



STATE LIBRARY  
VICTORIA

# Disability Action Plan 2021

## CEO MESSAGE

State Library Victoria's vision is of a library for all in a changing world - a library built on the pillars of inclusion, empowerment, community, and future. We are committed to social inclusion, learning and creativity for all.

Our strategic goals include a focus on inclusion and reach, through the provision of equitable access, regardless of ability, culture, language, age, gender or geography. This is at the heart of who we are as an organisation and underpins the services we offer.

This plan complements the Library's annual and strategic plans, providing an important framework to address barriers to access for people with disability, and promoting inclusion within the Library team and in the broader community.

**Kate Torney**  
Chief Executive Officer



## INTRODUCTION

People with disability often face a range of barriers in accessing services, employment, and in participation in the community. It is an issue that impacts many Australians, with one in five experiencing disability at some point in their lives and many more impacted indirectly through friends and family.

The Disability Action Plan 2021 draws on the outcomes from the Library's Community Consultation Insights 2020, and highlights the importance of disability voice, consultation and engagement in all Library systems.

It is a one-year plan that will guide Library activity in 2021 while robust mechanisms for consultation and engagement are established and a more detailed plan is produced.

## Definitions

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 describes disability as including physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning-related and medical conditions. This definition underpins the Plan.

## Social model of disability

Social models of disability focus on environmental and social barriers to inclusion, rather than seeing disability as deficits experienced by individuals. Applying a social model means focusing on removing barriers to equal participation, and this approach informs the Plan. This focus is in line with Victoria's *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.





## The approach

The *Disability Act* 2006 suggests the development of action plans which:

- Reduce barriers to people with disability accessing information, services and facilities
- Reduce barriers to people with disability in obtaining and maintaining employment
- Promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability
- Achieve tangible changes to attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability.

## Progress on disability inclusion

The Library's Diversity and Social Inclusion Action Plan 2017 – 2020 included a range of measures designed to remove barriers to access for people with disability. Achievements resulting from this and subsequent plans and strategies include:

- The incorporation of inclusion and access principles across the redevelopment of the Library and Vision 2020 resulting in:
  - upgrade of the west link stairs
  - upgrade to assistive technologies in visitor spaces
  - incorporation of automated doors
  - flattening of floors
  - ramp access at all visitor entrances
  - hearing loops in presentation spaces.
- Auslan interpreters in family programs
- Text captions for digital content
- The establishment of the Inclusion, Diversity and Access portfolio including a dedicated disability workstream
- The introduction of digital technologies to enable remote working.



# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2021 - GOALS

The goals align with the State Library Victoria 2020-24 Strategic Plan and seek to address four areas: access, employment, inclusion and participation, and attitudes and behaviours.

## 1. Access

**Goal: Reduce barriers for people with disability in accessing information, collection material, services and facilities**

We will work to ensure that people with disability have access to all Library services and facilities by offering services that are accessible and inclusive.

We will consult and grow our understanding of disability community needs to ensure that accessibility and inclusion are at the centre of program and service design and delivery.

Advances in digital technology have allowed us to rethink our digital service model. We will work with our audience to develop a world-class digital service that doesn't just replicate an onsite Library visit but provides an enhanced and enriched online experience, in turn improving access for people with disability.

## 2. Employment

**Goal: Reduce barriers for people with disability in obtaining and maintaining employment**

We recognise that there are systemic barriers to employment participation for people with disability. We are committed to improving employment outcomes and removing barriers for people with disability.

Recruitment and selection processes which are accessible and barrier-free are integral to reducing and removing barriers for people with disability in obtaining and maintaining employment.

We will focus on ensuring recruitment and selection processes are free from unconscious bias. We will build relationships with disability employment service providers to improve opportunities for employment at the Library.

We will also work to ensure inclusive engagement of freelance contractors, such as program talent.

Equal opportunities for employees with disability will also be a focus and we will ensure professional development opportunities are accessible and inclusive and that employees with disability have their voice heard and are represented in workplace decision-making.

### 3. Inclusion and participation

#### **Goal: Promote inclusion and participation of people with disability in the community**

The Library is known and trusted in the community. We want to ensure that all Victorians, including people with disability, can access the Library's services. We will use multiple platforms, including social networks, to broaden our communication strategies and increase our reach with messaging that is accessible, bold, clear and welcoming.

We recognise that there is minimal visual representation of people living with disability on our digital, print and physical signage. Ensuring greater representation will be a focus to ensure that people with disability recognise the Library as somewhere they belong.

### 4. Attitudes and behaviors

#### **Goal: Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability**

We see the development of employee capability as integral to the achievement of tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability.

We will implement training and development activities which seek to identify and remove unconscious bias and raise awareness of issues associated with the impact of disability. Employee capability development will underpin our approach across all goal areas within the action plan and we see it as integral to the plan's delivery.

### Plan management

The Head of People and Projects, supported by the Inclusion, Diversity and Access Portfolio's steering committee, is responsible for the delivery of the Plan. Responsibility for the delivery of individual action points is indicated within the Plan. Progress against objectives will be reviewed quarterly, and deliverables and outcomes will be included in annual reports.

The Plan provides the framework for the development of a more comprehensive disability action plan to be in place by the end of December 2021.

## DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2021

The actions listed in this plan are intentionally high level. It is designed to cover a one-year period and provide the framework for the development of a three-year plan with specific action points. Action points acknowledge the social model of disability and advantages of new technology to empower communities.

GENERAL		
Action	Responsibility	Measure
<b>1 Consult and connect</b> Establish a consultative committee / disability advisory group to provide feedback on Library services and identify barriers to access.  Identify and build relationships with relevant disability peak bodies, community groups and leading organisations.	<b>Director, Experience</b>	Consultative Committee established with Terms of Reference in place.  Identify relevant disability bodies and explore potential partnership opportunities.
<b>2 Formalise</b> Embed social model of disability as policy and practice.  Review relevant policies and procedures to ensure they reflect social model thinking.  Implement IDA portfolio working group policies and principles across the disability workstream.  Develop and implement a robust framework for the assessment of disability related actions.	<b>IDA Portfolio Steering Committee and Working Group</b>	IDA portfolio terms of reference and social model and principles for consultation and engagement applied across the workstream and the Library.  Policies and Procedures reviewed.  Framework for assessment of disability related actions developed.
<b>3 Produce</b> Develop a detailed disability action plan for the period 2022–25.	<b>IDA Portfolio Steering Committee and Working Group</b>	2022–25 Disability Action Plan developed and approved.

## ACCESS

Action	Responsibility	Measure
<p><b>4 Enhance access</b></p> <p>Implement more accessible processes for our communities to find, connect and engage with our collection, with a focus on people who experience significant access barriers, including people with disability as well as rural and regional Victorians and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.</p> <p>Build accessibility considerations into space and program design across all audiences.</p> <p>Conduct accessibility audit of visitor-facing digital products including website, and digital signage.</p>	<p><b>Director, Experience</b></p>	<p>Barriers to accessing front-of-house spaces are identified with action points included in next Action Plan.</p> <p>Programs and exhibitions incorporate accessibility considerations, such as Auslan, captioning, jargon-free language and a variety of formats.</p> <p>Accessibility audit of digital products conducted.</p>
<p><b>5 Digital and technology access</b></p> <p>Accessibility is a core component of digital maturity and organisational digital and technology strategies.</p> <p>Implement a schedule and procedures to maintain assistive technology for patrons.</p>	<p><b>Director, Enablers</b></p>	<p>Accessibility is incorporated into organisational digital and technology strategies.</p> <p>Assistive technology maintenance schedule and procedures implemented.</p>
<p><b>6 Enhance collection access</b></p> <p>Consult our users and leverage data analytics software to better understand what communities currently experience, and what they need and want to increase accessibility and discoverability.</p> <p>Increase the number of digitised collection items available to improve online access.</p> <p>Develop a sustainable digitising program for at-risk audio-visual collection material.</p> <p>Prioritise description of our legacy data collections to improve online discoverability.</p> <p>Explore and implement innovative approaches to add and enhance descriptions to collection items – this will include exploring community contributions and new technologies (e.g. AI, machine learning), and carrying out any promising solutions.</p>	<p><b>Director, Collections</b></p>	<p>These action points are to be delivered over the next four years. By the end of the term of this plan identifiable progress will be made to the delivery of these actions points.</p>



## EMPLOYMENT

	Action	Responsibility	Measure
7	<b>Recruit</b> Identify barriers that people with disability experience within the Library's current recruitment process.  Develop a relationship with a disability employment service provider and explore potential for placements.	<b>Head of People and Projects</b>	Identified adjustments to the recruitment process implemented.  Meeting with a disability employment services provider conducted.
8	<b>Workplace</b> Identify barriers to access within our workforce and prepare proposals to remove barriers or enhance access.	<b>Head of People and Projects</b>	Barriers identified and where appropriate, proposals to enhance access are produced.

## INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

9	<b>Promote inclusion</b> Acquire collection items that profile individuals, stories and formats from and for identified communities.	<b>Director, Collections</b>	Ten percent of the combined original material and rare collection budget is for acquisition of items from those who are often not heard, including people with disability, LGBTQI+ people, and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.
10	<b>Promote inclusion</b> People with disability are represented in programming.	<b>Director, Experience</b>	Speakers and artists delivering programming in 2021 include people with disability.

## ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

11	<b>Change attitudes</b> Develop an internal training proposal that covers disability awareness, understanding and removing unconscious bias, communication and mental health first aid.  Develop training and raise awareness on how to support colleagues with disability and empower managers to offer formal support.	<b>Head of People and Projects</b>	Proposal adopted and training delivered.
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