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Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2024 – 2026

Down Syndrome Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Down Syndrome Victoria celebrates the stories, culture and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders of all communities who also work and live on this land.

STATEMENT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Human rights, diversity, inclusion, as a disability organisation we know how important they are in creating a connected world. Creating communities that are resilient, strong and caring. The value it brings to empathy, innovation and creativity.

As an organisation we strive for these things for people with Down syndrome and their families in order that we will live in a society where people with Down syndrome are valued and enjoy social and economic inclusion. But beyond this we want to live in a society that values inherent human dignity and diversity and has achieved the social transformation that is required for this.

We want this for all people, and so in the development of this Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), we want to extend this organisational vision to ensure no one is left behind. We want to ensure everyone knows they can access the supports and services DSV provides, practically, comfortably and safely, and if for some reason they can't, that it is addressed in a timely manner within the outcomes of this plan.

This DIAP outlines the measures taken by DSV to ensure everyone is welcomed and supported within our organisation, and informs our community on our approach to diversity and inclusion.

DSV, along with our board of management and staff team, are committed to the implementation, maintenance and success of this action plan for the benefit of the Victorian community. This DIAP is our tool to ensure we continually strive for excellence and innovation, not only for people with Down syndrome and disability, but for every Victorian.

ABOUT DSV

Down Syndrome Victoria (DSV) is Victoria's state-wide peak association representing people with Down syndrome and their families. We are a community-based, not-for-profit membership association who has a proud history of supporting individuals, families and the community since our grassroots beginnings in 1978.

Down Syndrome Victoria (DSV) advocates with and for people with Down syndrome to have access to the same opportunities, supports and community activities as other Victorians. We work within a human rights framework, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability.

DSV provides information, training, general support, education support and services with and for people with Down syndrome, their families, professionals, and the wider community. This includes prenatal support and information to expectant parents and health professionals.

We aim to create a community where people with Down syndrome live the lives they choose, families and carers are well-informed, confident and supported, and community attitudes are positive and inclusive. DSV's [Strategic Plan 2024-2026](#) outlines these goals in more detail.

ABOUT OUR DIAP

Down Syndrome Victoria's DIAP demonstrates the organisation's commitment to eliminating discrimination and ensuring our organisation is inclusive and values diversity.

For the purposes of this document we are defining inclusion and diversity as:

Inclusion

The 'cultural and environmental feeling of belonging'¹. It is the creation of a more connected world where every person who wishes to can access and participate fully in all aspects of life in the same way as any other member of the community. Inclusion incorporates the social model of disability in that it is the inaccessibility of cultural and built environments which creates a person's disability.

Diversity

The 'full spectrum of human differences'². This includes not only disability but also gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, family status, religion, socioeconomic backgrounds and other characteristics. Diversity is not just about creating an organisation and community that provides equal rights and opportunities to all but values the fact that diverse abilities bring unique skills, benefits, innovation and insights to us as an organisation and community.

DSV's DIAP is guided by the principles of:

- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

The DIAP provides a systematic approach for our organisation to identify and address barriers to access and inclusion and develop strategies to transform DSV into an inclusive organisation that embraces diversity.

Goal 1: Valuing diversity

An organisation that welcomes and provides equal rights and opportunities to all.

Goal 2: Accessibility of communication

Communications and communication platforms are accessible.

Goal 3: Accessibility of environment

The physical location of DSV is fully accessible, welcoming and a universally designed location that facilitates access for all people.

¹ Inclusive Employment: A comprehensive guide to creating a culture of inclusion for people with disability in your organisation; 2021 Leap in! Australia

² Inclusive Employment: A comprehensive guide to creating a culture of inclusion for people with disability in your organisation; 2021 Leap in! Australia

Goal 4: Inclusive employment

Promoting inclusion in employment for all.

Implementation

The Accessibility Working Group develops, implements and monitors the DIAP. The working group is made up of volunteer staff members and the Down Syndrome Advisory Network Victoria (DSANVic) representative.

The Accessibility working group ensures the DIAP stays on track, compiling annual reports and progress reports provided to DSV Executive, Board and DSANVic.

This DIAP is for 3 years and coincides with DSV's Strategic Plan.

Annually the DIAP is reviewed with respect to National and State disability strategies to consider actions and timeframes and ensure actions are achieving goals.

Goal 1: Valuing diversity

An organisation that welcomes and provides equal rights and opportunities to all.

- Ensure a welcoming organisation for diverse groups
- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
- Seek culturally specific knowledge (CALD, ATSI)

Goal 2: Accessibility of communication

Communications and communication platforms are accessible.

- Accessible communications (internal & external) for people with Down syndrome / intellectual disability / disability and diverse groups
- Awareness campaign outlining commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Robust communication guidelines

Goal 3: Accessibility of environment

The physical location of DSV is fully accessible, welcoming and a universally designed location that facilitates access for all people.

- Organisational understanding of accessibility requirements
- Welcoming environment for DSV office and training spaces
- Sustainability in compliance to accessibility requirements
- Accessibility of IT internally, including software and hardware – ensure accessibility for people with disability

Goal 4: Inclusive employment

Promoting inclusion in employment for all.

- Accessible employment process
- Equal rights and opportunities for diverse groups
- Career pathways at DSV for people with disability
- Leadership opportunities for people with disability
- Partnerships with businesses that employ and support people with disability