



*Every  
child,  
every  
opportunity*



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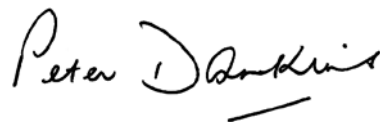
## Message from the Secretary

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) has a strong commitment to diversity and the principles of fair treatment and inclusion. Responding to the diverse needs of young Victorians, in particular those with a disability, and developing a workforce reflective of people of all abilities is part of our core business.

*The DEECD Disability Action Plan 2009–2012* outlines a wide range of actions that will be undertaken over the next three years to optimise participation and positive outcomes for people with a disability. The actions address key areas: access to goods, services and facilities; access to (and retention of) employment; the promotion of participation and inclusion of people with disability in the community; changing attitudes and practices discriminating against people with disability.

The *DEECD Disability Action Plan 2009–2012* has been endorsed by the Departmental Management Committee, and offices and statutory authorities of the Department will be accountable for implementing the plan.

The Department will work closely with staff, stakeholders, people with a disability and the Disability Advisory Council of Victoria to ensure an inclusive education environment which provides all Victorians with the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a world-class education and early childhood development system.



**Prof. Peter Dawkins**  
Secretary



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# Executive Summary

The *DEECD Disability Action Plan* is a whole-of-department plan covering all DEECD Offices, the VCAA, the VRQA and the Merit Protection Boards.



## Background

This is the second disability action plan (DAP) of the (now) Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). The first DAP, *Disability Action Plan 2005–2008* was developed in response to the Victorian Government's social policy agenda in *A Fairer Victoria* (2005). It launched the Department's journey towards greater awareness of the barriers faced by people with disabilities and resulted in a range of structural and procedural changes that have made business practices more accessible and inclusive.

The Department's second disability action plan will continue this journey, with new initiatives focused on a new set of outcomes. The *DEECD Disability Action Plan 2009–2012*

(*DEECD DAP* or 'plan') has been developed in accordance with the *Disability Act 2006 (Vic.)*, which requires all Victorian public sector organisations to:

- reduce barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- reduce barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment
- promote inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability.

The DEECD Disability Action Plan Committee has worked with all business areas to develop the commitments in this plan, and gain General Manager endorsement. The

Committee comprises staff and management from each of the Department's Offices, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), and staff with disabilities.

### Key features

- The creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in 2007 enabled the inclusion of initiatives addressing the needs of children and young people with disabilities from birth to 18+ years.
- The plan has a new section focusing on the integration of disability issues into the Department's business processes, such as strategic and business planning, auditing and risk management. The implementation of the initiatives in the plan will be strengthened by their inclusion in divisional and office business plans.
- The workforce is a focus of the employment initiatives in the plan, with access to a specialist disability recruitment provider to assist people with disabilities to apply for positions in the Department.

### Monitoring and updating of the DEECD DAP

The DEECD Disability Action Plan Committee will be reviewing the plan periodically to ensure it remains current with DEECD structure and program delivery. New initiatives will be added to the four-year plan as they emerge.

The Department's progress in achieving the four outcome areas will be monitored by the Office for Disability in the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD), using a whole-of-Victorian Government (WoVG) monitoring framework. In addition, the Department is required to report on its progress in meeting its *Disability Act 2006 (Vic.)* commitments in the *DEECD Annual Report*.

The plan is a public document that can be obtained from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/disability.htm>.



# Introduction

The *Disability Act 2006 (Vic.)* requires all public sector organisations to develop and implement a disability action plan (s.38).

## Why develop a disability action plan?

It provides a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to enabling people with a disability to participate in the life of our community.

The Act recognises that people with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community, including the right to:

- be respected
- live free from abuse, neglect or exploitation
- realise their capacity for physical, social, emotional and intellectual development
- exercise control over their own lives
- participate actively in the decisions that affect their lives and have information and be supported where necessary to enable this to occur
- access information and communication in a manner appropriate to their communication and cultural needs
- services that support their quality of life.

Public sector disability action plans (DAPs) are also an integral part of the Victorian Government's strategy for addressing disadvantage in our community, as outlined in *A Fairer Victoria*. People with a disability have been a key focus of the *A Fairer Victoria* since its release in 2005.

## A disability action plan can help meet the Department's objectives

In its 2008 *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Education* (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint2008/>) the Government identified improving outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians as a priority. The Blueprint states that Government will:

*better support children and young people with a disability or developmental delay by developing a whole-of-government strategy for Victorians aged 0–18, rolling out the first phase of 1000 additional Early Childhood Intervention Service places and completing the Early Childhood Intervention Reform Project.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Blueprint factsheet – priorities for next 12 months.  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/directions/blueprint2008/factsheet.htm>

*The DEECD Corporate Plan 2009–2011* (p. 24) states that addressing issues of social inclusion and disadvantage will be a focus of the Department as it works towards achieving four key priorities:

- 1 Increase access to high-quality early childhood health, education and care services
- 2 Strengthen public confidence in a world-class education system, with a strong and vibrant government school sector as its core
- 3 Integrate services for children and families
- 4 Improve outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians.

The *DEECD Organisational Development Framework* (the *Framework*) articulates an approach to building organisational capability:

*Organisational capability is DEECD's ability to successfully deliver early childhood and education services and fulfil its vision, mission and reform commitments to government, communities, parents and children.*

As the initiatives in the plan relating to staff training, information provision and organisational awareness are implemented, the Department's capacity to deliver effective and inclusive services to Victorians with disabilities will be enhanced.

In turn, the further development and roll-out of the *Framework* provides an opportunity to profile the principles of equity and fairness on which the disability action plan is based. This will contribute to an organisation which increasingly recognises the core elements of the *Framework* – 'Shared purpose' and 'Shared values'. The *Framework* will also encourage Department staff to work sensitively and effectively with our diverse workforce and the community, and ensure that all future policies and practices are consistent with these understandings and commitments.



# Introduction continued



## What is meant by ‘disability’?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines disability as:

*any limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities. Examples range from hearing loss which requires the use of a hearing aid, to difficulty dressing due to arthritis, to advanced dementia requiring constant help and supervision’.<sup>2</sup>*

This definition is consistent with the meaning of ‘disability’ commonly held in the community and is used for many purposes including the collection of national data.

Disability is increasingly being recognised as an emerging concept arising from the relationship between a person’s impairment and the attitudes of those around them.<sup>3</sup> This approach considers disability to result from the interaction of three factors: medical condition, bodily function, and the social and physical environment.

There are four broad categories of impairment (see table 1). Disability arises when a person cannot do everyday tasks because their social and physical environment does not account for their impairment.

**Table 1: Impairment categories**

Impairment category	Effects/symptoms
<b>Intellectual and cognitive</b>	People with an intellectual or cognitive impairment experience difficulty with comprehension and learning.
<b>Physical</b>	Physical impairment affects a person’s mobility and can limit their ability to move about, get up and sit down, carry things, etc.
<b>Psychiatric</b>	Psychiatric impairment is a general term for illnesses that cause symptoms such as mood changes, psychotic episodes, auditory or visual hallucinations, or delusions.
<b>Sensory</b>	A sensory impairment affects one or more of the five senses, most commonly hearing and sight.

### Some facts and figures about disability

One-in-five people in Australia (20 per cent) have a reported disability.<sup>4</sup>

Disability can occur at any time in life. Some conditions that cause disability are present from birth; however, most people with a disability acquire their impairment as an adult.

The prevalence of *profound or severe core-activity limiting* disability increases from 3 per cent of 0–4 year olds to 10 per cent of 65–69 year olds, and then dramatically rises to 74 per cent of those aged 90+ years.<sup>5</sup>

In 2003, one-in-four people (24 per cent) aged 15–64 years with a profound or severe core-activity limiting disability (living in households) had completed Year 12. This compares to half (49 per cent) of those without a disability. People with a profound or severe core-activity limitation were also less likely to have completed a diploma or higher qualification (14 per cent) than those without a disability (28 per cent).<sup>6</sup>

Disability rates increase with age, reaching 92 per cent of those aged 90 or over. As the Australian population ages, it is expected that the proportion of Australians with a disability will increase.<sup>7</sup>

The rate of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is almost twice as high as that of non-Indigenous people.<sup>8</sup>

It has also been estimated that one-in-four people with a disability comes from a non-English speaking background, or is the child of parents from a non-English speaking background.

Each person's experience of disability is different, being influenced by the attitudes of others towards their impairment; how much the community values the differences between people; how easy it is for a person to get access to information and services; and the physical environment.

<sup>2</sup> *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003, p3.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Preamble.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings*, 2003, p3.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Australia's Welfare*, 2007, p167.

# Introduction continued

The *DEECD Disability Action Plan 2009–2012* (*DEECD DAP* or the ‘*plan*’) is a strategic whole-of-Department improvement plan to ensure that DEECD programs and services consider the needs of Victorians with disabilities.

## The DEECD Disability Action Plan 2009–2012

The plan will help the Department identify and remove barriers preventing people with a disability from:

- accessing the Department’s goods and services
- obtaining and maintaining employment with DEECD
- taking part in the organisations’ activities.

The development and implementation of the *DEECD DAP* is also an important way to increase awareness and change attitudes about the issues facing people with disabilities. The *DEECD DAP* is a living document, which will be updated periodically to reflect new developments as they emerge.

## The four outcome areas

Section 38 of the *Disability Act 2006 (Vic.)* requires disability action plans to address four outcome areas:

- reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities
- reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment

- promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability
- achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against persons with a disability.

The first two outcome areas are concerned with accessibility to goods, services, facilities and employment. The initiatives in the *DEECD DAP* grouped under these outcomes focus on the Department’s programs and business practices impacting on these issues. The third and fourth outcome areas require the Department to engage at both a cultural and a practical level with the prevailing values, attitudes and practices of the organisation impacting on people with disabilities.

In practical terms, this means that business units must consider how their work affects the ability of Victorians with disabilities to interact with the early childhood and education sector. Increased inclusion can itself be a vehicle for positive change in attitudes and values. The initiatives included in this plan range from parent interactions with schools and school councils, to the accessibility of DEECD research forums on educational topics.



Progress towards the final outcome of ‘achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against persons with a disability’ is largely dependent on the implementation of the proceeding three outcomes, because those initiatives improving service delivery should lead to a greater awareness of disability issues in the Department’s culture. In addition, the *DEECD DAP* recognises that *increased awareness is often the first step towards changing attitudes*. To this end, the initiatives under the final fourth outcome are targeted at raising awareness of disability issues among DEECD staff.

**Key features of the DEECD DAP**

The integration of disability awareness into the Department’s business procedures has

been a focus of the *DEECD DAP*, including initiatives to optimise its implementation and monitoring. Several initiatives will adapt processes, such as strategic and business planning, red-tape reduction, risk management and auditing. By mainstreaming disability issues into such business functions, the Office for Children and Portfolio Coordination (OCPC) will help the whole Department ensure its services are inclusive.

This new plan for the first time follows the journey of children and young people from birth to adulthood. The Office for Children and Portfolio Coordination (OCPC) has contributed initiatives spanning maternal and child health programs through to kindergarten, which include workforce and curriculum

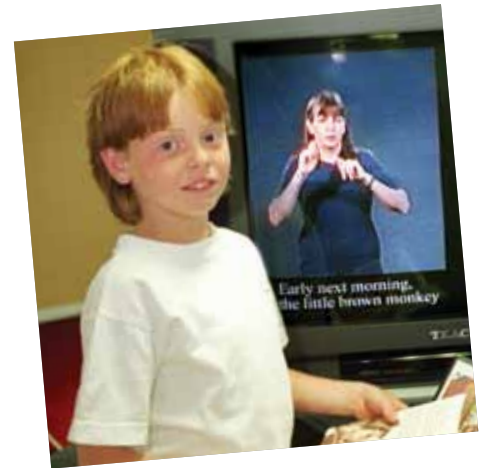
development and streamlining the transition to school. The early childhood sector (0–8 years) is experiencing exciting policy growth at both the state and national levels, and it is likely that several of the initiatives will develop further during the life of this plan.

The Department’s Office of Government School Education (OGSE) has outlined a wide range of programs and initiatives to enhance the Department’s services to school-age children with a disability and their families. The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) is again central to the *DEECD DAP*. It is complemented by a raft of new initiatives, such as an abilities index to provide schools with a greater understanding of student needs, and a community awareness campaign to be jointly undertaken with the Office for Disability in the Department of Planning and Community Development.

The pathway from school to working life is the subject of a special initiative from the Youth Transitions division in the Department’s Office for Policy, Research and Innovation (OPRI). This is a collaborative project with the Department of Human Services (DHS), and will result in

# Introduction continued

Increasing employment options for people with disabilities in the Department is a key goal of the Department's Office for Resources and Infrastructure (ORI).



a range of resources for young people with disabilities and their teachers and families to assist with a major change in life direction.

Increasing employment options for people with disabilities in the Department is a key goal of the Department's Office for Resources and Infrastructure (ORI). A wide variety of initiatives will examine how the Department's workforce can be diversified to reflect and better serve the Victorian community. For the first time, these initiatives will include a focus on our school workforce, using the services of a specialist disability recruitment provider.

## **Implementation and monitoring**

Because the *DEECD DAP* is a whole-of-department plan covering the five offices, the VCAA, the VRQA and the Merit Protection Boards, the four outcome areas have been broadly

interpreted to enable all of the Department's business areas to link their work to outcomes assisting Victorians with disabilities. As a consequence, the initiatives are wide-ranging in their subject matter and implementation timelines.

Individual divisions are responsible for implementing their *DEECD DAP* initiatives and for including them in their strategic and business plans. In turn, the implementation of the *DEECD DAP* and progress towards achieving the outcomes will be monitored according to established departmental planning processes. For example, the Portfolio Audit Committee will monitor the Department's internal procedures to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the Department to meet its responsibilities (see initiative 1.4.8).



# Introduction continued

The Disability Action Plan Committee will periodically review progress of the *DEECD DAP* and report to the Office for Disability (Department of Planning and Community Development).

The Office for Disability has developed a monitoring framework for departmental DAPs, under the auspices of the State Coordination and Management Committee. This monitoring framework provides the Government with the ability to measure progress towards achieving the outcomes articulated in the *Disability Act 2006 (Vic.)*.

## Consultation

Consultation is integral to the successful development and implementation of a disability action plan. The DEECD Disability Action Plan Committee was established as a consultative body to oversee the development of the *DEECD DAP*. It comprises staff with disabilities, and representatives from the Department's five offices, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The plan is the product of the committee's extensive engagement within DEECD and their shared knowledge of DEECD programs.

Those committee members with a range of physical and sensory impairments contribute their perspectives as both employees

of the Department and members of the community who may have experienced the barriers faced by Victorians living with disabilities.

The support and leadership of senior DEECD management has also been crucial to the development and support of the *DEECD DAP* and its initiatives:

- The DEECD Disability Action Plan Committee is chaired by an Assistant General Manager who is supported by several executives and managers on the committee.
- Departmental office executive teams (deputy secretaries and general managers) were briefed on the goals of the *DEECD DAP* and requested to support its development.
- All DEECD general managers and the Departmental Management Committee (DMC) reviewed and approved the *DEECD DAP* prior to its commencement.

The *DEECD DAP* project team consulted with a range of external stakeholders with experience in disability action planning, including the Office for Disability (Department of Planning and Community Development) and the Disability Action Plan Officers Network representing the ten Victorian government departments.

The plan will be shared with the Victorian Disability Advisory Council (VDAC), which advises the Government on disability issues, and then lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwth).

The *DEECD DAP* is a public document available to all Victorians with an interest in disability issues. It can be obtained from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/divequity/disability.htm>.

# Outcome Area 1

## Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities

### 1.1 Reducing barriers to people with disabilities accessing the Department's information and communications

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.1.1 DEECD-wide initiative ensuring DEECD information is accessible to people with disabilities</b></p> <p>Providing information to Victorians is a core function of the Department and its statutory authorities. This information should be available to all Victorians, including Victorians with a disability, whether it is printed material, webpage information or public forums. Published information will be consistent with the Department's <i>Accessible Communication Guidelines</i> and the <i>Victorian Government External Communications Access Policy</i>.</p> <p>The following key initiatives will be undertaken across the Department.</p>	<p>All DEECD divisions and authorities</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Accessible DEECD research forums</b></p> <p>A matrix of potential venues accessible to people with disabilities will be developed and used to guide selection of venues for new research forums. In addition, access to research forums will be made available online.</p>	<p>Education Policy and Research, OPRI</p>	<p>2010</p>
<p><b>A review of Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority communications</b></p> <p>VCAA leads the development, distribution and monitoring of P–12 curriculum policy in Victoria, including the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the VET in Schools program (VETiS) and the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The authority works in partnership with school systems, schools and the wider community to ensure that students have access to world-class curriculum. The VCAA will review its communications by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying documents and processes that require updating to conform to the Department's Accessible Communication Guidelines and the Victorian Government External Communications Access Policy</li> <li>• developing an action plan to implement the required changes</li> <li>• adopting processes to share best practice approaches across the authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Curriculum, VCAA</p>	<p>2009–10</p>

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>A review of Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) communications</b></p> <p>The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority is responsible for registering all schools (government and non-government), senior secondary providers, registered training organisations and higher education providers (except those established under their own Acts) in the state. It also approves providers of courses for overseas students, accredits courses, registers qualifications and authorises providers to conduct those courses and qualifications. It also registers students for home schooling. The VRQA will review its publications, website, information sessions and communication mechanisms to ensure they meet the Department's Accessible Communication Guidelines and the Victorian Government External Communications Access Policy.</p>	<p>Corporate Services, VRQA</p> <p>2010</p>	
<p><b>Shared Services Provider Communications</b></p> <p>On 14 December 2009, DEECD transitioned over to the Shared Service Provider (SSP) within the Government Services Group, Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF). The SSP has been established as part of the Efficient Government Policy to deliver facilities and accommodation management services.</p> <p>A primary responsibility of the Procurement Division is to manage the relationship between DEECD and DTF, with regards to the SSP. Procurement Division will monitor the SSP's communication activities so they are accessible to employees and visitors with a disability.</p>	<p>Procurement Division, ORI</p> <p>2010–11</p>	
<p><b>Procurement Division Communications</b></p> <p>Procurement Division supports corporate and regional business units in their procurement processes. The Division also works with those business units through strategic planning, sourcing, contract management and procure/pay operations to achieve effective and value for money outcomes.</p> <p>The Procurement Division will review all divisional forms, manuals and general resources (including online procurement systems) to ensure they meet the standards set out in the DEECD Accessible Communications Policy.</p>	<p>Procurement Division, ORI</p> <p>2010–11</p>	

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.1.2 Web applications and accessibility</b></p> <p>The Information Technology division (ITD) is committed to adhere to whole-of-Victorian-Government disability standards and guidelines for the Department's external and internal websites. The public facing sites are compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the international standards organisation for the world wide web, which maintains a consistent approach to working with new and existing web pages and applications.</p> <p>ITD has developed a Developer's Resource Kit website <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/devreskit/">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/devreskit/</a>, which contains W3C, WoVG website and DEECD guidelines. The kit amalgamates, interprets and presents information in a single repository and has been designed as a knowledge bank of quality assurance requirements, recommendations, checking tools, examples and source references. It provides access for external and internal technical developers and clients to locate answers to questions regarding quality assurance and website requirements. The kit ensures that online information is accessible to people with disabilities within ITD, across the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the general public. This kit is scheduled for redevelopment in 2010.</p> <p>ITD are also actively involved in the Web Management WoVG Taskforce in periodic reviews of the WoVG disability guidelines and standards.</p>	Information Technology, ORI	Ongoing
<p><b>1.1.3 Development of an accessibility checklist for professional learning program leaders and providers</b></p> <p>In recognition that the quality of teachers and leaders has the greatest impact on student learning outcomes, a range of professional learning opportunities are provided to teachers, leaders and education support staff. The Department also informs schools as to what school-based professional learning should look like. A checklist will be developed for DEECD program leaders and providers to ensure that professional learning (incorporating materials, presentations, and venues) is delivered according to the <i>DEECD Accessible Communication Workplace Guide</i>.</p>	Schools Improvement, OGSE	2010
<p><b>1.1.4 Review of DEECD templates to include accessibility prompts</b></p> <p>There are many DEECD templates used to assist the Department's officers in their work. A review of these templates will be undertaken to incorporate accessibility and inclusion prompts where possible.</p>	Human Resources and Communications, ORI	2010

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.1.5 Review use of the DEECD Accessible Communications Workplace Guide</b></p> <p>The DEECD Accessible Communications Workplace Guide was introduced as an action under the <i>Disability Action Plan 2005–2008</i>. Anecdotal evidence suggests that awareness and use of the Guide is inconsistent across the Department. A review and update of the Guide will be undertaken with a view to increasing its use.</p>	Communications, OCPC	2010
<p><b>1.1.6 DEECD print publications for external audiences available in alternative formats</b></p> <p>All DEECD publications created for external audiences (e.g. parents or the wider kindergarten or school community) should be available in accessible formats on request. Clear statements on how to access alternate formats must be located on the imprint page of these publications.</p> <p>The print publications guidelines being developed for the visual identity project will include these instructions.</p>	Communication, OCPC	2010
<p><b>1.1.7 DEECD online publications available in alternative formats</b></p> <p>All DEECD publications that are made available to the public through the website should be available in accessible formats. Key publications should be available in both PDF and Word format. Supporting audio files should be made available where possible. Guidelines relating to these best practice requirements will be developed.</p>	Communications, OCPC	2010
<p><b>1.1.8 Develop a communications checklist for use by all DEECD business units</b></p> <p>Business units can easily overlook the requirement to make their communications accessible. The development of a communications checklist, including accessibility factors, will be embedded in all strategic communications templates, and publications and event management guidelines, to ensure accessibility considerations are taken into account.</p>	Communications, OCPC	2010
<p><b>1.1.9 Develop a communications checklist for use by schools</b></p> <p>Schools are recognised to be a focal point of local communities and communication with the community can be expected to increase as interaction and participation increases. A communications checklist will be developed as part of the <i>School Communication Toolkit</i> to help schools ensure that their communications are inclusive and accessible.</p>	Communications, OCPC	2010

## 1.2 Reducing barriers to children and young people with a disability accessing the Department's services

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.2.1 Early Childhood Strategy Division – Policy Development</b></p> <p>Early Childhood Strategy Division is responsible for strategic policy development and management of strategic projects on early learning and improving the quality and accessibility of early childhood services. This includes stronger integration between schools and early childhood services. The division leads and develops cross-system and key change projects across the Department through close liaison with local government, central agencies and external stakeholders, and ensures the Department's policy development covers all facets of early learning and development. It also plays a leading role in the development of <i>Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development</i> projects directly related to the early childhood sector. Early Childhood Strategy Division will continue to consider the needs of children with disabilities and their families as part of strategic projects and policy development. This will also be reflected in the internal business planning process.</p>	Early Childhood Strategy Division, OCPC	Ongoing
<p><b>1.2.2 Early Childhood Programs</b></p> <p>The Programs and Partnerships Division is responsible for the development of universal services across the early years, which have a strong emphasis on access, participation and capacity building. Programs support the health, development and learning of Victoria's young children, including kindergarten, capital grants for new kindergartens and children's centres, maternal and child health, primary school nursing, parenting services, early childhood intervention services, inclusion supports, support for Best Start local partnerships and planning and the regulation of children's services. These services play an important role in identifying children with disabilities and additional needs and providing a referral mechanism to other appropriate services.</p>	Programs and Partnerships, OCPC	Ongoing
<p><b>1.2.3 Early Years Workforce Strategy</b></p> <p>The <i>Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development</i> states that the Victorian Government will release an early childhood workforce strategy, setting out a vision for the early childhood workforce in 2020 with supporting goals. It will also include a set of long-term reform directions and a set of initiatives that constitute the first actions to deliver on the vision and goals. The Early Childhood Strategy Division will continue the development of the early childhood intervention workforce, and grow the capacity of the broader early childhood workforce to work with children with disabilities and their families. These goals will be incorporated into the strategy.</p>	Early Childhood Strategy, OCPC	Completed 2009

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.2.4 Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)</b></p> <p>Victoria is leading the development of the national Early Years Learning Framework on behalf of the Council of Australian Governments. This work links to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for children from birth to eight years, and the introduction of transition plans for children enrolling in school for 2010. The VEYLDF sets out to describe common goals for children from birth to eight years of age. The framework will provide information about how children learn and develop and it will outline how early childhood professionals can use this information to improve their practice and outcomes for all children.</p> <p><b>UPDATE:</b> In November 2009 the Minister for Children and Early Childhood Development released the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for children from birth to eight years. The Victorian Framework identifies five learning outcomes for all children from birth to eight years , identifies eight practice principles to guide early childhood professional’s practice with children and families, and emphasises the importance of supporting children’s transitions within and across early childhood settings. The Victorian Framework has been written to advance all children’s learning and development and was written in close consultation with leading early childhood intervention professionals</p>	<p>Early Childhood Strategy, OCPC and VCAA</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>1.2.5 Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Key Ages and Stages (KAS) Framework</b></p> <p>Training relating to the Maternal &amp; Child Health (MCH) revised Key Ages and Stages (KAS) Framework was completed in 2009. This training included MCH Framework, PEDS, Brigance, Family Violence, SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy), QUIT and a SLEEP intervention at 8 months. Over 1100 MCH Nurses, Managers and students completed this training. MCH Key Ages and Stages training this year (2010) is focused on new students and MCH nurses returning to practice. This revised Framework is now being implemented state-wide and promotes a consistent, evidence based approach with the use of validated tools. This is providing a stronger identification and referral process for children identified with disabilities or developmental concerns to access services and programs to address issues at early stages.</p> <p>The Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) has been engaged to conduct the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Key Ages and Stages (KAS) Framework Implementation evaluation. The evaluation commenced in January 2010 and is scheduled for completion November 2012. A project team has been organised and includes DEECD project officers and CCCH project officers</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships, OCPC</p>	

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p>(Continued)</p> <p>The evaluation is to focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Consistency in the delivery of the MCH service across the state including an analysis of the degree to which the revised MCH KAS framework has been implemented.</li> <li>2) Gaining an understanding of the impact the MCH KAS framework has had on outcomes for families and children from birth to school age.</li> </ol>		
<p><b>1.2.6 Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)</b></p> <p>The ECIS program supports children with a disability or developmental delay from birth-to-school entry and their families, through the provision of special education, therapy, counselling, service planning and coordination, and assistance and support to access services such as kindergarten and child care. The aim of these services is to provide parents and families with the knowledge, skills and support to meet the needs of their child and to optimise the child's development and ability to participate in family and community life.</p> <p>To continue to improve the ECIS service system a quality assurance framework will be developed for ECIS over the next four years. The framework will incorporate revised program standards, best practice guidelines for workers and an evaluation and performance monitoring system. In 2009-10 draft outcomes and principles statement will be developed</p> <p>UPDATE: APRIL 2010. An additional \$38.4 million over four years has been allocated for Early Childhood Intervention Services to support children with a disability or developmental delay before they reach school age.</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships, OCPC</p>	<p>2009–2012</p>
<p><b>1.2.7 Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Packages</b></p> <p>KIS packages support children with severe disabilities to access a funded kindergarten program. Support through this program may include specialist training for kindergarten program staff, additional staffing support, additional resources and/or specialised assistance for kindergarten staff to identify program adjustments to further support the access and participation of all children. From 2008–09, an additional 150 packages over four years are being provided to help children with severe disabilities to participate in a funded kindergarten program by providing additional</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships, OCPC</p>	<p>2009–2010</p>

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p>(Continued)</p> <p>support staff, specialised assistance for kindergarten staff, modifications to the kindergarten or for specialised equipment.</p> <p>UPDATE: An additional 35 recurrent packages were distributed for the 2010 kindergarten year to bring the total new packages for 2010 to 60.</p> <p>An increase to the unit price for KIS packages has been approved by the Minister and implemented for the 2010 kindergarten year. This provides service providers with 12.5% of a unit price for coordination costs replacing a much smaller fixed coordination allowance. This new funding model supports the sustainability of the KIS program into the future.</p>		
<p><b>1.2.8 Sharing Our Journey – Information kit and protocol</b></p> <p>In 2008, the <i>Sharing Our Journey</i> information kit and protocol were distributed to schools, kindergartens and early childhood intervention providers to facilitate the smooth transition of children with severe disabilities in receipt of a Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) package, to move from kindergarten to school. The resource includes materials such as a child profile statement; planning statement and information for families of children with severe disabilities. This project was a joint initiative of the Student Wellbeing and Support division (OGSE) and PP division's Inclusion and Innovation Branch (OCPC). In 2009, this initiative is being further developed, and will be expanded to include the transition of all children accessing ECIS moving into kindergarten.</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships, OCPC, and Student Wellbeing, OGSE</p>	<p>Completed 2009</p>
<p><b>1.2.9 Transition: a positive start to school (transition plans)</b></p> <p>Transition plans are a crucial element in improving the communication about children's learning and development as they move into school. They will provide a bridge for children, families and professionals to more easily share information about children as they progress from early childhood education and care into school. The <i>Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development</i> acknowledges the need to ensure that all children are ready for school and that schools are ready for children. Transition plans will be put in place to assist families, professionals and teachers to better support all children, including those with a disability or developmental delay, to participate in all educational opportunities.</p>	<p>Strategy, OCPC</p>	<p>Completed 2009</p>

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.2.10 Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program</b></p> <p>The Preschool Field Officer Program provides support to children with additional needs to access and participate in state-funded kindergarten programs. PSFOs are experienced qualified early childhood teachers who may also have qualifications in special education or a related area. They provide an advisory service to kindergartens and families to assist children attending four-year-old kindergarten. Children with additional needs may include children with mild language delays, challenging behaviours, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or who have experienced trauma. PSFOs will be provided with training in working with vulnerable families (which includes families of children with a disability or developmental delay) and in providing secondary consultation to kindergarten staff regarding programming for these children.</p> <p>UPDATE: Further training in Trauma and Attachment and the impact on Brain Development in Young Children is being provided in 2010 to build upon the theory and knowledge with case discussion and a focus on practical application.</p> <p>Additional funding totalling \$123,667 has been provided to allocate 171 new referrals in the growth LGAs of Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Wyndham and Whittlesea. The funding allocation contributes to additional children receiving support through the PSFO program.</p>	<p>Programs and Partnerships, OCPC</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>1.2.11 Program for Students with Disabilities</b></p> <p>The Program for Students with Disabilities provides additional resources to support students who meet the program eligibility criteria. These students have severe to profound disabilities in the following areas: physical disability, visual impairment, severe behaviour disorder, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder and severe language disorder with critical educational needs. Student Wellbeing and Support Division will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide school, student and parent access to information regarding the Program for Students with Disabilities</li> <li>• promote inclusive practices by engaging and encouraging the Student Support Group (SSG) process to involve students, parents/carers and teachers in educational planning</li> <li>• review and publish annually the <i>Program for Student with Disabilities Handbook</i>, including on the DEECD website</li> </ul>	<p>Student Wellbeing, OGSE</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/or division	Delivery timeframe
<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide professional development and information sessions to schools and communities regarding the Program for Students with Disabilities.</li> </ul> <p>UPDATE APRIL 2010: An additional \$38.1m has been allocated to support growth in the Program for Students with Disabilities across Victorian government schools until 2011–12.</p>		
<p><b>1.2.12 Program for Students with Disabilities Management System (PSDMS)</b></p> <p>PSDMS is a database and management system designed to provide reliable and efficient support for the management of the Program for Students with Disabilities. It provides schools with the facility to make online Program for Students with Disabilities applications for student funding; and information to monitor their PSD funding and budgets more effectively. It also provides accurate information to the Department about PSD-funded student movements between schools. Student Wellbeing branch will further refine the current management system to enable improved and accurate resourcing to schools to support students through the PSD.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	Ongoing
<p><b>1.2.13 Language Support Program</b></p> <p>The Language Support Program provides direct assistance to teachers in developing strong oral language competency in children and young people to maximise their learning potential. It aims to build the capacity of schools and teachers to provide appropriate programs and learning experiences that will improve the oral language skills of all students, particularly those with a language disorder. The division will develop and distribute a <i>Language Support Program Professional Learning Guide</i> to assist teachers to improve oral language competency and confidence in children and young people with language disorders or delay to maximise their learning potential. It will be made available to Victorian government schools, regions, speech pathologists and central DEECD via the DEECD website.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	Completed 2009

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.2.14 Abilities Index</b></p> <p>The Abilities Index is a new mechanism of support for the learning and resourcing of students with disabilities within government schools to be developed by the Department. It will provide schools with a better understanding of the educational needs of the student; a set of educationally based learning goals; an appropriate learning pathway with strategies, and the funding to put it into practice. Importantly, the Index's focus on learning pathways and targets will enhance the Department's ability to report on the achievement of students with disabilities. The project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a shift from a deficit-based model to an educationally based model</li> <li>• a set of standardised pathways and associated resource support which will be used to identify an individual's appropriate learning pathway</li> <li>• the resource and funding requirements for a student's learning pathway including the support available in the school and relevant network</li> <li>• a resourcing and support approach that will strengthen seamless and smooth transition across the early childhood and schooling settings.</li> </ul>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	Ongoing
<p><b>1.2.15 Autism agenda</b></p> <p>In its 2006 pre-election policy, Addressing Disadvantage, the Victorian Government committed to develop an Autism State Plan in response to growing need and demand in the area of autism services, and with the goal of improving service provision for people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The initiatives to be rolled out under the Autism State Plan will be announced progressively during 2009. These will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing school-wide policies and processes promoting respect and understanding for children with an ASD and their families, as well as defining appropriate teaching and support requirements for students with an ASD</li> <li>• ensuring access to appropriate ongoing professional development for teachers and staff to raise awareness and increase knowledge of ASD, in order to help identify at-risk children and appropriately support and engage children diagnosed with an ASD</li> <li>• establishing home-school collaboration that promotes positive, respectful and meaningful partnerships between the school and the child's parents or caregivers in order to facilitate a shared understanding of the child and their learning needs</li> </ul>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	2009–12

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/or division	Delivery timeframe
<p>(Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investigating options for all regions to establish a student support services officer outreach model to provide targeted support to students to addressing their individual needs and challenges; and to identify positive programming supports that will enhance school-wide service provision for all children with an ASD</li> <li>• developing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all children with an ASD, addressing their unique needs in the areas of learning style, communication and social skills development</li> <li>• building the capacity of the mainstream service platform to support students with ASD</li> <li>• improving transition support to ensure an integrated and seamless service delivery system is in operation</li> <li>• reviewing the ASD Eligibility Criteria for the Program for Students with Disabilities to ensure it reflects current best practice and identifies the appropriate student cohort for support under the PSD.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>1.2.16 Autism Inclusion Support Programs</b></p> <p>Autism Inclusion Support Programs can enhance parent choice, strengthen the capacity of staff to support students with Autism and increase local provision options for parents.</p> <p>Six Autism Inclusion programs will be established in mainstream schools in 2010 and 2011.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	2010 – 11
<p><b>1.2.17 Satellite Units</b></p> <p>Satellite Units are learning areas in mainstream school settings with Governance, specialist teachers and programs from a Specialist School.</p> <p>Satellite units will extend the expertise in specialist schools into mainstream settings, enhance parent choice by localising provision and strengthen the knowledge and skills of mainstream teachers.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	2010 – 11

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.2.18 Establishment of the Victorian Deaf Education institute</b></p> <p>The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's Review of Deaf Education was completed in 2008. Despite evidence that educational outcomes of deaf students should be virtually equivalent to that of their hearing peers, the review found that in Victoria, deaf school leavers demonstrate significantly lower educational outcomes. The review identified key reforms needed to improve the learning and wellbeing outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing children and young people. Specifically the review identified improvements in educational support and workforce sufficiency, early diagnosis and family-centred support, equity and fairness in access to services across the state and the need for ongoing assessment and monitoring. A key recommendation of the review was to explore the establishment of a Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) to play a pivotal role in building the required knowledge, skills and workforce capacity for individuals working with deaf children in an educational setting.</p> <p>The intention of the VDEI is to meet the existing and future workforce and training needs of deaf educators, through partnership arrangements with tertiary providers. This intention will be met through the provision of accessible, flexible and sustainable learning programs. The key objectives of the VDEI initiative are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve teacher capacity and the quality of education practice in order to lift the learning and well being outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children.</li> <li>• Enable flexible and equitable access to professional learning opportunities for all staff working in the field of deaf education regardless of their location in metropolitan, rural or remote areas.</li> <li>• Ensure the workforce is sufficient to provide for the diverse range of students' needs, and locations.</li> <li>• Develop learning opportunities for parents of children with a hearing loss through the provision of relevant online and face to face sessions or workshop topics (for example communication, speech and language development, audiological care).</li> </ul>	<p>Student Wellbeing, OGSE</p>	<p>2010 – 11</p>
<p><b>1.2.19 Enhanced post-school pathways</b></p> <p>DEECD will continue to work with DHS (Disability Services) to create an evidence based, enhanced pathway planning framework at school that effectively engages and prepares students with a disability, and their families and teachers, to achieve optimal outcomes in the post school environment. This will be accomplished through a range of initiatives aimed at awareness raising and enhanced planning processes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A single integrated planning tool</li> <li>• An online user guide for teachers and planners</li> </ul>	<p>Student Wellbeing, OGSE, and Youth Transitions, OPRI</p>	<p>2009 – 11</p>

## 1.3 Reducing barriers to accessing and using the Department's buildings and work environments

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.3.1 Improving access to schools – new or replacement schools</b></p> <p>New or replacement schools are designed and built to conform to the Building Code of Australia for disabled access. These buildings are fully accessible, both internally and externally, by people with disabilities. The buildings are installed with accessible toilets and showers and have adequate room for a change table. In the event of a student, teacher or parent attending these schools having special needs, the Department addresses these needs separately.</p>	Infrastructure, ORI	Ongoing
<p><b>1.3.2 Improving access to schools – refurbishment of schools</b></p> <p>Where schools are to be upgraded, those areas affected by the works are upgraded to conform to the Building Code of Australia for disabled access. The refurbished buildings provide an enhanced level of access where practicable, within the limitations of the existing facilities and the refurbished area. In the event of a student, teacher or parent accessing these buildings having special needs, the Department addresses these needs through the Infrastructure Integration Program.</p>	Infrastructure, ORI	Ongoing
<p><b>1.3.3 Infrastructure Integration Program</b></p> <p>The Department undertakes an annual program to provide facilities that will enable students, parents and teachers to access mainstream schools. It provides funding for projects to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meet the needs of new students at a school</li> <li>• meet the needs resulting from the deterioration of a students condition</li> <li>• expand existing facilities to cater for the curriculum requirements for the student.</li> </ul> <p>Projects include modifications such as ramps, grab rails and modified toilets for students who use wheelchairs, through to modified lighting and sign work for students with limited eyesight. The program also provides for limited equipment such as change tables and hoists. In August of any given year, applications are sought from schools for integration works to be undertaken in preparation for the following school year. Throughout the year, integration funding is provided on a needs basis.</p>	Infrastructure, ORI	Ongoing

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.3.4 The Shared Services Provider and the DEECD built environment</b></p> <p>The Department and the Shared Service Provider (SSP) have entered into a Service Level Agreement – this document outlines all service delivery requirements for the SSP and the Department’s obligation under this arrangement.</p> <p>The SSP is required in all activity relating to building maintenance and accommodation to ensure that the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cwth) is complied with. Procurement Division, through the SLA with the SSP, will monitor these activities in reference to building maintenance and accommodation.</p>	Procurement Division, ORI	2010–2011
<p><b>1.3.5 Installation of hearing loops in DEECD central office conference rooms</b></p> <p>The hearing loops in the 2 Treasury Place conference rooms in will be upgraded to ensure they contain the current technology for the deaf and hearing impaired.</p>	Procurement, ORI	Completed 2009
<p><b>1.3.6 Accessible VCAA training programs</b></p> <p>The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provides high-quality curriculum and assessment programs for Victorian students and, with DEECD, is developing the Early Learning and Development Framework 0–8. A variety of venues are used for training of staff, including significant numbers of sessional staff. Therefore, it will undertake a review of its staff training procedures to ensure that they identify and meet the venue accessibility requirements of trainees.</p>	VCAA	2009–10
<p><b>1.3.7 Accessible venues for Special Examination Arrangements (SEA)</b></p> <p>The VCAA is responsible for ensuring the quality of the VCE, the external examinations and the delivery of all VCE results to students across the state every year. Eligible students can apply for and be granted a special examination arrangement (SEA). VCE examinations include performance examinations at a variety of venues. The VCAA will review its procedures for a student granted an SEA for a performance examination to ensure that the performance venue is confirmed as suitable for that student and the assessors.</p>	VCAA	2009–10

## 1.4 Including disability issues in the Department's business processes

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.4.1 Specialised provision</b>            The Department is developing a policy framework within which specialised provision (e.g. curriculum and/or cohort specialisation) is strategically managed across the system. During the development of the framework, the Department will have regard for the diversity of student needs and interests, including the particular learning needs of students with a disability.</p>	System Policy, OPRI	2009–12
<p><b>1.4.2 Embedding the DEECD DAP into annual business planning processes</b>            DEECD offices and divisions are required to create annual business plans setting out priorities and goals for the year ahead. The initiatives contained in the plan are now considered DEECD core business and should be included in annual divisional business plans. Planning@DEECD on eduGate will provide business planning templates for divisions and regional offices that incorporate a standardised approach to the inclusion of <i>Disability Action Plan 2009–12</i> commitments. A help document 'Using the business planning template' and FAQs will provide further information.</p>	Strategy and Coordination, OCPC	2009–12
<p><b>1.4.3 Streamlining disability services – reducing the administrative burden</b>            Children with disabilities receive services from a variety of organisations and in a variety of educational settings as they age. The Red Tape Reduction branch will explore the opportunities for reducing the administrative burden (red tape) resulting from the integration of services for students with a disability 0–18 years.</p>	Portfolio Governance and Improvement, OCPC	2010

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.4.4 Including disability issues in DEECD strategic planning</b></p> <p>The Department's directions and priorities in delivering services to Victoria's communities are developed according to strategic plans such as the <i>Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development</i>. The Strategy branch of the Strategy and Coordination division will consider disability issues in the Department's futures-focused strategic thinking and planning activities.</p>	Strategy & Coordination, OCPC	Ongoing
<p><b>1.4.5 Developing a risk profile for the implementation of a disability action plan</b></p> <p>Concurrent with the Department's responsibility to develop a disability action plan are the risks associated with inadequate implementation. The Portfolio Risk team is available to work with the Disability Action Plan Committee, to facilitate and conduct a risk assessment of the plan for the purpose of ensuring that identified risks are appropriately identified and managed.</p>	Portfolio Governance and Improvement, OCPC	2009–10
<p><b>1.4.6 Improving the Department's services to people with disabilities</b></p> <p>The Victorian Auditor-General's Office reviews the Department's programs and identifies areas where improvements can be made. Many of these reviews involve program areas relevant to members of the Victorian community with disabilities, such as the 2007 performance audit of the Program for Students with a Disability, which resulted in a number of recommendations for improvement. The Audit Planning team will liaise with the Student Wellbeing branch and monitor the extent to which these recommendations have been/are being implemented. The Audit Planning team will also coordinate DEECD responses to any other Auditor-General's recommendations impacting on members of the community with disabilities and monitor actions that arise.</p>	Portfolio Governance and Improvement, OCPC	Ongoing
<p><b>1.4.7 Improving accountability – The DEECD Disability Action Plan and internal audit</b></p> <p>The Department's Portfolio Audit Committee (PAC) advises the Secretary if the internal processes of the Department are operating at an acceptable level and if appropriate controls are in place to meet external accountability requirements. The committee receives regular briefings on strategic issues and DEECD activities. The Audit Planning team coordinates presentations to PAC and opportunity exists for the Portfolio Audit Committee to be briefed on the <i>DEECD DAP</i>, implementation progress in the annual compliance report, and progress reports. Audit Planning will also consider related audits for inclusion in the three-year portfolio audit plan including the possibility of facilitating an internal audit on progress to inform government reporting mechanisms.</p>	Portfolio Governance and Improvement, OCPC	Ongoing

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>1.4.8 Applying the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities</b></p> <p>Executive and Ministerial Services (EMS) division is responsible for the provision of information services and decision support for Ministers and the Department Executive, particularly in respect of legal, legislation, Cabinet, Parliament, freedom of information, privacy, whistleblowers, edutrack, briefings and correspondence matters. The EMS division will assess all new legislation and regulations relating to the <i>Education and Training Reform Act (2006)</i> for compatibility with the requirements of the <i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities</i>, with particular attention to be paid to implications for persons with a disability. The <i>Charter</i> is an Act of Parliament enshrining civil and political human rights. It provides that every person is equal before the law, is entitled to the equal protection of the law without discrimination and has the right to equal and effective protection against discrimination.</p>	Executive and Ministerial Services, OCPC	Ongoing
<p><b>1.4.9 Keeping the disability action plan (DAP) up to date</b></p> <p>The disability action plan is a four-year plan that will require periodic review to ensure it remains up to date and relevant in rapidly shifting contexts. The DEECD Disability Action Plan Committee is the body responsible for the development and oversight of the DAP and includes representatives from each office and statutory authority, and representatives with disabilities able to bring unique perspectives to the committee. The Disability Action Plan Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review the DEECD DAP annually</li> <li>• update the plan to reflect any changes in Department structure and initiative accountability.</li> <li>• ask business areas to provide feedback on initiative progress</li> <li>• include new initiatives as opportunities emerge.</li> </ul>	Human Resources, ORI	Ongoing
<p><b>1.4.10 Accessible Organisation Development processes</b></p> <p>The Organisational Development (OD) Branch is in the process of developing projects to build organisational capability.</p> <p>The OD Branch will ensure that all DEECD OD projects and their related templates consider the needs of staff with disabilities. This includes the procurement processes for external services and the use of technologies and organisational diagnostics e.g. Staff Survey, online programs and leadership feedback processes. The development of these projects will include consideration of accessibility requirements of employees with disabilities.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	Ongoing

## Outcome Area 2

### Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment

#### 2.1 Reducing barriers to the attraction and recruitment of people with a disability into the DEECD workforce

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>2.1.1 Interviewing candidates with disabilities for positions in the DEECD corporate workforce</b> A specialist disability recruitment provider refers candidates with a disability to the Department's recruiting managers for potential interviews. These referrals are only made following assessment of the position's key selection criteria and a determination that the candidate is suitable for the role. All recruiting managers in the Department undertake to interview these candidates when a referral is made.</p>	All divisions	Ongoing
<p><b>2.1.2 Increase awareness of the services of specialist disability recruitment providers</b> Although the Disability Employment Advisory Service (DEAS) is operational, anecdotal evidence suggests many recruiting managers are not aware of the services offered by specialist disability recruitment providers. Awareness of the DEAS will be increased by identifying avenues for advertising the scheme and implementing an awareness raising strategy.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.1.3 Review recruitment advertisements to target people with a disability</b> Department job position advertisements include brief statements indicating that people with disabilities are encouraged to apply for positions. Advertising policies will be reviewed to explore options for maximising the attractiveness of DEECD vacancies to potential applicants with disabilities, recognising that this is a largely untapped source of talent.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.1.4 Including people with disabilities on teacher attraction materials</b> It is vital that the Department's workforce is representative of the Victorian community including the one-in-five Victorians with disabilities. The Department's promotional material to attract graduates and professionals into the teaching and education workforce will be reviewed to determine whether they can be enhanced to include representations of people with disabilities.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>2.1.5 Extend the Disability Employment Scheme to the schools workforce</b></p> <p>A specialist disability recruitment provider has been engaged by the Department to put forward candidates for advertised corporate positions. However, the majority of the Department's employees are located in the school environment Human Resources will work with the disability recruitment provider to facilitate access to advertised school-based vacancies (Recruitment Online).</p>	Human Resources, ORI	Completed 2009
<p><b>2.1.6 Review of the Disability Employment Scheme</b></p> <p>The Disability Employment Scheme agreement requires a specialist disability recruitment provider to provide quantitative data to the Department, including how many candidates have been referred to DEECD vacancies; how many have obtained interviews; and how many were successful in obtaining the position. Human Resources will monitor the operation of the Disability Employment Advisory Service, provide regular scorecard reports to the Officer for Disability (DPCD) and examine how success rates can be improved where required.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.1.7 Including people with a disability the Victoriaworks For Young People (VYP) program</b></p> <p>The Victoriaworks For Young People (VYP) is a potential pathway for young people with disabilities into work. Schools take a significant number of VYP trainees each year. Human Resources division will liaise with the Disability Employment Advisory Service to provide information to enable DEAS candidates to be considered as candidates by schools recruiting VYP trainees.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.1.8 Identifying a HR services officer to specialise in disability employment issues</b></p> <p>An HR services consultant will be identified to develop and maintain awareness of disability issues and policy, and to keep abreast of vacancies in the Department (including short-term positions) that might be referred to its specialist disability recruitment provider.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.1.9 Introduce 'Career Start' to the corporate and schools workforce</b></p> <p>Career Start is a new whole-of-Victorian-Government initiative aimed at increasing the number of graduates with disabilities in the public sector workforce. The Department will market Career Start to managers and principals to maximise opportunities presented by this scheme.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010

## 2.2 Reducing barriers to the retention of people with a disability in the DEECD workforce

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>2.2.1 Identifying the employment concerns of VPS staff members with disabilities</b> Retention of employees is an integral part of succession planning and talent conservation. Employees with disabilities experience unique issues, which may impact on their employment satisfaction. A survey of VPS staff with a disability will be undertaken to determine the issues most likely to affect their attitudes to remaining with the Department in long-term employment.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2011
<p><b>2.2.2 Development of a comprehensive DEECD Reasonable Adjustment Policy</b> Executives, managers and principals may be requested to modify the workplace to enable an employee with a disability to work effectively. This is known as a request for 'reasonable adjustment'. A comprehensive <i>Reasonable Adjustment Policy and Guidelines</i> policy containing step-by-step protocols will be developed to assist managers and principals with this process.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>2.2.3 Flexible work options for people with a disability</b> Flexible work practices are particularly important to staff with disabilities and staff who have carer responsibilities for family members with disabilities. The Department has a <i>Flexible Work Kit</i> designed to maximise the opportunities for managers and staff to introduce flexible practices into their workplaces. The kit will be renewed and updated to so that opportunities for staff with disabilities or carer responsibilities are a focus of these policies.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010–2011
<p><b>2.2.4 DEECD Employee Health and Wellbeing Program</b> The Organisation Development Branch will be developing a DEECD Employee Health and Wellbeing Program for all central and regional office staff. This program will provide online desktop resources, quarterly onsite health related activities and will include identification and development of options to support employees with disabilities and raise awareness for those staff working with employees with disabilities.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010

# Outcome Area 3

## Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>3-1. Acknowledging staff contributions to improving outcomes for students with a disability</b></p> <p>The prestigious Victorian Education Excellence Awards recognise the important contributions made by staff across all schools from early childhood and school teachers, leaders and Education Support staff to their schools and school communities. The current review of the Excellence Awards will examine how to acknowledge and recognise staff contribution to improving educational outcomes for students with a disability.</p>	Schools Improvement, OGSE	Completed 2009
<p><b>3-2 Maximising inclusion and participation through flexible delivery modes</b></p> <p>In developing its curriculum implementation programs, the VCAA encourages teachers to develop flexible approaches to teaching and learning, including online and interactive learning. VCAA will encourage schools to use flexible delivery modes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing strategies for encouraging information and exchange of ideas among VCAL teachers through the Quality Assurance Program</li> <li>• develop equivalent advice for P–10 and other senior secondary programs</li> <li>• promoting opportunities for schools to use flexible delivery modes in implementation of VELS, VETiS and VCE.</li> </ul>	Curriculum, VCAA	2009–12
<p><b>3-3 Bar None in Education Program</b></p> <p>Through raising awareness in the school environment, it is anticipated that there will be improved inclusion of people with disabilities in education and, as a flow on effect, higher levels of school retention and attainment, and increased economic and social wellbeing. The products to be developed include a Teacher Information Booklet, a Teacher Awareness Kit, a DVD and a Train the Trainer professional learning program. Copies of the resources will be available to all schools in hard copy and on a linked DEECD (Office for Disability) website.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	Completed 2009

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>3-4 Abilities and Disabilities Awareness Program</b></p> <p>The aim of the Abilities and Disabilities Awareness Program is to make all people aware of what they can do, not what they can't do, and to talk about the abilities of people with a disability. The program offers one hour Disability Awareness Workshops for Prep–Year 12. Student Wellbeing and Support division will promote and further develop the program to encourage young people with difficulties to have confidence in their ability, and to change community perceptions in the promotion of positive attitudes towards people with a disability. It will also look at linking the program to the student wellbeing website.</p>	Student Wellbeing, OGSE	Ongoing
<p><b>3-5 Representations of people with disabilities in student learning resources</b></p> <p>The Student Learning Programs division provides advice, develops resources and facilitates programs to support school leaders and teachers in the provision of curriculum and recognises the importance of including young people with disabilities in this work. It will develop Student Learning resources, such as digital case studies, student work samples and publications including examples or work from special school settings.</p>	Student Learning Programs, OGSE	2012
<p><b>3-6 School councils – parents and stakeholders</b></p> <p>All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils play a key role in developing a vision for the school, in collaboration with all members of the school community, and are actively involved in developing and then endorsing the school's strategic plan. A school council comprises a mandated elected parent category, a mandated elected Department employee category and an optional community member category. Group Coordination division will review its strategies and material to ensure that training and advice is accessible to existing and potential members of council, including those with a disability.</p>	Coordination & Strategy, OGSE	Ongoing
<p><b>3-7 Inclusive school surveys</b></p> <p>Schools survey parents and students to gain their feedback on a variety of topics relating to school life. The Department issues guidelines to schools to support them run these surveys. The guidelines will be reviewed for opportunities to further promote the inclusion and participation of parents and carers with a disability in the survey process.</p>	Data, Outcomes & Evaluation, OCPC	2012

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>3-8 Victorian Families as Partners in Learning (FAPIL) Policy</b></p> <p>Many families are not available to attend school or early learning centres during school hours, but are keen to participate in their child's education. Schools and early childhood services need to adapt to this evolving landscape and find new and innovative ways of engaging families to foster partnerships.</p> <p>The development of the Victorian Family School and Early Childhood Services Partnership Policy aims to support schools to engage in partnerships with families that build learning, development and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people. The policy recognises that school populations consist of diverse family structures, culture groups and experiences and advocates the need for differentiated approaches to ensure all families are effectively engaged in learning. It will be inclusive of all students and families, including families with members who have disabilities. The development of the policy will result in a resource kit, which will include guidelines and other supports for schools to improve their engagement with families, including those with people with disabilities. Once developed, information regarding the policy will be accessible on the Education Regeneration and Community Partnerships division website.</p>	<p>Education Partnerships, OGSE</p> <p>2010</p>	<p>2010</p>
<p><b>3-9 Partnership census data</b></p> <p>The School Census requests that schools complete questions on Community Partnerships. This dataset assembled and managed by the Education Partnerships division (EPD), will provide insight into the quantum and nature of partnership activity across Victoria. The questions in the census are concerned with the number and type of partnerships that schools engage in and also the groups with which they associate. The data helps to inform DEECD of the changes in the quantity and nature of partnerships over time. The Community Partnerships category will continue to feature in future census materials and will be expanded where appropriate. EPD will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify instances from the dataset where schools, including special schools, are engaged in partnership activity with a focus on disability, whether they be educative or promoting access and inclusion.</li> <li>• make use of individual responses to fashion case studies promoting successful examples of targeted partnerships including people with disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Education Partnerships, OGSE</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Initiative	Accountability: Authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>3-10 Regeneration coordination</b></p> <p>An education regeneration project brings together key education and early childhood providers within a community to implement an improved model of education provision. Education regeneration involves significant school reorganisation, the delivery of substantial new educational infrastructure, transformed curriculum programs and pathways, and strategic school-community partnerships to address area-based disadvantage. Education Regeneration and Community Partnerships Division (EPD) provides a central coordinating point for all work relating to regeneration projects and is well placed to promote the consideration of issues around disability, accessibility and inclusiveness in the planning processes for all emerging regeneration projects. EPD will standardise and review the process undertaken for prospective regeneration projects (such as project management frameworks, communications and stakeholder engagement activities, partnership guidelines and capital works processes), and identify opportunities to encourage best practice in disability issues into these projects.</p>	Education Partnerships, OGSE	Ongoing
<p><b>3-11 International Day of People with Disability</b></p> <p>International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPwD) is an international celebration sanctioned by the United Nations which occurs on 3 December each year. It is an opportunity to recognise the contributions made by people with a disability in all aspects of our community. Human Resources division will coordinate DEECD celebrations in central office and invite staff to celebrate IDPwD by attending a range of awareness-raising events. Staff in regional offices and schools will be encouraged to mark the day by organising events in their locations as appropriate.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2009–12
<p><b>3-12 Inclusion of Victorians with disabilities in the VRQA communications strategy</b></p> <p>In 2009, the VRQA will be developing a new communications strategy, representative of all Victorians, to ensure that all communications released by the Authority are as effective as possible. The VRQA will consider the perspective of Victorians with disabilities when developing its communication strategy and will include images of Victorians with disabilities in its publications and on its website where appropriate.</p>	Corporate Services, VRQA	2009

# Outcome Area 4

Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices that discriminate against persons with a disability

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>4-1 Promote the work of DEECD staff providing services to children and young people with disabilities</b>            Many staff in schools and the early childhood sector deliver services to people with a disability. These efforts and achievements can go unheralded. Human Resources and Communications will implement a strategy to increase awareness and appreciation of the work being done across the early childhood and school services sector.</p>	Human Resources, ORI Communications, OCPC Student Wellbeing, OGSE	2011
<p><b>4-2 Raising the profile of staff in our schools with a disability</b>            A number of the Department's school-based staff have a disability. The successes and contributions of these staff members need to be profiled in case studies to encourage people with a disability to take up opportunities in the education workforce. Human Resources and Communications divisions will develop case studies profiling staff in schools with disabilities and market them to increase awareness of their important role in the sector.</p>	Human Resources, ORI Communications, OCPC	2010-2011
<p><b>4-3 Increasing awareness of disability issues in school leaders</b>            The Department is introducing a suite of development programs available to managers and principals. These programs will include content to increase awareness of disability issues. The professional learning program targeting principals to be delivered through the Victorian Institute of Educational Leadership will consist of a module titled 'Leading Ethically'. This module will focus on the area of leading for student and staff diversity (including disability) and will cover issues such as creating and supporting a just and secure environment and providing equity and access for all.</p>	Schools Improvement, OGSE	2010

Initiative	Accountability: statutory authority, DEECD office and/ or division	Delivery timeframe
<p><b>4-4 Increasing awareness of disability issues in education support staff</b></p> <p>The roles of education support staff in schools vary considerably and include office staff, lab technicians and integration aides. The role of support staff includes helping to improve student learning outcomes. Professional learning for education support staff will be delivered to raise awareness and increase knowledge of disabilities to better support and meet the needs of students.</p>	Schools Improvement, OGSE	Completed 2009
<p><b>4-5 Promoting best practice sharing in inclusive curriculum policy and implementation</b></p> <p>The VCAA is responsible for Victoria's curriculum policy and implementation. VCAA Curriculum branch will provide opportunities for teachers to share best practice programs that focus on achieving changes in attitudes and practices to eliminate discrimination against persons with a disability. This initiative will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a scoping exercise to review opportunities within professional learning programs conducted by Curriculum Branch for Early Childhood, P-10 and Senior Secondary Schooling branch</li> <li>• Incorporating appropriate opportunities in selected programs where identified.</li> </ul>	VCAA	2009-11
<p><b>4-6 Disability Awareness training for DEECD corporate staff</b></p> <p>An increased awareness of the barriers faced by Victorians with disabilities will enable DEECD corporate staff to provide appropriate services to the community and colleagues. The Department will examine options for providing disability awareness training for DEECD corporate staff commencing with a pilot program.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010
<p><b>4-7 DEECD Shared Values - Respect and Diversity</b></p> <p>In 2009 and 2010, the Department developed a new set of its Shared Values to reflect one DEECD. The new Shared Values include Respect and Diversity as key DEECD values. The Organisation Development Branch will integrate the new Shared Values into people related initiatives such as performance planning and development, induction and recruitment and leadership and management development. Respect and Diversity will be specifically reflected in the definition and the key behaviours that demonstrate the values.</p>	Human Resources, ORI	2010-2011

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Initiatives of DEECD divisions or statutory authorities

Office/ statutory authority	Division	Initiatives
<b>OGSE</b>	Coordination & Strategy	3.1.6
	Student Wellbeing	1.2.8, 1.2.11, 1.2.12, 1.2.13, 1.2.14, 1.2.15, 1.2.16, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 4.1.1
	Education Partnerships	3.1.8, 3.1.9, 3.1.10
	Schools Improvement	1.1.3, 3.1.1, 4.1.3, 4.1.4
	Student Learning	3.1.5
<b>OCPC</b>	Strategy	1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.9
	Programs and Partnerships	1.2.2, 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 1.2.7, 1.2.8, 1.2.10
	Communications	1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 4.1.1, 4.1.2
	Portfolio Governance and Improvement	1.1.1, 1.4.3, 1.4.5, 1.4.6, 1.4.7
	Data, Outcomes and Evaluation	3.1.7
	Executive and Ministerial Services	1.4.8
	Strategy and Coordination	1.4.2, 1.4.4
<b>OPRI</b>	Education, Policy and Research	1.1.1
	Youth Transitions	1.2.16
	System Policy	1.4.1
	International Education	1.1.1
<b>ORI</b>	Corporate Services	1.3.4, 1.3.5
	Information Technology	1.1.2
	Human Resources	1.1.4, 1.4.9, 1.4.10, 1.4.14, 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.1.7, 2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2
	Infrastructure	1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3
<b>VCAA</b>		1.1.1, 3.1.2, 4.1.5
<b>VRQA</b>		1.1.1, 3.12

