

GETTING TO WORK FAQs



When does **Getting to work** start?

Getting to work is a seven year plan starting in September 2018 and ending in 2025.

Who is **Getting to work** for?

Getting to work is relevant to job seekers with disability, employees with disability, Victorian public sector employers, disability employment services, recruitment agencies, unions, and the Enablers Network.

What does **Getting to work** aim to do?

The principal objective of **Getting to work** is to increase the overall engagement, representation and meaningful employment of people with disability across every level of the Victorian public sector. This will be measured by achieving an employment target of six per cent of people with disability employed across all government departments and non-sworn staff of Victoria Police by 2020, increasing to 12 per cent by 2025.

We will achieve this by:

- creating safe, inclusive and respectful workplaces that are free of discrimination
- implementing inclusive attraction, recruitment, retention and progression strategies
- supporting prospective and existing employees and their managers.

This will result in a capable and diverse public sector that better reflects the diversity of the Victorian community and benefits from the experience that people with disability bring to the workplace.

How were the public sector disability employment targets set?

Every Opportunity: Victorian economic participation plan for people with disability 2018-2020 is the Victorian Government's three year plan to enhance the economic participation of people with disability in this state.

The initial target of six per cent by 2020 was selected as an achievable interim target based on what is known about current levels of employment of people with disability in the public sector. By way of example, the Department of Health and Human Services set a five per cent target for the employment of people with disability for the first year of its **People Strategy 2020**.

The secondary target of 12 per cent by 2025 was selected as an ambitious target and one that will demonstrate leadership across both the government and non-government sectors. This target was developed with reference to the standards set by a range of organisations considered to be high performers in the employment of people with disability in both the private and public sectors. Whilst the achievement of these targets is ambitious, we believe they are realistic. We also understand that work will be required at a number of levels, with appropriate resourcing over time, to support their introduction and address the associated challenges.

Who does the disability employment target apply to?

The six per cent disability employment target by 2020 will initially be applied across government departments and non-sworn staff

of Victoria Police. The target will later be extended across the broader public sector.

What is the current representation of people with disability in the Victorian public sector?

People with disability make up less than four per cent of the Victorian public sector workforce compared with nine per cent in the broader Victorian workforce.

What is **Getting to work** doing to improve employment opportunities for people with disability?

Getting to work outlines 21 actions that are grouped into three focus areas:

1. Build awareness through access to information
2. Attract and recruit people with disability
3. Support employees with disability

Some of the key initiatives include:

- Disability awareness and confidence training for all levels of the VPS
- Mentoring opportunities for employees with disability at all levels
- More pathways into the public sector for people with disability (such as GRADS)
- Support for the Enablers Network, an employee-led association for people with lived experience of disability and their allies in the Victorian public sector
- Equitable access to all roles flex for people with disability.

How were key themes identified in developing **Getting to work**?

Getting to work was informed by consultation with key stakeholders, including government departments and Victorian public sector employees with disability.

The key themes that emerged were the need to:

- Provide pathways from education to employment by way of work experience, traineeships, and graduate positions
- Establish a disability confident culture by demonstrating leadership commitment, ensuring recruitment policies are inclusive, and providing training and awareness raising opportunities for staff across all levels of the VPS.

How does **Getting to Work** fit with the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a significant reform that is changing the way disability services are funded and accessed in Victoria to ensure people with disability get the support and services they need and deserve. This will mean better outcomes for people with disability through greater choice and control over the services and decisions affecting their lives.

Enhancing the economic participation of people with disability is a key objective of the NDIS, one that requires complementary effort outside of the scheme itself.

As a major employer, the Victorian Government has a significant role to play in improving employment outcomes for people with disability. With the support available through the National Disability Insurance Scheme, an increased number of people with disability will be seeking employment in the public sector.

How will the Victorian public sector achieve its vision?

Our vision for the future is a capable and diverse public sector that better reflects the diversity of the Victorian community and benefits from the experience that people with disability bring to the workplace.

We want people with disability to be engaged in flexible and sustainable employment and have opportunities to develop and succeed. We want people with disability to be valued, respected and supported at work. The public sector will continue to work in partnership with people with disability, disability community organisations, employee networks, unions, and other key stakeholders to achieve lasting change

Who will lead the implementation of the plan?

Responsibility is shared across the public sector. The Victorian Secretaries Board will lead and drive change. Departments, Victoria Police and other public sector agencies will deliver fit-for-purpose actions that lead to meaningful employment and increased representation of people with disability across every level of their organisations. The VPSC will support and coordinate the public sector to implement **Getting to work**, sharing good practice, data insights and progress reports.

How will progress be measured?

Progress towards the public sector disability employment target will be tracked through the annual public sector employee opinion survey (People Matter). The results of this survey are made available publicly on the VPSC's website. Progress towards the public sector disability employment target will also be tabled in the Victorian parliament on an annual basis, as part of reporting against **Absolutely everyone: state disability plan 2017-2020**.

Were people with disability consulted in developing **Getting to work**?

Yes. We consulted with and listened to people with lived experience of disability. We conducted surveys and facilitated workshops across government to seek input and feedback. We also worked closely with The Enablers Network, an employee-led association for people with lived experience of disability and their allies in the Victorian public sector, to develop this plan.

What is the official definition of disability in the Victorian public sector?

The Victorian public sector has based its definition of disability on, with some amendments noted below, the United Nations (UN) definition of disability: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term (lasting 6 months or more) physical, mental health, intellectual, neurological or sensory impairments which in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The VPSC, in consultation with departments, made a number of amendments to the definition:

- 'lasting 6 months or more' to distinguish disability from injury
- 'health' has been added to reflect current practice in defining mental health
- 'neurological' has been added to highlight conditions like autism (sometimes referred to as 'neurodiversity')
- 'attitudinal' has been added to clarify that negative attitudes can be as much a barrier for people with disability as physical barriers.

How is data on the employment of people with disability across the VPS collected?

The VPSC collects data on disability employment annually through the People Matter Survey, a public sector employee opinion survey. The VPSC reports on disability representation through the **State of the Public Sector in Victoria** publication on an annual basis.

What are workplace or reasonable adjustments?

Being flexible about working conditions can allow organisations to attract and retain more people with disability. Some people with disability may not need any changes to the workplace to be able to do their job. Some may need minor adjustments that can be easily made at minimal or no cost. Others may need specific equipment or changes to the physical environment to help them do their work. Such changes are referred to as 'reasonable adjustments'.

Employers are legally required to make workplace adjustments for people with disability. Workplace adjustments can be applied throughout the employee life cycle to ensure people with disability are not disadvantaged in the workplace. This ensures fairness for people with disability as access to workplace adjustments can help them to perform at their best at work.

Examples of workplace adjustments include:

- providing access to interpreters at meetings
- providing access to a job coach
- job sharing between a person with disability and a co-worker
- supporting working from home arrangements
- providing disability representation on selection panels
- allowing paid and unpaid leave
- providing hypothetical or situational interview questions
- modifying the duties involved in a job
- providing different tests in assessment centres
- providing written instructions, task lists, labels, prompts or reminders
- providing clear and constant daily routines
- exchanging duties between a person with disability and a co-worker
- providing extra rest breaks
- allowing flexible working hours
- participating in rostering decisions
- permitting part-time work.

If reasonable adjustments are required to help an employee with disability to do his or her job, costs may be covered by the Commonwealth Government's Employment Assistance Fund.

Are people with disability being given special treatment?

No. People with disability are not being given special treatment under the plan. We recognise the need to level the playing field for people with disability because of the disadvantage they face in the labour market. People with disability face unconscious bias, stereotypes and negative assumptions about their ability which diminish their opportunities. **Getting to work** will support public sector employers to find hidden talent.

How do I find out more about careers in the Victorian public sector?

We are committed to ensuring our workforce is reflective of the community we serve and this includes increasing the employment of people with disability and actively promoting awareness and understanding to create inclusive and diverse work environments.

Learn more about careers in the Victorian public sector including disability employment pathways at careers.vic.gov.au

How do I apply for a job in the Victorian public sector?

We strongly encourage people with disability to apply for jobs in the Victorian Government. Most job vacancies are advertised on careers.vic.gov.au

Departments and agencies might also use disability employment service providers, jobs boards, newspapers agency web careers pages and specialist publications for more technical roles. You can also gain help at any stage of the recruitment process by contacting the human resources branch in the department or agency, or the nominated contact officer for an advertised vacancy.

How do I find out more?

The Disability Employment Team at the VPSC welcomes any questions you may have about **Getting to work**. Email info@vpsc.vic.gov.au