that supports people of all abilities to be their absolute best. Where everyone can feel safe and connected to our core purpose.

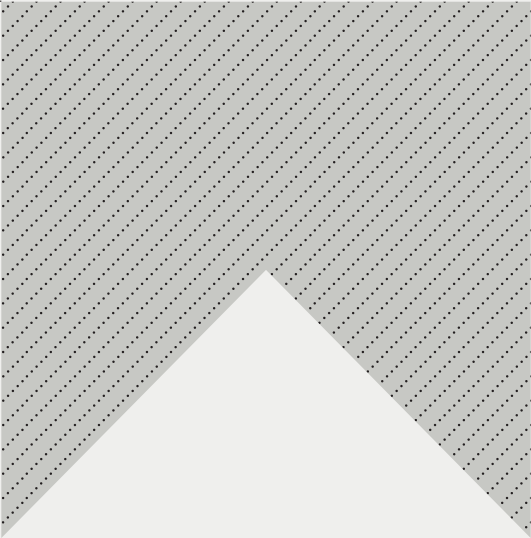
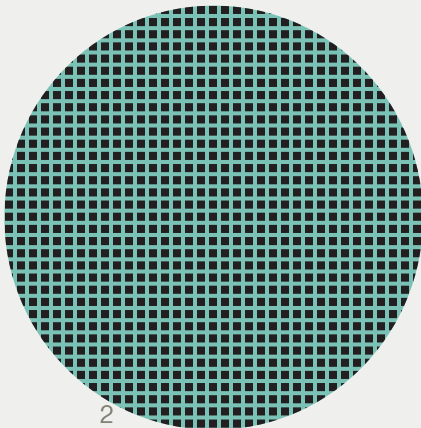
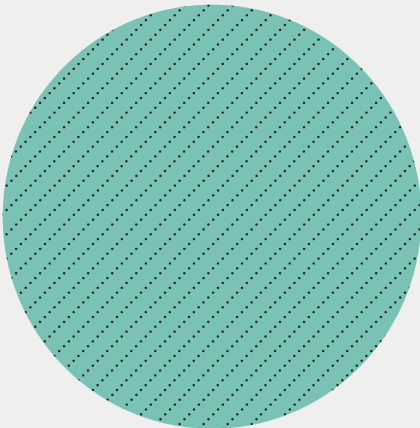
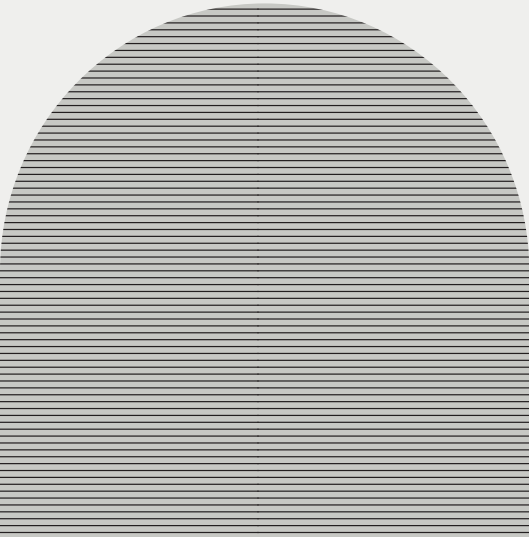
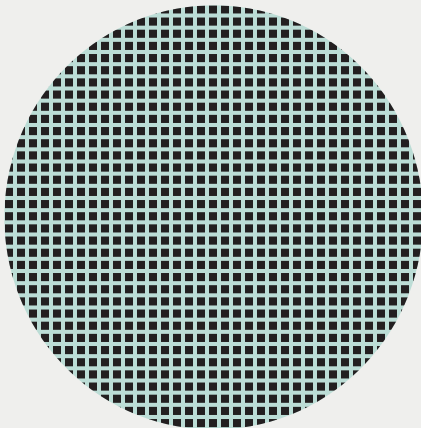
I look forward to the outcomes of this plan and to making a positive and tangible difference to the lives of people of all abilities.



Colin Radford

**Chief Executive
WorkSafe Victoria**





Introduction

As a key **regulator** of Victoria's occupational health and safety (OHS) law, WorkSafe aspires to provide an inclusive, connected and accessible working environment and customer experience.

We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone feels safe to bring their whole self to work – and feel genuinely included.

Accessibility refers to removing barriers in systems, environments and mindsets. Accessibility benefits everyone as it removes these barriers it all employees – with or without a disability – to work to the best of their ability.

This *Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan* is designed to guide us over the next three years to build and improve on our previous Disability Action Plan. Our overarching vision is to:

- Remove barriers to accessibility and participation
- Promote inclusion
- Achieve real and positive change in practices and mindsets
- Create even more opportunities for us to shape our workforce in a way that better reflects the community we serve

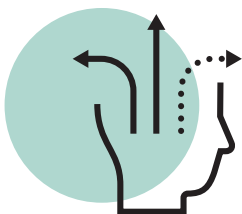
We can all greatly benefit from the diversity of experience, ideas and knowledge that people living with disability bring to the workplace and broader community.

We are grateful to all members of the working group who contributed to developing this Accessibility and Inclusion (A&I) Action Plan in partnership with the [Australian Network on Disability](#) (AND).

The group is represented by passionate individuals from across key functional business areas, many with lived experience of disability directly and/or indirectly as a carer or family member of someone living with disability.

Our next chapter

Our new Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan is designed to build on the foundations and achievements of our first 2017–19 Disability Action Plan, while also integrating with the [2020–23 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) (PDF 2.6MB).



Access

Our expertise and knowledge can be accessed by every Victorian to best serve the interests of health and safety.

We develop, cultivate and share knowledge so that every Victorian benefits.

Our networks should be about casting the net out far and wide to reach as many people as possible who may be outside of our usual circles.

By broadening our reach, we deepen our knowledge and extend our spheres of influence.



Inclusive design

Our facilities and services are designed with the most vulnerable in mind.

When we are planning our work, it is important that we prioritise the most vulnerable of workers and stakeholders and have them front of mind. How will they access this new service or facility?

This shifts us from bureaucracy to practice and reinforces that the needs of our employees come first.



People

Our workforce reflects the diverse demographic that we serve. We celebrate individual differences. We create an environment where everyone feels safe to bring their whole self to work and where nobody is excluded.

We represent and serve the people of Victoria and reflect the richness of knowledge, tradition and understanding that is within our community.

As a diverse workforce, we can continue to attract people who will better reach our clients.

WorkSafe’s 2020 – 23 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is founded on a set of six principles that come together to drive inclusive practice.



Engagement

We engage with people, ideas and systems which challenge and enrich what we do.

We understand that diversity applies to different ways of thinking.

Our shared differences provide rigour to fine tune ideas. We are more focused on getting to the best idea than defending our current position.

Learning to work with difference both challenges and enriches the final product.

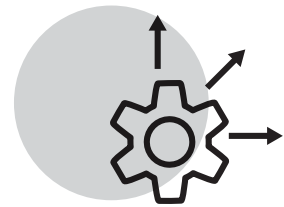


Metrics & accountability

We measure, monitor and track to ensure that we are becoming increasingly diverse and inclusive.

We invest in the systems and processes required to increase accountability and transparency.

We use data to reflect on our services and engagement.



Networks & supports

We create networks to support and strengthen difference and to educate ourselves about new perspectives.

We encourage and provide practical support and time for our employees to create learning communities around protected attributes.

In these spaces they advocate, generate awareness and practice empathy.

This provides us with a more sophisticated workforce and increased understanding of the diverse needs of our community.



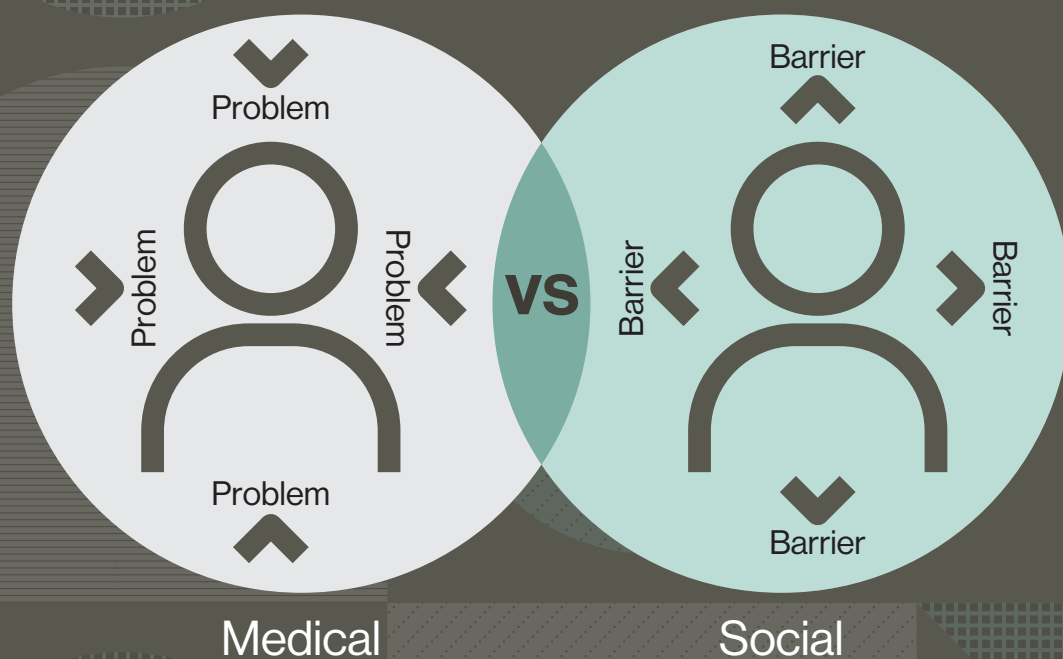
A framework for access and inclusion

Two primary ways are used to address disability – the medical model and the social model of disability.

The medical model focuses on the diagnosis, and tends to view disability as a problem of the individual.

The social model of disability recognises that people with disability are not disabled by their impairments – rather, they are impacted by the world around them. It focuses to remove barriers in society such as physical environments and social attitudes to be more accessible and inclusive.

At WorkSafe Victoria, we've adopted the social model lens of disability to develop this Action Plan. Our goal and intention is to view and address barriers through this social model lens, so that people living with disability can access and participate in our workplace on a more equal basis with others. That is, with more independence, choice and control.



Reference: <https://pwd.org.au/resources/disability-info/social-model-of-disability/>

| Our commitment

To enhance and promote accessibility and inclusion we are committed to strengthening our approach in four key areas:



01

Our culture

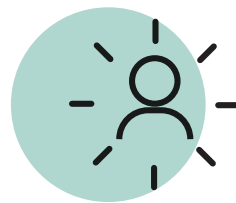
Shift mindsets and practices that discriminate against people living with disability.



02

Our building, systems and processes

Create more accessible and inclusive systems and processes, so everyone has equal opportunities to access WorkSafe's information, services and facilities.



03

Our talent

To increase employment opportunities at WorkSafe for people who are living with disability.



04

Our community

Promote access, inclusion and equitable participation in the community.

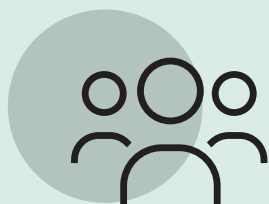
At a glance



People

1 in 5
people in Australia
identify as living with
disability¹

1 in 52
WorkSafe
employees identify
as living with
disability²



Leadership

34%
of people in Australia
identified as living
with disability are
managers or
professionals³

7%
of WorkSafe's
leadership identify as
living with disability²



Age

**The prevalence
of disability
increases
with age¹**

40%
of the Australian
workforce is 45
years or older¹

44%
of WorkSafe's
workforce is 45
years or older²

WorkSafe will proactively explore and address the barriers and challenges that intersect for people with disability who wish to continue in our organisation as they age to support all employees to work well, longer and safely.

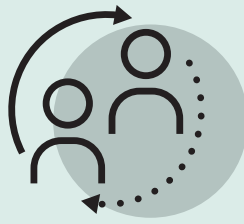
Data collected

1) Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, 4430.0 – *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2018*.

2) WorkSafe Victoria, *Employee Opinion Survey Results 2020*.

3) Australian Network on Disability website 2021, sourced from "Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016, 4430.0 – *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015*."

4) Thompson C, Broadbent E, Wood MA, McKenzie L, Maltby B, How S, May A, Dow J, McPherson S, Fong H 2020, *Bringing our whole selves to work: the Enablers Network research report into the experiences of employees with disability and carers of people with disability in the Victorian public sector*, Enablers Network, State of Victoria, Melbourne.



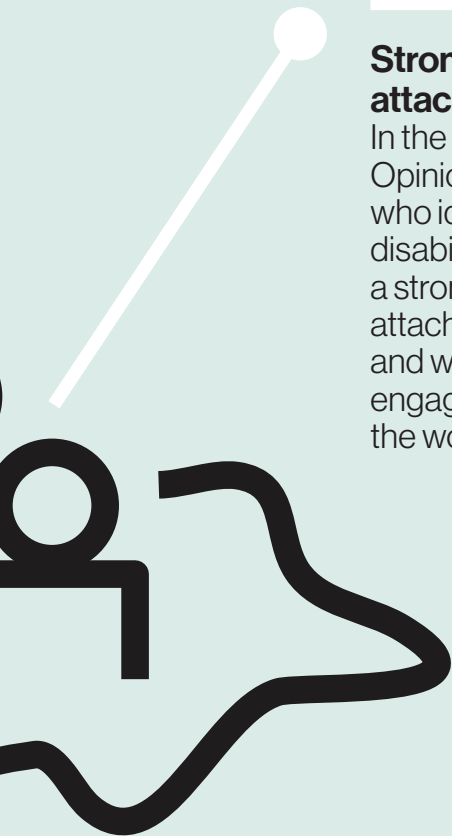
Employee experience and wellbeing

Stronger personal attachment

In the 2020 Employee Opinion Survey, employees who identify as living with disability said they have a stronger personal attachment to WorkSafe, and were equally as engaged as the rest of the workforce.

Responded to in a timely manner

Compared to all employees, employees who identify as living with disability were more likely to agree their OH&S concerns or suggestions have been responded to in a timely manner.



Inclusion

Less comfortable

Employees who identify as living with disability said they felt less comfortable to bring their whole self to work, are less inclined to speak up and challenge how things are done.

Hesitant to disclose

Key findings from the Victorian Public Sector indicate employees with disability and carers are hesitant to disclose their disability or caring responsibilities citing a risk of unconscious bias as their key concern. A key theme apparent in the experiences of employees who had positive relationships with their people leaders was the presence of empathy, and compassion, and a mutual understanding of each other's circumstances.⁴

Disability discrimination

Disability discrimination has been the single largest cause of complaints to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission for the last five years.

Our legislative framework

Compliance with legal requirements is an important foundation for diversity and inclusion leading practice.

Legislative, regulatory and legal frameworks and governance

The United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Victorian Disability Act 2006

The Victorian State Disability Plan 2017–2020

External Stakeholders and Community

WorkSafe vision and purpose

WorkSafe values

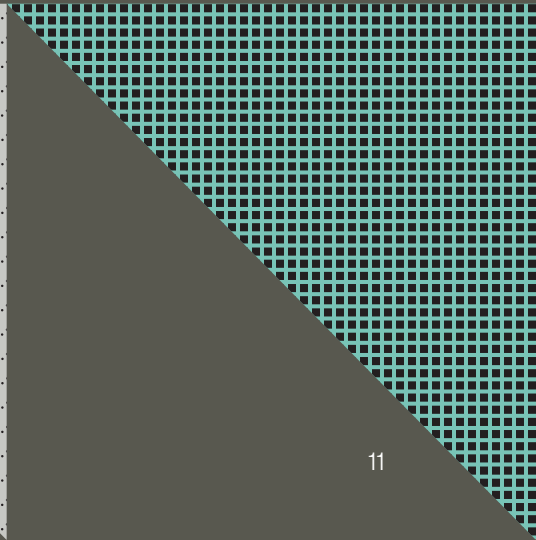
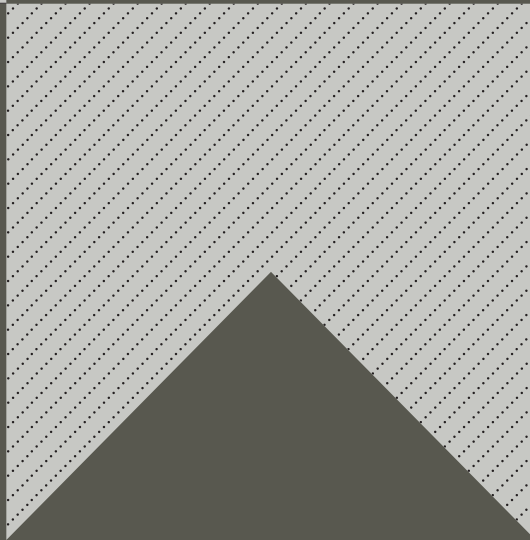
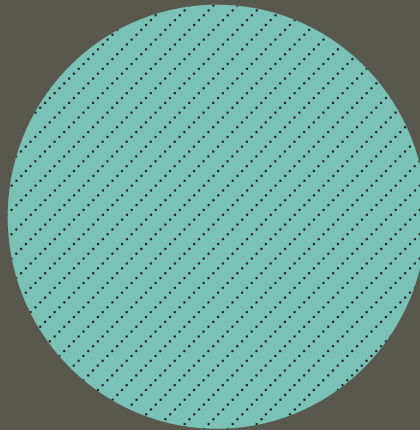
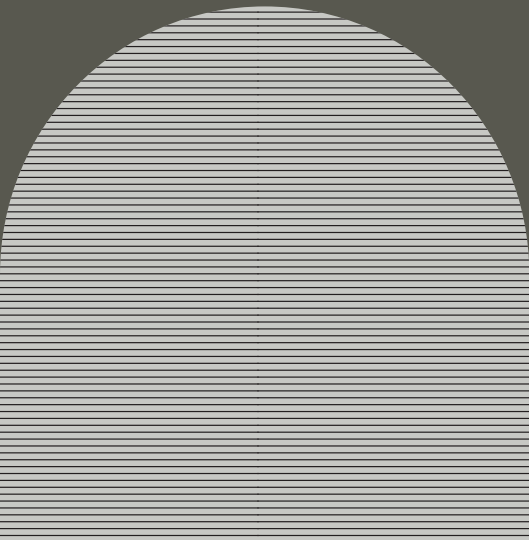
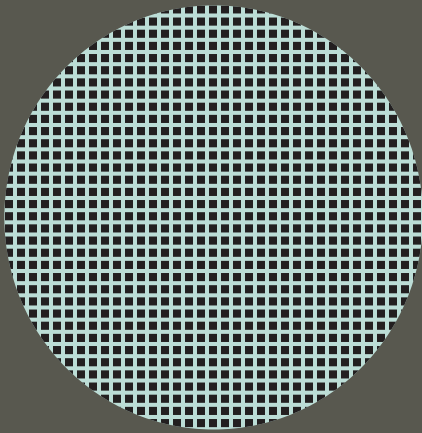
WorkSafe People and Culture Strategy

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and
Action Plan 2020–2023

People Leaders and Employees

Employee led networks

Our Action Plan for 2021 – 2024



Goal 1

Our culture

Shift mindsets and practices that discriminate against people living with disability in our workplace.



Goal	Key actions	Action owners	Priority
1. Our workplace encourages people to feel safe to bring their whole self to work.	1.1 Mobilise and establish a new employee-led network that includes employees living with disability, carers, advocates, and allies. The network will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A voice for people living with disability and/or carers to raise awareness about accessibility and inclusion at WorkSafe. • Available to provide feedback to support continuous improvement in making the design, delivery and evaluation of policies and practices, programs and initiatives more accessible and inclusive. 	People & Culture Business Unit – Centre of Excellence, Learning and Organisational Development teams	Years 1 & 2
2. Continue to build on the foundations set in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy to create a safe and inclusive culture; address and remove any barriers to inclusion and; confidently welcome employees, customers, and community living with disability.	2.1 Deliver learning experiences for employees and people leaders to know the role they can play and actions they can take to create a more accessible and inclusive workplace.		Years 2 & 3
	2.2 Continue to deliver fit-for-purpose health, safety and wellbeing programs, tools and resources that support and guide our people leaders and employees to create a safe and healthy workplace, and prevent mental and physical injury in the workplace.		Years 1 & 2
	2.3 Continue to ask, listen and respond to employees who identify as living with disability and/or carers, by monitoring and evaluating key drivers and drawing on insights from employee experiences through the Employee Opinion Survey.		Years 2 & 3
	2.4 Conduct focus groups to explore and validate insights from WorkSafe's Employee Opinion Survey for those who identify as living with disability and/or carers, and develop solutions to continue to address any inclusion barriers.		
3. Ensure our learning and development programs are accessible.	3.1 Incorporate accessibility design principles and guidelines into WorkSafe's learning assets and programs.		Years 1,2 & 3
	3.2 Identify the business units, branches and teams that need to have practical knowledge and understanding about what and how to apply accessible design principles (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).		

Goal 2

Our building, systems and processes

To have more accessible and inclusive systems and processes, so everyone has equal opportunity to access WorkSafe's information, services and facilities.



Goal	Key actions	Action owners	Priority
4. Our technology makes it easier to access information.	4.1 Review Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy and procedures and develop a systematic approach in how WorkSafe will meet and exceed the provision of accessible technology.	ITSS team	Year 1
	4.2 Monitor and update system enhancements to WorkSafe's intranet and external website to ensure we are compliant with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 to Level AA at minimum.		
5. Our premises provide a dignified and accessible experience.	5.1 Establish design principles for all fit outs and property design that incorporates consultation and input from employees and customers living with disability.	Facilities Management team	Year 2
	5.2 Undertake accessibility evaluation across all WorkSafe premises.		
	5.3 Design and implement a plan to address and improve on accessibility in all premises.		
6. Our workplace policies and systems enable our employees to confidently seek and receive <u>workplace adjustments</u> .	6.1 Design, implement and embed a standalone Workplace Adjustment policy and procedure.	People & Culture Business Unit – Wellbeing, Health and Safety team	Year 1
	6.2 Design, implement and embed an opt-in Accessibility Passport.		
	6.3 Promote our Accessibility offerings to all employees (e.g. Workplace Adjustments process, Personal Emergency Plan policy and procedure, and Employee Assistance Program).		
7. Our emergency evacuations are inclusive and consider access requirements for employees and visitors with disability.	7.1 Ensure all employees with disability have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.	People & Culture Business Unit – Wellbeing, Health and Safety team	Year 1
	7.2 Ensure evacuation plans and information are clearly visible and easily accessible to visitors to WorkSafe premises.		

Goal 2

Continued...

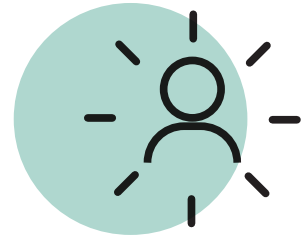


Goal	Key actions	Action owners	Priority
8. Our communication and marketing processes and practices are designed to deliver a consistently accessible and inclusive experience for employees, customers and communities.	8.1 Provide relevant guidance for business areas to help them produce and deliver accessible and inclusive content, assets and practices. This includes updating brand and language style guidelines to include accessibility standards and instructions for meetings, events, digital content, intranet and public website content, publications, tools and templates.	External Affairs Division – Corporate Communications, and Marketing & Communication branch teams	Year 1
	8.2 Feedback mechanism to encourage input and suggestions to improve the accessibility of our communications and marketing.		
9. Our procurement policy, procedure and practices will elevate our opportunity to engage with diverse suppliers.	9.1 Leverage procurement policy, procedure and social procurement strategy to include accessibility as part of the procurement process, starting with the prioritisation of ICT goods and services.	Procurement team	Year 1
	9.2 Expand the expectations of suppliers to support and meet WorkSafe Victoria's commitment to accessibility and inclusion.		

Goal 3

Our talent

To increase employment opportunities at WorkSafe for people who are living with disability.



Goal	Key actions	Action owners	Priority
10. Our recruitment processes are barrier free and customised to help us source, attract and tailor candidate experiences to accessibility requirements.	10.1 Review recruitment policies and procedures to identify and remove any inadvertent barriers that may prevent prospective candidates with disability to apply for a position.	People & Culture Business Unit – Talent Acquisition Team	Years 1,2 & 3
	10.2 Work with expert advisors with lived experience of disability to develop contemporary accessible talent acquisition approaches to increase active participation and encourage people living with disability – including carers – to apply for roles.		
	10.3 Identify and build strategic partnerships with disability agencies.		

Goal 4

Our community

To promote access, inclusion and equitable participation in the community.



Goal	Key actions	Action owners	Priority
11. Our events, programs and sponsorship applications actively work to be accessible and inclusive.	11.1 Develop and integrate an accessible and inclusive checklist and process for the management of all WorkSafe events.	External Affairs Division – Corporate Communications and Marketing & Communication branch teams	Year 1
12. Proactively seek to understand and identify solutions to better respond to the needs of our customers with disability.	12.1 Review and update external feedback mechanisms to ensure they are accessible for customers with disability.	All business units People & Culture Business Unit – Centre of Excellence, Learning and Organisational Development teams	Years 2 & 3
	12.2 Continue membership with external partner, Australian Network on Disability and build partnership with the Victorian Public Sector Enablers Network.		

How will we measure our impact?



This Action Plan builds on the previous Disability Action Plan while also aligning with our current Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

In this Action Plan, we've identified a range of key measures to tell us:

- if we're achieving our goals and making an impact, and
- how well our outcomes are making a difference to our workplace and community.

Key organisational effectiveness measures include:

- Participating in a yearly benchmark assessment by submitting the Accessibility and Inclusion Index Report assessed by Australian Network on Disability to measure and monitor progress.
- Establishing a Monitor and Evaluation Framework and adopt a continuous improvement approach in our oversight of the actions being implemented, and
- Adopting a quantitative and qualitative approach to understand the employee experiences including engagement, access to workplace adjustments, flexibility and career progression.

Our governance and reporting

This Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan plays a big part of our organisational drive to create an inclusive culture where everyone can bring their whole self to work.

An Accessibility & Inclusion Implementation Team and Steering Group will be created to oversee, implement and monitor our progress against the Monitor and Evaluation Framework.

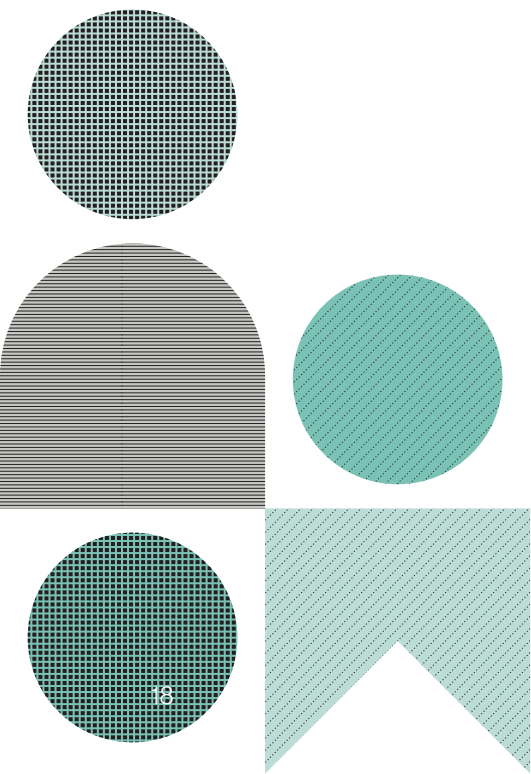
The Accessibility and Inclusion Implementation Team will have representatives from business areas with specific action items allocated for them to lead.

The Steering Group will have the Executive Sponsor for Accessibility and Inclusion, the Diversity and Inclusion Program Lead, a Diversity & Inclusion Council member, and a representative from the newly-established Accessibility and Inclusion Employee-Led Network.

Progress on actions will be reported quarterly to the Steering Group and annually to WorkSafe's Diversity & Inclusion Council. The agency will also participate in the Access and Inclusion Index reporting on a yearly basis with the Australian Network on Disability (AND).

This Action Plan will be lodged with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

We welcome all feedback on our Action Plan via email at inclusion@worksafe.vic.gov.au



Glossary of useful terms

Term	Definition
Access	Access refers to the ability of a person with disability to use goods, services, facilities, and information (e.g. a ramp allows access into a building and a captioned video allows access to information).
Accessibility Passport	A dynamic tool to document, monitor and review workplace adjustments. The Accessibility Passport also supports discussions of adjustment requirements between employee and their People Leader.
A / AA / AAA web accessibility standards	These levels of conformance indicate the compliance targets for a website. Government agencies are expected to meet level AA. They are governed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and are outlined in their Web Content Accessibility Guidelines www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/
Disability	<p>The <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) defines disability as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; <p>and includes disability that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).

Glossary of useful terms

Continued...

Term	Definition
Disability discrimination	<p>To treat someone with disability less favourably than someone without disability, based on their disability. Discrimination on the grounds of disability is prohibited under federal legislation – <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> – and Victorian – <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1995</i>.</p> <p>Discrimination can be direct or indirect. An example of direct discrimination is refusing to allow a person with a disability to enrol in a course, even though they are eligible, because they have disability. An example of indirect discrimination is requiring all applicants for a job to fill in a form that cannot easily be completed by a person with disability.</p>
Workplace adjustment	<p>A change to work process, practice, procedure or environment that is necessary and reasonable to perform their job in a way that reduces or eliminates any barriers at work.</p>
Universal design	<p>Universal design is a solution that produces buildings, products and environments that are usable and effective for everyone, not just people with a disability. For example, flat panel light switches are easier to use for everyone.</p>

aDAPting to Disability: A guide to disability action plans in Victoria. Second Edition. Office for Disability, Department of Planning and Community Development (June 2009).

