



PENINSULA HEALTH

Disability Action Plan 2010-2013

Meeting the diverse needs of people with a disability



Disability Action Plan 2010-2013

Peninsula Health would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Disability Community Advisory Group, consumers, their carers and key staff in the development of this plan.

Peninsula Health's Community

Over 300,000 people live in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula region of Victoria. The largest group represented in both regions is the 25 - 54 year age group. The Mornington Peninsula records a significantly larger proportion of people over 55 compared with national figures. The number of people in the region over 85 is expected to rise significantly by 2031 (2006 census Australian Bureau of Statistics). The region has a small indigenous population and has a high Australian-born population. Language services most in demand at Peninsula Health are Auslan (sign language), Greek, Italian, Dari and Arabic. The local population can swell by more than 100,000 people during holiday and peak summer periods.

Peninsula Health's services

Peninsula Health operates 25 public health facilities across 13 main sites, including two public acute hospitals, Frankston and Rosebud. Services provided include medical, surgical, paediatric, maternity, critical care, mental health, rehabilitation, palliative care, community health & health education, outpatient services, aged care & assessment, investigative and medical support services, allied health and clinical training (Peninsula Health Annual Report 2009).

Peninsula Health employs over 4000 staff and services are enhanced by the contributions of approximately 900 volunteers, local community groups, and other organisations involved in service delivery.

Introduction

Peninsula Health is committed to ensuring that people with a disability have equal access to services and resources within the community. The development and implementation of a Disability Action Plan demonstrates this commitment and complies with Victorian and Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation. Through the Disability Action Plan, Peninsula Health will ensure that, within our services and workplace, there is no discrimination against people with a disability, and that their interests are considered in our future planning. The Disability Action Plan ensures consideration of disability issues is core activity in all areas of Peninsula Health.



Dr Sherene Devanesen
Chief Executive

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About disability

One in five Victorians has a disability. Disability results from the interaction between medical condition; bodily function; and the social and physical environment. Disability can:

- Occur at any point in a person's life
- Be sudden
- Be episodic
- Be overt or hidden
- Involve more than one impairment
- Affect other people, often family members

Why do we need a Disability Action Plan?

A Disability Action Plan assists organisations to devise and implement actions to ensure that their facilities, services and programs do not exclude people with a disability, or treat them less favourably than other people. Under the Disability Act 2006 it is a legal requirement for public sector bodies to develop Disability Action Plans and to report on them in their annual report.

The Disability Action Plan will help Peninsula Health to meet the diverse needs of people with a disability who use, visit or work within our organisation.

Legislative and Policy Framework

Peninsula Health is committed to ensuring that people with a disability have equal access to services and resources within the community. There are legislation and policy statements which support the rights of people with a disability. The development and implementation of Peninsula Health's Disability Action Plan demonstrates this commitment as well as ensuring compliance with the legislation and policies.

The legislation and policy statements include:

- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (www.un.org)
- *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* (1992) (www.austlii.edu.au)
- *Victorian Disability Act* (2006) (www.dhs.vic.gov.au)
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act* (1995) (www.equalopportunitycommission.vic.gov.au)
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* (2006) (www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012* (www.dhs.vic.gov.au)
- *Growing Victoria Together: A vision for Victoria to 2010 and beyond* (www.dpc.vic.gov.au)

How was the Peninsula Health Disability Action Plan developed?

Peninsula Health Disability Action Plan was developed through extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders

- *External Consultation:*
 - Extensive consultation was held with people with a disability, carers and disability service providers through the Peninsula Health Disability Community Advisory Group
 - Focus Groups
- *Internal consultation:*
 - Consultation was completed with key stakeholders from within all areas of Peninsula Health.
- *Literature Review*
- *Staff and Community Participant training*

What does Peninsula Health's Disability Action Plan achieve?

The Disability Action Plan provides Peninsula Health with a framework to meet the needs of people with a disability. The Disability Action Plan has four key action areas in line with the Victorian Disability Act (2006). These areas are the Key Goals for Disability Action Plans:

1. Promote access for people with disabilities
2. Promote inclusion and participation in the community
3. Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability
4. Promote employment opportunities for people with a disability

How does the Disability Action Plan align with Peninsula Health's Strategic Plan?

Peninsula Health's Strategic Plan (2009-2013) has six Strategic Goals. The four Key Goals of the Disability Action Plan fit broadly within these Strategic Goals:

- Strategic Goal 1: Create a better consumer experience
- Strategic Goal 2: Provide timely and appropriate healthcare
- Strategic Goal 3: Care for and develop our workforce
- Strategic Goal 4: Promote the health and wellbeing of our community and staff
- Strategic Goal 5: Enhance quality
- Strategic Goal 6: Provide innovative and efficient services

How is the Disability Action Plan promoted?

The Disability Action Plan is lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission for inclusion on their website. It is also accessible on the Peninsula Health website and staff intranet. There is ongoing promotion to staff through regular departmental updates, newsletters and 'Roadshows'. The organisation will promote the Disability Action Plan to the community including through the Community Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Group network.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Disability Action Plan

The Peninsula Health Disability Community Advisory Group plays a key role in overseeing the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Disability Action Plan.

- All actions identified in the Disability Action Plan are included in the Operational Quality and Risk Management plans of relevant Peninsula Health services / departments.
- All services / departments will provide reports about their progress to their Executive Director.
- The Executive Director is responsible for making sure all actions are monitored and reported.
- Peninsula Health reports annually on the plan through the Peninsula Health Quality of Care Report and Annual Report.

Goal 1

Promote access for people with disabilities

Peninsula Health ensures all of our services, facilities and information can be accessed by people with a disability.

- Service Access

Peninsula Health provides the community and its consumers with a large amount of information about its services, programs and facilities. This information is provided in many different ways including face to face, electronic and written forms. Ongoing reviews ensure that information is provided in an accessible form for people with a disability.

- Providing Accessible Health Information

Peninsula Health provides the community and its consumers with a large amount of specific health information. We provide information in a form that is accessible to people with a disability to make sure they are able to take full advantage of it to achieve positive health outcomes.

- Providing Access to Buildings and Facilities

All Peninsula Health buildings and facilities must be accessible to ensure equal access for all members of the community. This includes existing buildings and facilities as well as future development.

What Peninsula Health will do:

- Provide all sectors of the community with access to the full range of our information through compliance with accessibility standards and guidelines as monitored by the Consumer Information Steering Committee eg: an easily accessible website based on W3C¹ guidelines, plain English, font size, colour, readability, large print, Braille.
- Facilitate a link between the Disability Community Advisory Group and the Consumer Information Steering Committee to guide policy and input to the final copy of accessible Peninsula Health generated written information
- Enhance website capability to support advanced accessibility features eg Auslan Interpretation, voice overs/audio for sight impaired, Braille signage.
- Identify accessibility features and alternative formats available for website and written material.
- Support individual way-finding needs through appropriate signage, concierge services and environmental enhancements.
- Consider engagement of Access Auditors² to conduct a baseline audit for all Peninsula Health sites.
- Promote the first contact call centre (Access unit) to provide information regarding all services.
- Provide information regarding accessibility features of service(s) eg: location of accessible toilets, ramp entry, and accessible transport.

¹ <http://www.w3.org/>

² Access Auditors are accredited by a professional body, the Association of Consultants in Access, Australia Inc. For more information visit www.access.asn.au

- Provide equitable access to interpreter services for people with a disability.
- Provide appropriate examination, assessment and treatment equipment/resources eg Hi-Lo examination beds, appropriate seating, hoists, sensory aids in treatment areas
- Provide adequate accessible toilet facilities and where appropriate designate a high support needs toilet located at one or more sites.
- Provide adequate disabled parking at all sites.
- Implement RECHARGE³ program for electric wheelchairs/scooters at all appropriate sites.
- Work in partnership with local service providers to improve transport for people with a disability. Eg local government areas

³ The RECHARGE Scheme is a partnership between local businesses, community organisations and City Councils, which enables community members to recharge their electric wheelchair or scooter battery if required. For further information visit www.rechargescheme.org.au

Ideas to think about.....

When you enter a building do you consider:

- *How hard it is to push the door?*
- *The type of door handle used?*
- *If there is a lift to assist wheelchair access?*
- *If there is enough space to turn a wheelchair?*
- *The colours or letters used on information signs?*
- *The height of the reception desk?*
- *Ability to reach the taxi phone?*
- *If signage is adequate for people to find their way?*

When you produce written information do you consider:

- *The complexity of the language you use?*
- *How much jargon or professional speak you use?*
- *How many acronyms or abbreviations you use?*
- *The font size?*
- *The colour of the print and the paper?*
- *Using relevant pictures to help understanding?*

All of these things can have a significant impact on how well a person with a disability can access buildings, services and information.

Goal 2

Promote inclusion and participation in the community of people with a disability

Peninsula Health is leading the community in promoting practices that include people with a disability and which allow them to participate.

- **Strengthening Partnerships**
Peninsula Health recognises the need for effective partnerships with people with a disability, carers and disability service organisations.
- **Accessible Events**
Peninsula Health provides leadership within the local community in a range of health care, health promotion, and early intervention strategies and programs to ensure that we meet the needs of people with a disability and their carers. This includes all meetings, gatherings and structured activities for example Annual General Meeting, Ageing Well Expo and health and wellness forums.
- **Advocacy / Support**
Access to appropriate support assists with positive health outcomes and increased satisfaction with health care. Appropriate support is provided to people with a disability to ensure they gain equal access to and have satisfactory experiences with healthcare providers.

What Peninsula Health will do:

- All Peninsula Health departments/programs should develop and strengthen partnerships with Disability Service Organisations (DSOs) relevant to individual service areas, as demonstrated for example by increased joint projects and relationships with a range of DSOs. Information regarding potential disability service organisations is available from Frankston City Council (www.frankston.vic.gov.au), Mornington Peninsula Shire Council (www.mornpen.vic.gov.au), and the Mornington Peninsula Community Guide (www.communityguide.com.au).
- An organisation wide accessible events checklist, supported by an operational guideline will be developed and implemented as appropriate.
- All department /programs hosting events will advertise accessibility features through a range of media.
- Services will identify and offer individual support as required for members of the community attending Peninsula Health eg carer, support aids, interpreters.
- Information will be provided to Peninsula Health consumers about external advocacy / support services available to them
- Peninsula Health will support consumer advocate positions in relevant service areas.
- The Peninsula Health Community Participation framework will be promoted to staff to facilitate consumer input and feedback into service planning, delivery and evaluation as per Department of Health Community Participation Key Performance Indicators.

- Staff training in inclusive consultation with people with disabilities will be provided to facilitate engagement and participation of people with a disability in service planning, delivery and evaluation.

Ideas to think about.....

When organising an event do you:

- *Ask participants if they have any access or support requirements?*
- *Consider venues that allow people to enter, exit and move around the building with ease?*
- *Ensure there are accessible toilet facilities?*
- *Check that the room is 'hearing friendly'?*
- *Provide support workers if required?*
- *Limit visuals and ensure all visuals are easy to understand with good colour contrast?*
- *Promote your event through organisations and networks aimed at people with disabilities in order to fully access all possible audiences?*

These and other considerations assist organisers to improve the accessibility of events to increase the participation of people with a disability.

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/disabilityact

Goal 3

Achieve tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against persons with a disability

Peninsula Health challenges attitudinal barriers such as ignorance and stereotypical thinking which contribute to prejudice and actions which discriminate against and exclude people with a disability. Peninsula Health breaks down these barriers by providing people with facts and information which counteract hurtful attitudes and promote understanding.

- **Organisational Culture**

Peninsula Health is inclusive and encourages and values people with disabilities. Peninsula Health tolerates only inclusive attitudes and practices and encourages staff to see the ability, not the disability. An inclusive culture requires an organisational focus on a number of key aspects of attitude and practice:

- Attitudes towards disability
- Communication
- Role of Carers
- Care Planning and Provision

- **Consumer Consultation**

We will ask people with a disability and their carers to help us improve programs and services to ensure that they meet the needs of everyone. We actively seek input from people with a disability and their carers through both formal and informal means.

What Peninsula Health will do:

- Strengthen partnerships with and seek input from the disability community through the Disability Community Advisory Group.
- Include Disability Awareness principles in the Peninsula Health corporate orientation program with reference to the Disability Action Plan.
Train all staff and community participants / volunteers in mandatory Diversity Training, which includes Disability Awareness.
 - Provide specialist Disability Awareness training for staff or community participants / volunteers whose role it is to welcome people to our services eg. reception, concierge and ward clerks.
 - Utilise disability consultants / specialist trainers in Disability Awareness where appropriate to ensure high quality training programs.
 - Utilise the 'consumer voice' in education through consumer involvement, DVD, testimonials eg: "Talk" DVD⁴.
- In conjunction with the Disability Community Advisory Group raise the profile of the needs of people with a disability through newsletters, International Day of People with a Disability and Expos.
- Lead development and implementation of organisation wide policy / guidelines clearly communicating the relationship between Peninsula Health and paid external professional carers.

⁴ 'Talk' is an award-winning 12 minute film which challenges misconceptions about disability in a creative and entertaining way. 'Talk' portrays a society in which non-disabled people are a pitied minority and disabled people live full and active lives. "Talk" available at www.celebratingthejourney.org/talk-videos.asp

- Provide leadership in Disability Awareness education for undergraduate and postgraduate students on placement within Peninsula Health through the organisation's Diversity Awareness training.
- Ensure risk identification, information gathering and care planning tools are in place to meet the specific needs of people with a disability and encourage carer partnerships.

Carer and Patient Comments

They were extremely caring to my daughter, never embarrassed to ask me to explain the nature of her disability and how they best could assist her. I found the medical staff prompt and accurate in their assessment when attending to my daughter because they took note of the information I could provide to them.

Carer of young adult with a disability

They see the physical disabilities and don't listen to you.

Young adult with a disability

They think all people with a disability are the same and don't look at their individual needs.

Parent of a young adult with a disability

Goal 4

Promote employment opportunities for people with a disability

Peninsula Health treats employees, volunteers and community participants with a disability in a fair and equitable manner.

- Recruitment policies & practices
Peninsula Health ensures any position within the organisation is offered to the best candidate available. Barriers to employment for people with a disability arise from negative attitudes, assumptions and stereotypical thinking.
- Employment opportunities
Peninsula Health values diversity and innovation within the workplace and recognises that every individual brings with them a range of abilities.
- Community participation / Volunteer opportunities
Peninsula Health values the significant contribution made by our community participants and volunteers, and is committed to supporting and developing these roles across a broad cross section of the community including those with a disability.
- People with a disability in the workforce
Peninsula Health provides a safe and supportive work environment for all employees including 'reasonable adjustment'⁵ such as the adaptation of the physical environment, provision of specialist equipment or resources and job redesign.

⁵ "A change that allows an employee with a disability to carry out the tasks for which they were hired eg computer screen reader for employee with vision impairment, more breaks for an employee with arthritis

What Peninsula Health will do:

- Include the needs of people with a disability in organisation wide and department specific employment policies / guidelines.
- Train staff involved in Human Resource management / recruitment in issues around disclosure, reasonable adjustment and interviewing techniques for candidates with a disability.
- Build partnerships with local Disability Employment organisations.
- Build partnerships with local Volunteer Agencies who assist people with a disability to identify volunteering opportunities.
- Provide employment material in accessible formats to enable enquiry and application by people with a disability.
- Promote an organisational culture that encourages disclosure by employees and community participants / volunteers about their disability and related support requirements.
- Ensure that 'reasonable adjustment' is offered to support employment of staff and community participants / volunteers with a disability according to Peninsula Health's Equal Employment Opportunity policy.
- Provide flexible and innovative employment opportunities for people with a disability and carers of people with a disability.
- Provide flexible and innovative opportunities for community participants and volunteers.
- Identify and address the needs of Peninsula Health's workforce and consumers with a disability in Emergency Plans eg internal emergency responses, summer preparedness plan.
- Utilise Commonwealth funding opportunities to support employees with a disability and their colleagues.

Employee Experiences

Having a job allows me to learn new skills, meet new people, have pride in myself and be accepted by others.

It is very hard when I am not supported by others in the workplace, not supported by employment agencies and there is not enough funding for workplace modifications.

I worry about losing my job because of having time off due to my disabilities.

They were impressed by my resume and gave me great feedback following phone interview, inviting me to attend a face to face interview. I can't help but feel that it was discovering my disability that turned them off employing me.

What will make the Disability Action Plan work?

- *The Disability Action Plan has been developed in partnership with people with a disability and their carers.*
- *The Disability Action Plan is a core part of planning for all services, departments and units in their service provision, projects and policies.*
- *The Disability Action Plan has solid support from Peninsula Health Executive and Senior Management.*
- *Staff in the organisation will undertake general training in disability awareness and where relevant specific training directly related to their tasks.*
- *Peninsula Health will constantly review and monitor its Disability Action Plan, to make sure it is appropriate and its goals are being achieved.*
- *Peninsula Health will evaluate the Disability Action Plan and has hard evidence demonstrating positive changes as a result of the plan.*

*"aDAPting to Disability: A guide to disability action plans in Victoria" (2009)
Office for Disability*

“The primary experience of a human being with a disability, at least the primary experience in relation to community, is one of thoughtless, unnecessary and hurtful exclusion from nearly every social, political, educational, cultural, commercial or communication transaction.

To encounter a barrier to freedom of movement or interaction once in a lifetime seems to send some people into a frenzy of punitive litigation; to encounter such barriers all day every day is the ordinary experience of people who have a disability.”

*The late Elizabeth Hastings, former Disability Discrimination Commissioner,
“Access on the agenda: no longer an afterthought”.
Speech to the Creating Accessible Communities Conference,
Fremantle, Western Australia, 12 November 1996*

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