



EPA VICTORIA DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 TO 2011



FOREWORD

I'm pleased to present EPA Victoria's first Disability Action Plan 2009–2011 (the Plan).

The vision at the heart of the Plan is an EPA Victoria (EPA) that is accessible to and inclusive of all people with a disability, their family, friends and carers.

While the Plan has been developed to ensure compliance with the Disability Act 2006 (Vic), it has also been developed in the spirit of human rights, to ensure that our organisation is mindful how we engage with stakeholders, communities and individuals.

The Plan signals a commitment to improving outcomes for all people with a disability who engage with our organisation – its services, programs, and other opportunities including, but not limited to, gaining and maintaining employment and developing their careers with EPA.

EPA's purpose – to protect, care for and improve our environment – can not be achieved in isolation. Our ongoing success is closely tied to our ability to build effective relationships with people – our clients, stakeholders and communities – as well as our ability to attract, maintain and develop a skilled and professional workforce.

Effective disability action planning will improve the way we do business and help us to foster our organisational values of collaboration, innovation, integrity and respect.

Our values, which provide important guidance as to the way we are to engage with all people, also provide a lens through which service planning and implementation can be enhanced. Our values are integral to effective disability action planning.

EPA recognises that the true value of our Plan will exist in its implementation, ongoing improvement and achievement of actual outcomes. EPA therefore undertakes to not only support and resource our Plan, but also monitor and review it on a regular basis, to ensure it is as effective as it can be.

I would like to personally thank EPA's Disability Advisory Committee, who provided leadership and guidance in developing the Plan.



Mick Bourke
Chairman
EPA Victoria

ABOUT DISABILITY

This Plan has been developed in the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008 (the Convention), which Australia has ratified.

EPA has adopted the definitional approach set out in Article 1 of the Convention, namely that

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The key to this approach is the phrase "in interaction with various barriers". In other words, disability results from an interaction between a non-inclusive society and individuals. This model of disability, sometimes referred to as the 'social model', recognises that while people with a disability have impairments that affect how they function, it is the barriers that exist in society that actually create disability.

From this perspective, disability is not something that rests with individuals as a bodily condition – it rests with us all, as a condition of society. The challenge, from a human rights perspective, is to create a more inclusive society. Through effective disability action planning, organisations such as EPA can contribute to social change, through systematically removing the barriers, within our control, that prevent people with disabilities from participating fully in society.

The Convention marks a 'paradigm shift' in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Rather than viewing them as 'objects' of charity, medical treatment or social protection, the Convention views persons with disabilities as 'subjects' with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent, as well as being active members of society.

The Victorian Government is leading the way in building a human rights culture in Australia, and this is evidenced through a range of legislative instruments and strategic directions. The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic) is an agreed set of democratic rights and freedoms protected by law that requires all public authorities, and any organisation providing public services on behalf of Government, to act in a way that is consistent with human rights.

The Victorian Government understands that people with disabilities, like all members of the community, should have access to a range of programs, services, facilities and employment opportunities that support quality of life. This is reflected in *A Fairer Victoria* and also in the *State Disability Plan 2002-2012*, in which the Victorian Government has made a commitment to making public services accessible.

While disability may be difficult to define, formal definitions such as those in legislation at State (Disability Act 2006) and federal level (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) reveal that disability is much wider than normally thought.

For instance, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 definition covers disabilities which are physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory and neurological. This definition also covers physical disfigurement and the presence of disease causing organisms, such as HIV. It is

important to note that this definition covers a disability that currently exists, may exist in the future or is imputed to a person.

With such wide-ranging definitions, it is not surprising that the incidence of disability is far higher than normally considered. This is borne out by recent demographic data showing that 20 per cent of the Australian population has a disability.

The data also reveal that the incidence of disability is increasing, in line with the ageing of the population as the baby-boomer generation moves into retirement.

In summary, EPA recognises that effective disability action planning makes good sense both organisationally and socially. It provides a clear framework for addressing issues of equity, diversity and access, in a way that improves the work environment both physically and culturally for all.

Implementation of the Plan will assist EPA to deliver the very best services, both internally and externally, by creating a work environment and culture that are attuned to improving outcomes in the areas of human rights, equity, access and inclusion.

Taking action towards our goals, as envisioned in our Plan, will create a momentum of its own. Through ongoing implementation, review and improvement, opportunities will exist to significantly innovate our work practices and to move towards a more inclusive organisational culture. In doing so, we will contribute to the social change that is required to foster a more inclusive society.

DISABILITY POLICY

EPA recognises the number and diversity of people with disabilities in the community, and within its own workforce.

EPA will use its position of influence in the community and within the network of public sector bodies to promote consistent business practices that do not exclude people with disabilities from within EPA's own services, programs and facilities, and within our dealings with other agencies in the public and private sectors.

EPA's Disability Action Plan addresses the four outcome areas as set out in section 38 of the Disability Act 2006 (Victoria):

- 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.

EPA undertakes to consult regularly with people with disabilities, to follow best practice principles in hiring and sustaining its employees with disabilities, and to encourage similar undertakings with other organisations.

EPA will resource its Plan, and undertakes to regularly monitor, evaluate and review it. EPA will report on the implementation of its Plan in its annual report, as required by section 38 of the Disability Act 2006.

Endorsed
Chairman
EPA Victoria Board
24 February 2009

OUR VISION FOR DISABILITY ACTION PLANNING

At the heart of our Plan, is the following vision. That:

EPA Victoria is accessible to and inclusive of
all people with a disability,
their family, friends and carers.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF OUR DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

Although the key objectives of the Plan are derived from the Disability Act 2006, as an organisation we recognise that we can do more, and have expanded our objectives in line with our values. The additional emphases are indicated by an asterisk (*).

The objectives of our plan are to:

- 1) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services, facilities *and information**
- 2) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment *and developing their careers with EPA**
- 3) Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- 4) Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability

KEY THINGS WE ARE GOING TO DO:

Our plan identifies a total of 29 actions across the four outcome areas. Some of the initial actions we are going to take will lead to further actions. The key initial actions are:

- Reviewing our recruitment processes and policies to assess how accessible they are to persons with a disability.
- Reviewing the current accessibility of the EPA website and intranet, to determine compatibility with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium.
- Investigating options for more accessible telephone systems.
- Developing an EPA Style Guide to be applied to all our public documents (drawing on other established Style Guides which have been developed for this purpose).
- Developing a Disability Access Audit Project Plan to audit access of our buildings and facilities.
- Providing disability awareness training for all existing staff and contractors as part of the Learning and Development Strategy.
- Reviewing EPA's Evacuation and Emergency Plans and procedures.

All 29 actions are summarised under the four outcome areas, detailed on pages 12-17. There is a mix of short term and longer term initiatives.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

To help employees understand their role in supporting the Plan, the following responsibilities have been identified.

All employees are responsible for:

- understanding the Plan and its implications; and
- participating in learning and development initiatives to support Disability Awareness.

EPA's Executive Management Team is responsible for:

- understanding obligations regarding disability action planning and reporting;
- approving the Plan;
- meeting reporting obligations; and
- consolidating EPA commitment to disability action planning at the Directorate level.

Unit Managers are responsible for:

- accepting assigned responsibility for action(s) identified in the Plan;
- planning and budgeting resources for the actions; and
- building relevant actions into Unit and individual performance plans as appropriate

EPA's Disability Advisory Committee is responsible for:

- developing, monitoring and reviewing the Plan; and
- overseeing preparation of annual reporting information

The People and Culture Unit, as custodian of the Plan, is responsible for

- supporting and guiding EPA's Disability Advisory Committee;
- providing advice and support to EPA's Executive Management Team, Managers and employees; and
- showing leadership in disability action planning through role-modelling appropriate workplace attitudes and behaviours and delivering on assigned actions.



ABOUT EPA

The purpose of this section of the Plan is to provide a brief overview of EPA, to assist those unfamiliar with our organisation, to better understand it.

Our Strategic Directions and Values

EPA's purpose – to protect, care for and improve our environment – is underpinned by five delivery objectives and a set of four values. These are:

OBJECTIVES:

Increase resource efficiency
Reduce emission impacts
Enhance our reputation
Benefit the economy
Tackle climate change

VALUES:

Collaboration
Innovation
Integrity
Respect

What we do

Over the last 38 years, EPA achieved a lot for the environment in a time when pollution was the priority.

Today we operate in a dramatically different environmental, political, commercial and social landscape. We've never before faced challenges like climate change and resource overuse.

Victorians want us to continue to protect the environment as we have done in the past. But we now need to also focus on the challenges of our time and adopt new ways to address these challenges.

EPA will continue to deliver great things for Victoria's environment, community and economy by successfully delivering our strategic objectives.

Our Structure

EPA's structure enables us to achieve our strategic objectives.

The structure has seven key areas with the following focuses:

Client Services Directorate

- Provides client management services to enable the delivery of EPA services that meet the needs of our clients and achieve EPA's strategic objectives.

The Client Services Directorate comprises 6 units: Client & Customer Service; EPA Gippsland; EPA Bendigo; EPA Geelong, EPA Wangaratta; and EPA Dandenong.

Environmental Services Directorate

- Delivers environmental services to our clients including works approvals, licences, enforcement, pollution response, collaborations, sustainability advice and environmental monitoring.

The Environmental Services Directorate comprises 6 units: Sustainable Solutions; Statutory Facilitation; Environmental Performance; Pollution Response; Enforcement Unit; and Environmental Monitoring.

Business Development Directorate

- Defines and improves current services and develops new services for clients to meet EPA's strategic objectives.

The Business Development Directorate comprises 4 units: Service Growth; Service Knowledge; Regulatory Innovation; and Marketing.

Future Focus Directorate

- Develops corporate and environmental strategies that position EPA for the future.

The Future Focus Directorate comprises 4 units: Corporate Strategy, Environmental Strategies; Knowledge & Research; and Environmental Assessment.

Corporate Resources Directorate

- Supports EPA with good governance, business systems and internal support.

The Corporate Resources Directorate comprises 4 units: Assurance & Project Management; Business Systems and Applications; Information Technology; and Finance.

Organisational Growth Directorate

- Supports our people and culture, the way we engage with the community, and drives change in the organisation.

The Organisational Growth Directorate comprises 3 units: Organisational Transition; People & Culture; and Community & Stakeholder Engagement.

Chairman's Directorate

- Supports and advises the Chairman on a range of strategic and legal issues.

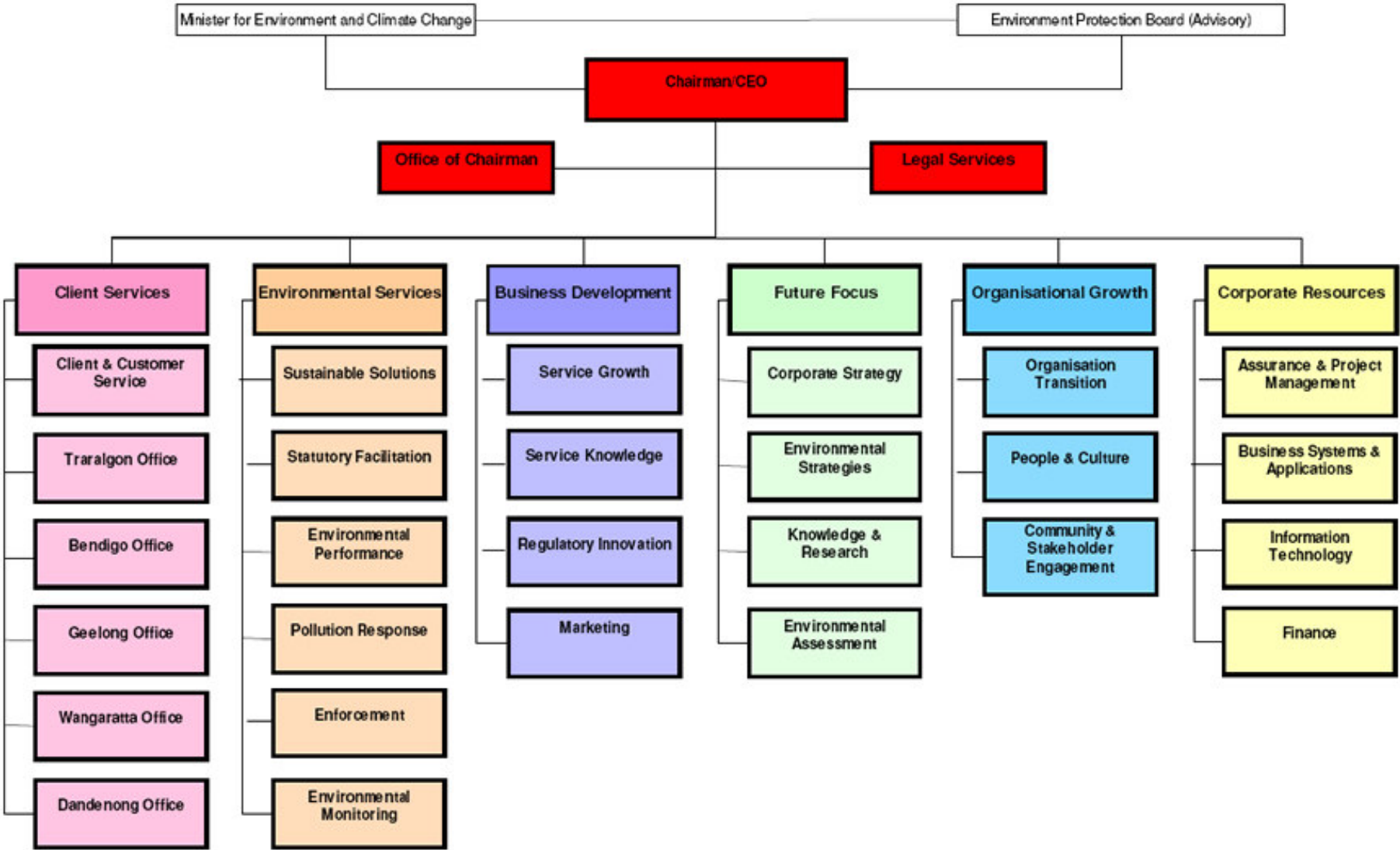
The Chairman's Directorate comprises 2 units: Office of the Chairman; and Legal Services.

EPA's organisational structure is illustrated on the next page.



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 TO 2011

EPA Victoria's organisational structure:



CONSULTATION

Development of EPA's Disability Action Plan 2009–2011 has been guided by EPA's Disability Advisory Committee (the Committee), which was established in January 2009.

The Committee is chaired by John Williamson, Director, Organisational Growth, and comprises the persons listed below.

- John Williamson Director, Organisational Growth (Chair)
- Catherine Quinn, People & Culture, Organisational Growth (Secretary)
- Robert Head, Manager, Organisational Transition, Organisational Growth
- Terri Elliott, Stakeholder & Community Engagement, Organisational Growth
- Carol Hargreaves, Environmental Monitoring Unit, Environmental Services
- Jenni Mann, Manager, Finance, Corporate Resources
- Ann Telford, Manager, North East Region, Client Services
- Max Costello, Legal Services, Office of the Chairman
- Andrew Marshall, Environmental Assessment Unit, Future Focus
- Dr George Taleporos, Disability Awareness Consultant
- Raffaella Calafiore, Community Services Manager & Industry Training Consultant, Education Training & Employment Australia
- Julie Holmes, Julie Holmes Consulting

Researching and preparing this plan has been an instructive and rewarding experience for all members of the Committee.

Having worked intensively to research and develop the Plan, the Committee, under its ongoing terms of reference, will monitor, review and improve the Plan.

The Committee will meet a minimum of 4 times per year, and at other times on demand.

The Committee will oversee preparation of annual reporting information relating to the Plan, and will oversee an annual review, to ensure that the Plan's short and long term goals are met.

A key outcome for the Committee will be ensuring the Plan becomes a powerful driver of inclusion and innovation within EPA.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY VICTORIA – DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 - 2011

(A) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing services, goods, facilities and information
Section 38(a) Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
<i>Improving the accessibility of EPA's communication with persons with a disability:</i>			
A1 Review the current accessibility of the EPA website, specifically to determine its compatibility with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium.	September 2009	Marketing	Accessibility of website determined and plans made if required to ensure its compatibility with the relevant standards
A2 Review the current accessibility of the EPA intranet, specifically to determine its compatibility with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium.	September 2009	Marketing	Accessibility of intranet determined and plans made if required to ensure its compatibility with the relevant standards
A3 Develop an EPA Style Guide to be applied to all EPA public documents	2009-2010, application ongoing	Marketing	Style Guide developed and being used
A4 Develop a standardised and documented protocol to ensure that public meetings are accessible	2009-2010, then ongoing	Community & Stakeholder Engagement	Protocol documented and applied to all public meetings
A5 Develop a protocol for responding to requests in alternative formats	2009-2010	People and Culture, in conjunction with Client Services	Protocol developed
A6 Investigate options for more accessible telephone systems, including consideration of introducing a TTY (telephone typewriter or text telephone) system and/or SMS system in EPA offices	2009-2010	IT and Client & Customer Service	TTY system and/or SMS operational in EPA offices



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 TO 2011

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
A7 Investigate options for introducing Hearing Loop at public meetings (can include portable or permanent options)	2009-2010	Finance, in conjunction with IT	Options investigated and plans made to enable Hearing Loop in public meetings and public consultations where requested
A8 Include a statement on all EPA publications that all publications can be made available in alternative formats or in larger print on request	2009-2010	Marketing	Statement exists on all EPA publications
<i>Improving access to EPA facilities for persons with a disability:</i>			
Develop an Access Audit Project Plan	2009-2010	Finance	Access Audit Project Plan is developed
A10 Undertake access audits of EPA buildings as per the Access Audit Plan	2010-2011	Finance	Access audits undertaken
A11 Develop a Retrofitting Policy	2010-2011	Finance	Retrofitting Policy is developed
A12 Ensure that the new Victoria Street EPA office is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Australian Standards for access to premises and the Building Code of Australia	2009-2010, on going	Organisational Growth	New EPA office is fully compliant with the DDA, Australian Standards and the BCA
A13 Review the EPA Evacuation and Emergency Plan and procedure	2009-2010	Finance	Evacuation and Emergency Plan and Procedure reviewed and further actions identified as required
<i>Enhancing the disability awareness of EPA staff and contractors:</i>			
A14 Incorporate disability awareness training into existing EPA induction for all new staff and contractors	2009-2010, ongoing	People & Culture	Disability awareness training is a standard component of induction training
A15 Introduce disability awareness training for all existing staff and contractors as part of the Learning and Development Strategy	2009-2010, ongoing	People & Culture	All EPA staff and contractors have undertaken disability awareness training

(B) Reducing barriers to persons with a disability with regard to obtaining and maintaining employment and developing their careers with EPA Victoria
Section 38(b) Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
<i>Ensuring that EPA recruitment processes are not discriminatory to persons with a disability:</i>			
B1 Undertake a review of current recruitment processes and policies to assess EPA's accessibility to persons with a disability (including advertising practices, position descriptions, short-listing and interview practices)	July 2009	Assurance & Project Management, in conjunction with People & Culture	Review undertaken and plans made to improve recruitment processes and policies as required
B2 Review current training of staff involved in recruitment (including external agencies) to identify whether training encourages accessible recruitment practices	2009-2010	People and Culture	Review undertaken and training plan modified if required
B3 Ensure that access to learning & development opportunities are supported for staff with a disability	Ongoing	Line Managers	Staff with a disability are supported by Line Managers and are able to equitably access training and development opportunities. This is to be monitored through the annual People Matters survey
B4 Investigate options for a traineeship program targeting people with disabilities	2009-2010	People and Culture	Options for a traineeship program investigated and further actions identified as required

(C) Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
Section 38(c) Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
C1 Encourage the participation of persons with disabilities in EPA community events and consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek links with relevant Local Government Disability Officers to make use of their community networks to increase participation of people with disabilities in EPA community events and consultations 	2009-2010, ongoing	Community and Stakeholder Engagement	Increased participation by persons with a disability in EPA community events and consultations
C2 Undertake a review of EPA's Greenhouse Calculator and Ecological Footprint on the EPA website to determine accessibility to persons with a disability	2011-2012	Business Development	Review undertaken and, if required a plan developed to remove any barriers to persons with a disability using the Greenhouse Calculator and Ecological Footprint
C3 As part of the audit of the Greenhouse Calculator , determine whether the benchmarks applied in it are realistic for persons with a disability	2011-2012	Business Development	An assessment is made as to the fairness of the benchmarks and, if required a plan developed to improve their equity to persons with a disability
C4 Ensure that a Disability Advisory Committee continues to monitor implementation of the Disability Action Plan on a quarterly basis	2009-2010, ongoing	People and Culture	Disability Advisory Committee meets on a quarterly basis to monitor implementation of the Disability Action Plan
C5 Ensure that persons with a disability continue to be involved in the implementation of the EPA Disability Action Plan	2009-2010, ongoing	People and Culture	At least 2 persons with a disability and at least one person with a lived experience of disability (e.g. family member, carer or friend) continue to be involved on the Disability Advisory Committee



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009 TO 2011

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
C6 Ensure that once developed, the Disability Action Plan is promoted widely within the EPA and also in publications, on the EPA website etc (and in alternative formats)	2009-2010, ongoing	People and Culture, Organisation Transition, Marketing and Community and Stakeholder Engagement	The Disability Action Plan is well known to EPA staff and EPA customers, including those with a disability
C7 Review the EPA Community Engagement Improvement Strategy to determine its inclusiveness of persons with a disability	2009-2010	Community and Stakeholder Engagement	Review is undertaken and, if required a plan developed to improve the inclusiveness of the Community Engagement Strategy to persons with a disability

**(D) Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability
Section 38(d) disability Act 2006 (Vic)**

Action	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance Indicator
D1 Review People Matter Survey to identify questions that assist in monitoring changes in attitudes and practices, and develop additional questions, if required, to help measure EPA's performance as an employer of choice for persons with a disability	June 2009, ongoing	People and Culture	Questions included and responses considered in the evaluation of each annual survey
D2 Ensure that accountability for actions in EPA's Disability Action Plan are filtered into EPA business planning processes across all business units (including through the Career, Performance, and Progression System – CPPS)	2009-2010, ongoing	People and Culture and Corporate Strategy	Disability Action Plan actions are included in all EPA business planning, including through CPPS
D3 Undertake periodic forums for EPA staff to promote EPA's Disability Action Plan and promote its achievements to date	2009-2010, ongoing	People and Culture	Periodic forums conducted



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions in relation to EPA's Disability Action Plan please contact:

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Textphone: details to be provided and will be published when available.

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