

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

2023-26





The Soul of Country

(Bundjil Midst Creation, Healing from Creation)

The art by Jarra Karaliner Steel is a modern interpretation of the spirit of her, her mother's and ancestors' land during Bundjil's creation of the landscape of the Yalukut Weelam (the local clan of the Boon Wurrung).

Alternative formats

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan is compatible with screen readers.

An Easy Read version of the plan, can be found at alfredhealth.org.au/accessinclusion

An Auslan and audio version of the plan can be found at alfredhealth.org.au/accessinclusion.

If you require an alternative format email inclusion@alfred.org.au or call 0427 657 918.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can phone us through the National Relay Service (NRS).

TTY users, dial 133677 and ask for 0427 657 918.

Voice relay users, phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 0427 657 918.

Acknowledgement of Country

Alfred Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing connection to land and waterways.

We value the contribution of indigenous wisdom to our understanding of disability. Worimi man, Damian Griffis of the First Peoples Disability Network, says there is no word for disability in his people's language. He says the focus is on "what we need to know about that person so we can ensure they can participate in the community."¹ In this plan we will try to do likewise. To hear from our patients and employees with disability to enable participation in healthcare and employment.

Front cover: Formerly a patient in Caulfield Hospital's Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre, James Kirkwood is now 'giving back' by volunteering. He is pictured with carer Lisa Wilson playing Uno with a patient.

Message from the CEO and Disability Committee Chair

Alfred Health's new Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2023-26)² is essential in ensuring that everyone, whatever their abilities, can get the healthcare and job opportunities they deserve.

Disability is just one aspect of a person's experience and our staff and consumers represent a variety of backgrounds and identities.

This plan is our response to ensuring everyone feels welcome, safe and included. It also addresses the state disability plan, Inclusive Victoria.

It is released at a significant time for people with disability, alongside the final report from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. We will learn from these findings, so we can contribute to breaking down barriers.

We are grateful to those who shared their experiences and ideas to create this plan. Your input has helped us better understand what's needed and where we should focus our efforts.

We believe every staff member plays a crucial role in making this plan work. We want everyone to actively help make Alfred Health a more inclusive health service. We invite our community to join us on this journey.

Let's work together to build a future where everyone has equal access to healthcare and opportunities.



Prof. Andrew Way AM
CEO, Alfred Health



Doug McCaskie
Disability Committee
Chair, Alfred Health

Understanding disability



18%

or around 1 in 6 Australians have disability.³



Only

10%

of this group are eligible for an NDIS plan.⁴



32,409

people with disability (requiring daily assistance with communication, mobility or self care) live in the Alfred Health catchment.⁵

Many people with disability have intersecting identities which can also impact on access to healthcare:

24%

of Aboriginal people have disability.⁶

38.5%

of LGBTIQ+ Australians have disability.⁷

7.4%

of children less than 15 have disability.⁸

1 in 4

people who report sexual violence are people with disability.³

1 in 2

adults with disability have experienced violence since age 15.³

Health experience and outcomes for people with disability

People with disability report **poorer general health and higher levels of psychological distress** than people without disability.⁹

People with intellectual disability are dying up to **27 years** earlier than most people and up to half their deaths are preventable.¹⁰

22% of all people who experienced disability discrimination report it was by health staff.³

People with disability who experience disability discrimination from health care staff are **six times** more likely to avoid medical facilities.³

Employment

People aged 15-64 with disability are **twice as likely to be unemployed** as those without disability.³

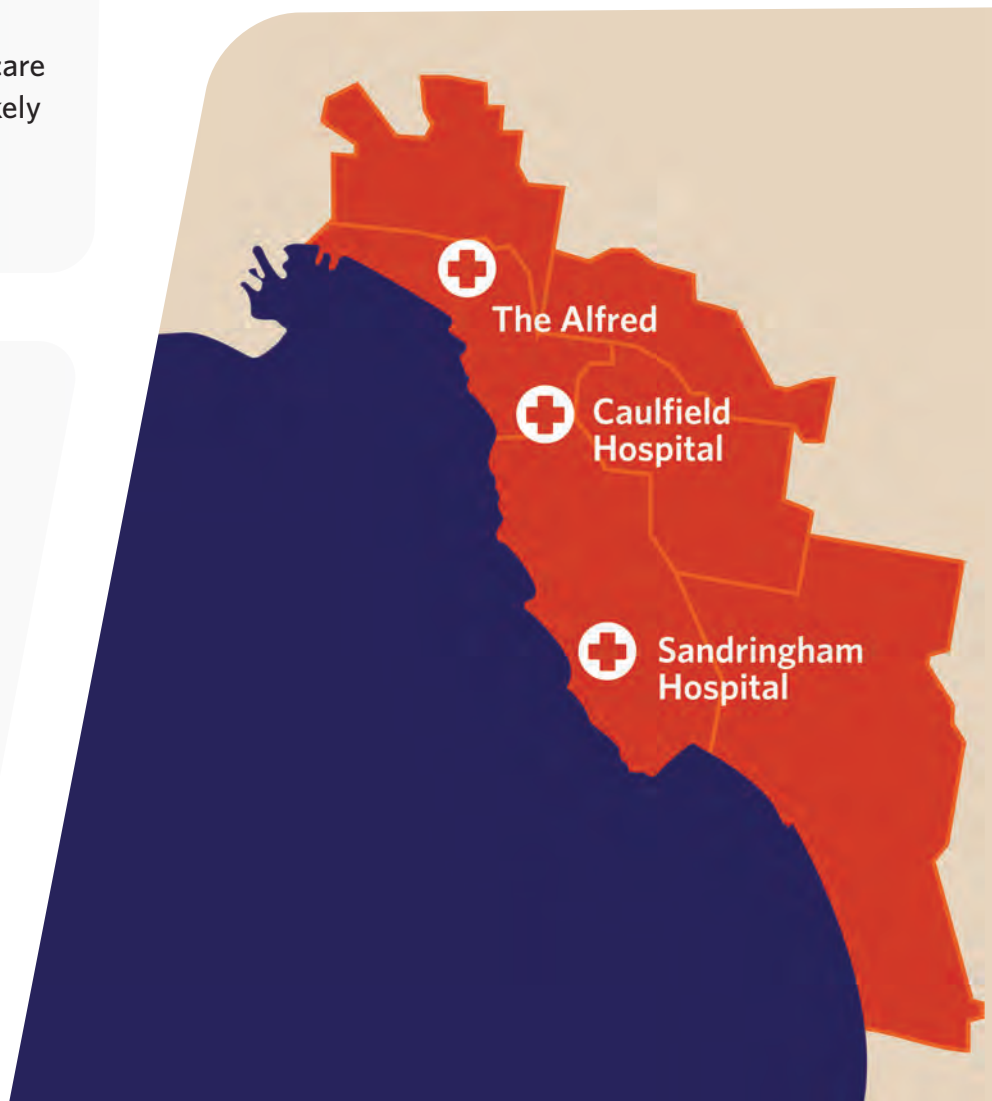
1 in 10 of those people with disability who are employed are underemployed.³

About Alfred Health

Alfred Health is one of Australia's leading healthcare services.

We have a dual role: caring for more than 750,000 locals who live in inner-southern Melbourne; and providing health services for Victorians experiencing the most acute and complex conditions through 18 statewide services.

Our three hospital campuses – The Alfred, Caulfield Hospital and Sandringham Hospital – as well as numerous community-based clinics, provide lifesaving treatments, specialist and rehabilitation services through to accessible local healthcare. We care for a wide range of people, from all age groups.



Building on our achievements

This plan builds on our achievements to date including our first Access and Inclusion Plan (2019-2022). Our previous plan was launched just prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this disrupted progress with some of the actions in the plan, many others were accelerated or achieved through the COVID-19 response.

A selection of achievements during the time of our most recent plan include:

Establishment of the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) service

This service enhances access for people with disability to COVID-19 testing and treatment as well as their usual health and medical services. Consumers have identified this as the single most important advancement in accessible healthcare over the past few years. A trial of a DLO service in the Emergency and Trauma Centre (E & TC) at The Alfred is underway. This service runs 7 days a week during business hours, with on-call after hours.

The SPEAK project

The SPEAK project produced a guide to support co-design with people with sensory, intellectual and communication support needs.

Disability Data Dashboard

Visibility of patients with disability has increased through the creation of the disability data dashboard. This provides staff with access to data about adverse events experienced by patients with disability and feedback from the patient experience survey.

Telehealth

Increased availability of telehealth has provided additional flexibility for people with disability attending health care appointments. The telehealth service has worked to remove barriers and maximise accessibility.



Accessibility menu

A new accessibility menu has been introduced to the Alfred Health Website. This menu provides options for users to customise the website to meet their individual needs.

Changing places

A changing places facility was created at The Alfred to provide bathroom facilities for people who can't use standard accessible toilets.

Quiet space

The first quiet space was created at The Alfred to give staff with sensory sensitivities a place to recover from sensory overload.

Working from home

Normalisation of working from home as well as improvements in the organisational capacity to support working from home provides greater flexibility for current and potential employees with disability.

Quality care in a home environment

Alfred Health's Mobile Assessment Treatment Service (MATS) plays an important role offering quality care in a home environment.

The MATS team consists of a Consultant Geriatrician, senior doctors, senior nursing staff and an Aged Care Nurse Practitioner. It provides assessment and care in the community, in consultation with patients, their family, carer and GP.

When Yooralla Carnegie Specialist Disability Accommodation resident Gaynor presented with health concerns, the MATS team were able to provide treatment, with a medical team also providing support.

For Gaynor, it meant she was able to be seen to by a doctor, get blood tests done, and have other assessments completed. Importantly, it was all

done from a home environment where she felt more comfortable than a potentially stressful hospital stay.

Yooralla Service Manager Ann-Marie Bassett said regular calls, visits and proactive communication reduced likely anxiety for Gaynor. Yooralla staff also benefitted.

“ Knowing that the MATS team was available for guidance and support – be it over the phone or face-to-face – assisted with the quality of care. The structured process also allows for more effective recovery.



The Mobile Assessment Treatment Team Service offers support to people such as Yooralla Carnegie resident Gaynor, pictured here with Yooralla Service Manager Ann-Marie Bassett.

Tech support improves vaccination experience

Virtual technology is being used by Alfred Health to support patients with autism and communication disabilities.

Among the technology being used is Smiley Scope. The equipment acts as a distraction technique to reduce anxiety around receiving a vaccination.

"For patients, it can make the experience more pleasant by taking the user through a guided, animated journey under the sea," said Disability Liaison Officer Alan Ottrey.

"For staff, there are prompts on when to prepare the injection site and give the injection."

So far, the technology has been primarily been used in the vaccination clinic, with one in the Emergency Department, one for Disability Liaison Officers and one for Paediatrics.

Staff need to be trained to use the equipment to ensure it is used effectively.

Alan said there has been a great interest in the idea of using technology, especially for individuals with hospital or medical trauma.



Pictured are Disability Liaison Officer Sebrina Teoh and nurse Ellen Dow with patient Rosie.

“A lot of families wanted to use it for their children. When it has worked, people have been very appreciative and come back to our clinics so they can continue to use the technology.

Similarly, staff have also been very interested in using the equipment.

"It has great potential to be rolled out more widely across the hospital," Alan said. "It has been terrific to work together with the Nursing team to provide adjustments to the way in which we provide vaccinations."

How we developed the plan.

The Disability Act 2006 states that we must have a disability plan. The plan should list actions to reduce discrimination and promote inclusion and participation. It should also reduce barriers to people with disability accessing health care services, facilities and employment.

We developed this plan with help from consumers with disability, their support people and disabled people's organisations. We also asked staff with and without disability about their ideas and opinions for making Alfred Health more accessible and inclusive.

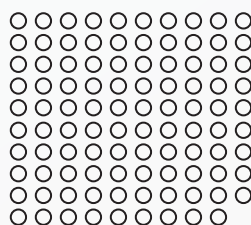
In addition to hearing about the experiences of consumers and staff, we completed the Access and Inclusion Index from the Australian Network on Disability (AND). Using this self-assessment tool, we examined our access and inclusion maturity across 10 key areas of the organisation. We received a report from AND with feedback and recommendations.

Together, the learnings from our community engagement process and feedback from the Access and Inclusion Index informed development of the actions for our Access and Inclusion plan.

This plan is underpinned by the Alfred Health Patients Come First Strategy(2021-2024)¹¹ and the Alfred Health Equity and Inclusion Strategy.¹² Together they support Alfred Health's purpose to improve the lives of our patients, their families, our communities and humanity.



How we listened:



99

People provided feedback

57 Online surveys



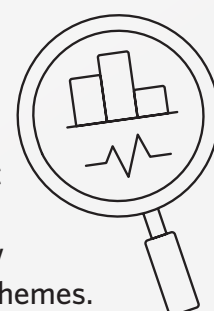
1 Focus Group with consumers living in supported disability accommodation.

3 Focus groups with consumers, carers and staff.



10 Interviews

1 Workshop with consumers and staff with different experiences of disability to review data and identify themes.





Working as an Alfred Health Consumer Consultant

Sam Jones has used her lived experience to advise Alfred Health how it can better support patients with autism, and intellectual and communication needs.

Sam was involved in the co-design of the SPEAK Project, working as a disability consumer consultant. The program aims to overcome sensory and communication barriers experienced by autistic people and those with intellectual and communication disabilities, when getting health care in our hospitals.

"I have lived experience with autism, and wanted to be a voice for the autistic community," Sam said.

“ My ultimate dream is that autistic people like me are not misunderstood. It's so good for my voice to be heard and I can help make a change.

In addition to highlighting her own healthcare experiences, Sam's role included learning from people with lived experience of disability and their carers about how we can improve hospitals. Staff were also interviewed.

Sam praised her Alfred Health colleagues for ensuring a safe and comfortable environment while she was working on the project. Something as simple as dimming the lights above Sam's desk, made a positive difference.

Where our plan fits

The Alfred Health Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2023-2026) is our contribution to the many laws and policies which uphold and protect the rights of people with disability.

These frameworks have guided development of our plan and place it in the context of international, national and state priorities and progress.

International⁴

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

National⁴

- Australia's disability strategy (2021-2031)
- National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- NDIS
- Information Linkages and Capacity Building program
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Victorian⁴

- Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022-2026)
- Disability Act 2006
- The Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Alfred Health

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2023-2026)²
- Patients Come First Strategy (2021-2024)¹¹
- Alfred Health Employee Equity and Inclusion Strategy (2023-2024)¹²
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (July 2023-July 2025)¹³
- Gender Equality Action Plan (2021-2025)¹⁴
- Alfred Health Strategic Plan (2021-2023)¹⁵

Our priority areas

Our vision is to provide welcoming and safe healthcare that meets the needs of people with disability across all their care experiences. Services are delivered by a workforce that reflects our community. This includes employees with disability who are supported to succeed at work.

Actions related to 6 priority areas will enable us to achieve our vision.

1 Leadership and inclusive culture

Disability access and inclusion is valued and prioritised throughout Alfred Health.

- Introduction of co-designed disability awareness training to staff.
- Trial of the Sunflower initiative, supporting the identification of people with invisible or hidden disabilities.
- Development of resources to support staff to provide reasonable adjustments to people with disability.
- Strengthen guidelines and training to ensure organisational communication is consistently accessible and inclusive.
- Accessibility is considered in the procurement of products and services.

2 Engagement with people with disability

We learn from the experience of people with disability.

- Consumers with disability are involved in reviewing and/or developing guidelines that reference people with disability.
- People with disability are involved in the planning and design of new services, buildings and facilities.
- Consumer feedback processes are strengthened to amplify the voice of people with disability.

3 Accessible health care services

We provide inclusive, accessible, and respectful healthcare for everyone.

- Clinical information systems capture and communicate the needs and preferences of people with disability.
- Our services support people with disability to be active participants in their healthcare.
- We support new and existing NDIS participants to navigate the NDIS.

4 Accessible environment and infrastructure

Our buildings and facilities are accessible to people with disability.

- Our buildings and facilities provide a dignified and accessible experience.
- Develop a risk-based approach to identifying and prioritising accessibility issues.
- Our technology makes it easier to access information



5 Inclusive employment practices

We support our staff with disability to succeed at work.

- Our policies and systems provide a clear pathway for staff with disability seeking workplace adjustments.
- Our workplace reflects the community we live in.
- We are working toward the Australian Public Sector disability employment target of 7%.
- Our recruitment practices are accessible and flexible.

6 Governance

Our governance systems ensure our services support people with disability.

- Develop inclusive design principles that underpin service planning, redesign and improvement.
- Ensure workplace policies, guidelines and systems enable our employees to do their jobs safely and effectively.
- Establish and monitor performance indicators that capture the experience and outcomes for employees and patients living with a disability

Priority areas and actions

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan's priorities and action plan will continue to be refined with key stakeholders through the lifecycle of the new 2023-2026 strategy. This is to ensure it remains relevant to the changing needs of the organisation and consumers.

To view the current actions in detail, visit alfredhealth.org.au/accessinclusion or scan the QR code.



How will we make sure the plan is achieved?

Every Alfred Health employee has a responsibility to work in a way that promotes access and inclusion for all people, including those with disability.

Implementation of the strategic actions named in this plan will be overseen by the Director of Allied Health who is the Alfred Health Disability Champion and chairs the Disability Committee. Disability project officers will provide disability expertise and resources to support departments across the organisation to achieve the actions they have committed to.

The Alfred Health Disability Access and Inclusion Plan will be submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission for inclusion on their Register of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans.

Progress of the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan actions will be included in the Alfred Health Annual Report. This report is available to the public via the Alfred Health website.

In addition, progress will be monitored by several Alfred Health committees with an interest in the plan as follows:

- Disability Committee (quarterly)
- Patients Come First Committee (annually)
- Consumer Advisory Committee (annually)
- Allied Health Operations Committee (annually)
- Alfred Health Executive Committee (annually)
- Disability Employee Network (once established, frequency to be determined)

How will we know if the plan is working?

We will track our overall progress through participation in the Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index. The Index provides us with an understanding of our disability maturity across different areas of the organisation.

We will complete an internal self-assessment in early 2025 to assess our progress at the mid-point of the plan. This will be followed by a full assessment submitted to the Australian Network on Disability for feedback and benchmarking in late 2026.

The next plan will be developed in 2027.

In addition to The Index, each action in the plan has one or more associated outcomes. These will be used to track progress and success of individual actions.



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Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

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Easy read version available

alfredhealth.org.au/accessinclusion

