

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERS



Public sector leaders have a responsibility to create inclusive and respectful workplaces free from discrimination, and support prospective and existing employees and their managers.

Many approaches can be adopted at an organisational level which create a flow-on effect to departments and divisions. Public sector leaders, including Directors and senior staff, need to lead and drive change and demonstrate their commitment to increased employment outcomes for people with disability.

Employees at all levels can be champions and allies. We can all support people with disability by raising awareness, promoting a positive workplace culture, and providing an authorising environment to ensure barriers are removed to improve employment outcomes for people with disability.

Key outcomes for public sector leaders

- Increased visibility of the disability employment action plan across the sector
- Disability Champions demonstrate understanding, confidence, and capability to enable implementation of the disability employment action plan
- The public sector brand is enhanced as an employer of choice

Disability Confidence

Disability confidence is about creating safe, inclusive, and respectful workplaces free from discrimination. It is the way we increase our knowledge of workplace barriers and understand how we can go about removing them to increase access and inclusion.

As public sector leaders it is important to understand disability confidence and the role you play to deliver key messages in your organisation. The [Australian Network on Disability](#) (AND) have multiple resources below to assist you in building disability confidence.

- [Inclusive Language](#)
- [Disability Etiquette](#)
- [Sharing Disability information](#)

The accepted way in which we think and talk about disability includes the social model which focuses on access and inclusion.

Sharing disability information

In line with the social model of disability, the Victorian public sector is committed to providing inclusive and respectful workplaces free from discrimination. To ensure we create that environment we have reframed how we talk about 'disability disclosure'. We encourage people with disability to share their disability information and feel safe to provide us with meaningful information on experiences and barriers for our continuous improvement.

The Victorian public sector currently monitors disability information using the People Matter Survey (PMS). This is confidential and de-identified and focuses on the overall workplace experiences of people with disability. The PMS captures rich data about engagement, job satisfaction, and other characteristics of the work environment as well as workplace adjustments. As part of our commitment to increasing access and inclusion we will use this tool to measure our progress towards achieving positive workplace experiences for people with disability.

Mental Health in the workplace

Creating a mentally healthy workplace must be as important for organisations as creating a physically healthy workplace.

Ultimately, workplace health is a leadership issue, and change must start at the top. Organisational leaders play a critical role in driving policies and practices that promote mental health. Leaders can positively influence workplace culture, management practices and the experience of employees.

For more information on how to increase mental health awareness and create supportive workplaces, please refer to the [Heads Up healthy workplaces](#) website.

Checklist – How disability friendly is your organisation?

To measure your organisation's journey toward access and inclusion you can refer to this handy checklist.

Key considerations include your policies and programs, job descriptions, advertising, interview selection and retention strategies. View the [federal government's checklist](#) on the Australian Public Sector Commission website.

Forums and Networks

Connecting with others is an important part of creating an accessible and inclusive workplace. Our forums, networks and champions are great way to increase your understanding of disability and help us embed access and inclusion in everything we do.

We have established forums and networks listed below:

Disability Champion Round Table

The Disability Champion Round Table consists of Deputy Secretaries nominated by the Victorian Secretaries Board who are accountable for the delivery of fit for purpose actions that lead to meaningful employment and increased representation of people with disability across every level of their organisations. The group meet a minimum of twice a year.

Disability Employment Community of Practice

The Disability Employment Community of Practice (CoP) provides a dedicated network for human resource managers and diversity and inclusion teams to learn about and share practical examples, experience and resources related to disability employment. The CoP also actively supports **Getting to work** and acts as an advocate for its outcomes. The CoP meets a minimum of every second

month.

Enablers Network

The Enablers Network is an employee-led association for people with lived experience of disability and their allies in the Victorian public sector, first established in 2016. The Enablers Network is an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming forum for people with disability and their allies to express a strong and united voice for change. It is the first sector-wide association for employees with disability in any State and Territory public sector. The purpose of the Enablers Network, in supporting Victorian Government departments and agencies to become leading disability confident employers, is to advance equity, equality, accessibility, and inclusion for people with disability in the Victorian public sector.

Disability Employee Networks

Throughout the public sector there are several Disability Employee Networks, including;

- Autism Success Network
- Victoria Police Employment Accessibility Advocacy Network
- DELWP Enablers Network
- DHHS Enablers Network

If you would like to learn more about the established forums and networks, please contact Liz Parkinson, Project Manager, Disability Employment Action Plan by phone (03) 9651 0845 or email elizabeth.parkinson@vpssc.vic.gov.au

Access and Inclusion Index

The Access and Inclusion Index was developed by Australian Network on Disability to test your organisation's level of accessibility and inclusiveness. A self-assessment questionnaire can help you identify potential improvements and to further develop and progress your plans.

The [Access and Inclusion index](#) is available on the Australian Network on Disability website.