

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

## 2023 – 2026

### How to put this plan into action

People with disabilities and family members are the experts. Invite people with disability and family members to talk to you in your setting and make a start. You could meet as a small group of two people if you need to.

The changes you make will help a range of people, now and in the future. The changes could help parents with prams or strollers, people with temporary and permanent mobility needs, and people with communication needs.

Here are some guidelines to help your conversation.

#### 1. Assess the current situation

Before you can make any changes, you need to review, or audit the way you already do things about access and equity.

To do your review or audit, you will need to:

- review the buildings and facilities to find problem areas
- review procedures, programs, services and activities for accessibility.

**You can also do an annual Essential Safety Measures (ESM). There is a checklist that can help with these reviews. The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has a self-audit checklist.**

You will need to include people with disabilities, carers, family and friends when you do the audit. They can tell you how they experience obstacles and difficulties. You can start with a tour of the buildings. You can talk about access to activities, worship services, materials and information.

“ The audit will clarify which services, programs, procedures and facilities make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to participate. People with disability are not all the same. Some access issues will not apply to all people with disability. When you make things more accessible, you can help a wider group of people. ”

– Andy Calder





## 2. Working out solutions

The audit will show you what problems you need to fix. You could then talk to people outside the organisation who can help you fix these problems. For example, you could talk to people from another congregation about how they have fixed access issues. This could also help schools.

Representation is essential. Participation needs to be genuine and thorough. You should consider working with some or all of these people:

- People with disabilities
- Carers, family members or friends of a person with a disability
- People of different ages.

When you are finding solutions, you should also consider:

- Intercultural needs
- Finance, property and architecture
- Educational and communication skills
- Theological and liturgical knowledge and skills.

You might not have experts in these areas in your organisation. You might need to ask people outside of your organisation to help.

## 3. Communication

You will achieve more when the whole congregation or Synod understand what is being done. The way the actions are planned will help the plan work.

Consider these questions:

- How will you consult inside and outside the organisation?
- How will your working group tell people about its plans? For example, minutes, displays, newssheets, announcements, bulletin boards, stories, website, social media
- How will your working group hear from the members of the organisation, including clients, and others? For example, parents of children, clients of a drop-in centre, families of residents in a nursing home, etc
- How will your working group consult with people with disabilities? Consider the diversity of disability, including people outside the organisation who could become members or clients
- What other ways of communicating can you use to make sure people with disabilities can access your information and offer feedback?





## 4. Setting priorities and goals

You will need to set priorities.

These criteria may help you decide your priorities:

- Which changes can be made now and which ones will take time?
- Which changes will benefit the most people?
- Which changes will be the easiest to achieve?
- Which changes can you afford now?
- Which changes can you link to other changes in your organisation?

How you set your priorities might depend on how your organisation works.

It is important to see how the priorities connect and how they fit the overall response and policy of your organisation.

## 5. Implementation

You will need to decide and document how you will make the changes.

- Who is going to do the actions? Who will be responsible for the work being done?
- When will the actions be finished?
- Who will communicate with members, clients and people with disabilities?
- If major building changes are needed, how will you make sure services can continue safely?
- Have you consulted with all the parts of the organisation about the changes and how the changes will affect them?
- How will you review the ongoing progress? Will the working group keep meeting to review progress?
- Have you developed a new policy statement for your organisation?



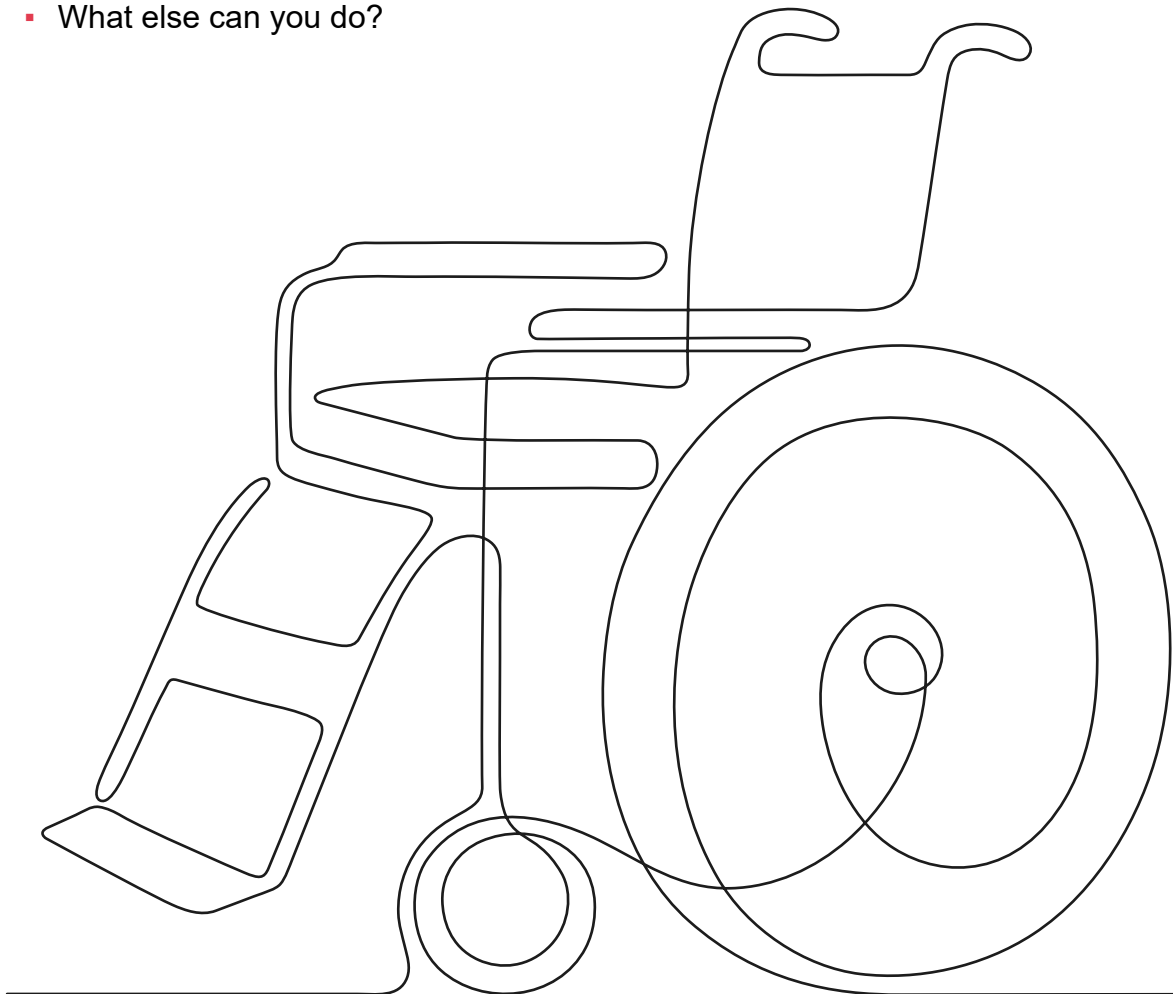


## 6. Review and evaluation

Make sure you review and evaluate the ways you do things. This includes reviewing the actions and plans.

The person who is going to do the review needs to represent the interests of people with disabilities, and provide feedback about achieving the goals. Consider if there will be annual or biannual reviews of the actions. This could happen at the same time as other organisational reviews, for example, the annual Essential Safety Measures audit.

- Is there a need for ongoing education?
- How can access and equity be part of the way we manage the organisation?
- How are access and equity issues part of the way people think and plan?
- Have you met all the needs you found when you did the access audit?
- Are there any new needs or issues that you have found since the access audit?
- What else can you do?



For more information, please visit:

[www.victas.uca.org.au/ministry-mission/disability-inclusion](http://www.victas.uca.org.au/ministry-mission/disability-inclusion)

