

Disability Action Plans

Based on Action Plans - Adapting to Disability Guide Department of Health and Human Services Victoria <http://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plans>

# What is a Disability Action Plan?

A disability action plan (DAP) is a plan by which organisations devise and implement actions to ensure that their facilities, services and programs do not exclude people with a disability or treat them less favourably than other people.

There are many ways by which an effective DAP can help an organisation remove barriers for people with a disability. Some examples include:

* ensuring that candidates with a disability applying for employment obtain the same opportunities as any other candidate;
* ensuring customers and clients with a disability receive the same courtesy, attention, information and service as any other customers or clients; and
* having information available in different formats so that anyone can be informed, regardless of ability to see, hear or understand.

DAPs encourage organisations to think widely, and to avoid assumptions about what people can and cannot do.

The preparation of a DAP involves looking at the organisation as a whole. The key steps are to consider what goods, services, and public programs are offered; to find out what barriers prevent people with a disability from using these; to devise action points which will remove those barriers; and to make sure the plan stays on track and is effective in removing barriers. There are many ways to remove barriers of all kinds, ranging from a renovation of inaccessible buildings to producing public documents in large print.

Under section 38 of the Victorian Disability Act 2006, the Victorian Government has identified four outcomes that a DAP should address:

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

These are called the four outcome areas. This guide discusses them in detail, and suggests an approach to addressing each.

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

The Victorian Government encourages all organisations to develop and implement a DAP.

Good DAPs have active support from senior management. They also are informed by people with a disability, including staff, volunteers and clients of the organisation and members of the organisation’s disability advisory group.

The Australian Human Rights Commission is a valuable source of information and advice on DAPs. Published on its website are the DAPs of numerous government, commercial and community bodies from around the country. Advice on DAPs and the register of lodged action plans can be found at:
<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/action-plans-and-action-plan-guides>

# Why develop a disability action plan?

The Victorian Government has a strong commitment to ensuring that people with a disability have equal access to services and resources within the community. Disability action plans (DAPs) form part of the Government’s broader social justice policy to reduce barriers faced by disadvantaged groups.

Under federal legislation (the Disability Discrimination Act 1992) and under Victorian legislation (the Equal Opportunity Act 1995) it is against the law to discriminate on the grounds of disability. A DAP can help your organisation to meet its obligations under this legislation.

As active planning documents, DAPs are an effective way to ensure improved access across all the departments, business units and work areas of your organisation. The incidence of disability in the general population is estimated to be 20 per cent, or one person in five. With the ageing of the population and the projected increase in the prevalence of disability, preparing a DAP makes sound business sense. A DAP will help you to meet the diverse needs of service users, members, employees and volunteers who have a disability.

People with a disability can face many different barriers to accessing goods and services and fully participating in community life. There are barriers that are physical, barriers that are attitudinal in the form of negative assumptions, and barriers to effective communication. DAPs confront these barriers and spell out how, when and by whom they will be removed.

A DAP will help ensure your organisation is accessible, has a welcoming attitude, and has staff who are informed about disability.

For further information and resources go to:
<http://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/disability-action-plans>