

# VicRoads Disability Action Plan 2016-2020

Version V3.0 | July 2016

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## Message from the Chief Executive

VicRoads goal is to improve people's lives through journeys that are safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable. We judge our performance by our customers' experience.

For Victorians with a disability, journeys can be more difficult if their access to transport or services is hampered. These barriers prevent people with a disability from actively participating in education, employment, recreation activities and community life that we all take for granted.

Disability affects a large segment of the community and our customers. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that approximately 15.4 per cent or 881,400 Victorians have a moderate to profound form of disability, the majority of which are not readily apparent to most around them.

VicRoads is committed to ensuring that disability is no barrier to accessing our facilities, services or working with us. This Disability Action Plan articulates this commitment. It is the result of consultation among staff and with some of our key stakeholders.

In developing this plan staff across the organisation were encouraged to look for ways to improve their services and work practices to better cater for customers and colleagues with a disability. They have come up with further initiatives that build on previous successes that encompass our employment opportunities, improving access to facilities and the way we communicate.

VicRoads will continue to make the transport system as accessible as possible in partnership with the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Public Transport Victoria and Local Government. Increasing the range of places that people can access increases everyone's social and economic opportunities.

We are determined to implement the actions outlined in this Disability Action Plan and place VicRoads as a leader in providing outstanding services to our customers. Equally we value our people and appreciate the unique ideas, capabilities and experiences that a diverse workforce can offer.

**John Merritt**

**Chief Executive**



## About VicRoads

VicRoads is a Victorian statutory authority that was established under the *Transport Act 1983* and continued under the *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

VicRoads purpose is to support economic prosperity and liveability by shaping the development and use of Victoria's road system as an integral part of the overall transport system.

VicRoads primary objectives are outlined in section 86 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010*. They include:

- working with others to ensure that the road system operates as part of an integrated transport system that seeks to meet the needs of all transport system users
- managing the road system in a way that supports a sustainable Victoria, by encouraging sustainable transport modes, and seeking to improve environmental performance while minimising adverse environmental impacts from the road system
- contributing to social wellbeing by providing access to opportunities and supporting liveable communities
- promoting economic prosperity through efficient and reliable movement of persons and goods
- working with others to reduce deaths and injuries arising from road crashes.

## VicRoads' Disability Action Plan 2016–2020

VicRoads' Disability Action Plan 2016-2020 outlines our commitment to be more accessible and inclusive for people with a disability. It sets out a further range of actions to reduce barriers for those with a disability from accessing our services, facilities and to enhance employment opportunities with us.

The actions have been developed following consultation with VicRoads staff, the Office of Disability, Department of Human Services Victoria and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

This new Action Plan builds on the actions of the previous VicRoads Disability Action Plan and draws on VicRoads Strategic Commitment legislative requirements as well as supporting the goals of the Victorian state disability plan 2013-2016 and the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

### Defining disability

For the purposes of this Disability Action Plan, VicRoads uses the comprehensive definition of disability as it appears in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. This definition covers disabilities that are physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological. This definition also covers physical disfigurement and the presence of disease causing organisms such as HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of a disability that he or she has, had, may have in the future or is assumed to have. It also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis that her or his associate (partner, carer, friend or family member) has a disability<sup>1</sup>.

### Our Legislative Requirements

#### Victorian Disability Act 2006

The Victorian Disability Act 2006 focuses on enabling people with a disability to more actively participate in the life of the community

The *Disability Act 2006* requires public sector bodies like VicRoads to prepare a Disability Action Plan for the purpose of:

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

#### National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

The Council of Australian Governments' national strategy has been endorsed by the federal and all state and territory governments. It is a national approach to enabling people with a disability to fulfil their potential and participate as equal citizens in society.

The National disability strategy 2010-2020 has a strong focus on making the mainstream system more responsive to people with a disability and their families and carers.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission - *Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans: A Guide for State & Territory Government Departments and Agencies* - <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability-discrimination-act-action-plans-guide-state-territory-government-departments-and-agencies>

## VicRoads Strategic Commitment

VicRoads Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 sets out our strategic framework including our strategic commitment, goals, objectives, priorities and associated indicators and targets that will guide the delivery of the activities that contribute to our purpose under the *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

VicRoads activities are guided by our commitment to make lives better, through journeys that are safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable. We also judge our performance by our customers' experience. Our strategic framework includes one central and three longer-term goals.

### Customer and Community

We create solutions with our customers and community.

### Journeys

We enable integrated transport choices and make journeys more pleasant and predictable.

### Wellbeing

We improve community wellbeing by reducing road trauma, amenity and environmental outcomes.

### Productivity

We strengthen the economy by ensuring best use of the road system, recognising its' interdependence with land use.

Our strategic commitment and goals have guided the development of the actions outlined in our Disability Action Plan.

## Forward Actions and Initiatives

VicRoads has developed the following new actions to be implemented between 2016 and 2020. These Actions have been developed around improving access, communication and engagement, employment and awareness for those with a disability.

### Accessibility and road network facilities

People need to be able to get to and move around roads, footpaths, places and spaces to make use of opportunities for study, work and leisure, to use shops and services and visit family and friends.

#### **Action 1: Include fully accessible facilities as part of substantial upgrades undertaken by VicRoads, whenever possible. (Chief Operating Officer or equivalent is responsible)**

Substantial upgrades mean periodic or major works on the road network; it does not include routine maintenance. Substantial upgrades may be considered to be a project which significantly changes the existing road infrastructure such as new roads, duplication of existing roads, intersection improvements, tram or bus stop improvements as well as those catering for pedestrians.

#### **Action 2: Include fully accessible facilities as part of non-substantial upgrades undertaken by VicRoads at targeted high-use sites. (Chief Operating Officer or equivalent is responsible)**

Extend the scope of 'non substantial' upgrades to include fully accessible facilities at targeted sites catering for pedestrians. A non substantial upgrade may be considered to be a project that has minor physical impact or is low cost. Maintenance activities can generally be considered as non-substantial.

#### **Action 3: Explore alternative arrangements and management options for Disability Parking Schemes in Victoria. (Executive Director, Registration and Licensing is responsible)**

Implement the Australian Disability Parking Scheme in Victoria by 2020. This includes addressing a number of long-standing issues with the operation and management of the current scheme to enable additional benefits for legitimate permit holders whilst reducing the likelihood of scheme abuse.

## Communication & engagement

We all need access to information to help us make decisions and choices about our lives and to be aware of issues, products, rights, entitlements, services or legislation that affect our lives.

### **Action 4: Develop and implement an intranet Accessibility Improvement Plan (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

VicRoads Intranet (vNet) – Conduct an independent web accessibility audit. Use the audit to develop an Intranet Accessibility Improvement Plan with a rolling program of prioritised actions to be implemented each year.

### **Action 5: Raise awareness across VicRoads of online accessibility requirements (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

VicRoads website and Internet – Prepare and implement a Communications Plan to raise awareness of accessibility requirements for published material. Provide supporting advice and guidance to staff on writing accessible content and documents by end 2016.

### **Action 6: Update VicRoads contracts to include requirement for online documents to comply with accessibility requirements (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

Contracts and Procurement – Review and revise procurement guidance advice to include updated accessibility requirements. The objective would be for all contracts to include a requirement that any communications material that is going to be uploaded to the website or intranet be accessible (allowing for a reasonable exceptions process).

### **Action 7: Provide staff training on accessible web content (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

Training and Development – VicRoads will support staff with training and development related to writing and publishing accessible web content and documents.

### **Action 8: Include accessibility requirements in new guidance for VicRoads staff relating to customer, community and stakeholder engagement (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

Stakeholder engagement - VicRoads will produce a guide and checklist to assist and improve our engagement with customers, communities and stakeholders during any projects, programs and policy development. The guide will include groups who represent people with a disability.

## Employment and awareness

As an organisation VicRoads believes that its workforce composition should be representative of the wider general community. VicRoads has developed a Diversity and Inclusion strategy that will guide the achievement of this goal. The strategy recognises that the inclusion of staff with a disability is important to their social and economic wellbeing and contributes to the overall inclusiveness of VicRoads workplace culture.

### **Action 9 (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

Incorporate disability awareness knowledge and understanding into management and leadership programs with a focus on the benefits of diversity for VicRoads.

### **Action 10 (Executive Director, Corporate Services is responsible)**

Review of existing business practices to enable a contemporary positive approach to attract, recruit, support and retain employees with a disability. VicRoads positions itself as an employer of choice for those with a disability.

## Disability Action Plan (2009-2011)

VicRoads' previous Disability Action Plan included 35 actions. They were designed to meet the legislative requirements of the *Disability Act 2006* (Victoria) as well as VicRoads' own strategic direction.

The Plan was provided to the Australian Human Rights Commission and included in the Register of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans as required. It was also made available on the VicRoads website.

The previous plan targeted actions in customer service, provision of information, physical improvements to facilities and the transport system and recruitment and training to reduce barriers, promote inclusion and avoid discrimination.

Some of the key results of the previous Disability Action Plan include:

- The ability for deaf customers to access VicRoads services through our panel of interpreter service providers, that include the provision of Auslan interpreters for deaf licence applicants.
- VicRoads' website and intranet comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA and appropriate procedures are in place to ensure content compliance.
- All VicRoads evacuation procedures have been reviewed and independently evaluated as effective for the needs of people with disability.
- All new works undertaken by VicRoads affecting tram and bus stops are subject to a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) audit.
- Making pedestrian facilities fully accessible as part of other road improvement projects is now an embedded practice. Measures taken include audio push buttons, tactile ground surface indicators and smooth ramp access where possible.
- VicRoads' recruitment policies do not discriminate against those with a disability. Ongoing reviews of the policies ensure inclusion and diversity of staff is recognised.
- Disability awareness training forms part of induction and training for staff in recruitment and selection.
- VicRoads launched a Diverse and Inclusive corporate commitment in November 2014.

## VicRoads' Disability Action Plan - Forward Actions

VicRoads undertakes to:

- lodge the Disability Action Plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in compliance with Part 2 of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- report on the implementation of this Disability Action Plan within the Annual Report in compliance with Part 3 of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- publish the current Disability Action Plan on VicRoads website and intranet in accessible formats
- provide the Disability Action Plan in alternative formats on request
- communicate the Disability Action Plan to staff to ensure VicRoads business areas are familiar with the plan
- review progress on implementation of actions in the Disability Action Plan with the accountable members of the Executive Leadership Team.

