

**Improving access to the Victorian electoral system**

**A Disability Action Plan**

**2008 – 2011**

The logo for the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) is prominently displayed at the bottom of the page. It consists of a large, dark maroon shape that forms the left and bottom curves of a stylized 'V'. Inside this shape, the letters 'V', 'E', and 'C' are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The 'V' is slanted, the 'E' is blocky, and the 'C' is a simple curve. The entire logo is set against a white background.

**VEC**



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## **Electoral Commissioner's foreword**

I am pleased to present the Victorian Electoral Commission's Disability Action Plan for 2008-2010.

This Action Plan outlines important initiatives for the 2008 council elections and the 2010 State election, and builds on the previous consultation and work achieved prior to the 2006 State election.

This Plan reflects key objectives and strategies in our Corporate Plan, in relation to improving physical and information accessibility to enrolment and voting. As such, the timelines and responsibilities have been linked to the relevant Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) Manager.

I acknowledge that there are some elements over which the VEC has little control, such as the accessibility of voting centres we use – unfortunately there is a dearth of public buildings rated as fully wheelchair accessible. However, we will continue to make progress wherever possible.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with our Electoral Access Advisory Group in pursuit of our objectives, and expect that their challenges for us will further support our steps to improve access to the Victorian electoral system.

I commend the action plan to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Tully', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Tully  
Electoral Commissioner

# Definitions

## **Audio files**

Typically .mp3 files located on the VEC's website or distributed to vision-impaired people to explain aspects of voting and elections.

## **Carer**

A relative, social worker, case worker or those employed in aged care facilities, hospitals or day care centres who assist someone who is physically or intellectually incapacitated.

## **CCTV**

Closed –circuit television, commonly used for magnification of documents for vision-impaired people.

## **Corporate plan**

A strategic outlook document, containing the VEC's operational objectives for the outlook period.

## **Easy English**

Information presented that is 'Easy to Read', which may or may not have images. It assists the reader to understand the written information and thereby make more meaningful choices.

## **Elector**

A person whose name appears on the register of electors and who is entitled to vote in elections.

## **Electoral Access Advisory Group**

A group of representatives from peak disability advocacy groups and Carers Victoria.

### **Electronic voting**

The casting of a vote on a non-networked computer, which enables large print, high contrast display and instructions and options provided in audio or written format. Electronic voting is restricted to those who are blind or vision-impaired (as at March 2008).

### **Fat pencils**

Large circumference pencils for use by people who have trouble using small or thin writing implements.

### **General Postal Voter**

A voter who has difficulty getting to a voting centre on election day can register as a GPV. GPVs include people with a disability, prisoners, those in remote communities and people who are 70 or over. After the close of nominations for an election, GPVs are sent postal ballot papers and certificate envelopes.

### **Magnifying sheets**

A4 size sheets to magnify voter instructions, ballot papers and group voting tickets in voting centres – an aid for vision-impaired people.

### **Mobile voting**

Mobile voting facilities are provided to assist electors in such places as hospitals, aged care facilities and nursing homes to cast a vote. The voting is mobile because election officials move around the premises, taking portable ballot boxes and voting compartments directly to patients.

### **Secret vote**

A vote made in secret - first introduced in Victoria in 1856. Sometimes called the 'Australian ballot'.

**Senior Election Official**

Trained electoral officer who may be appointed to act as an Election Manager or Assistant Election Manager for a Parliamentary or local government election.

**Voting centre/venue**

A place at which electors can vote in an election. There are three types in State elections:

- early voting centres
- mobile voting centres
- election day voting centres

**Voting compartment**

A small compartment at the voting centre where people fill in their ballot papers in secret at elections.

## About the Victorian Electoral Commission

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) conducts elections for the Parliament of Victoria and local government, as well as some commercial organisations on a contract basis. The VEC is also responsible for maintaining the register of Victoria's electors.

The VEC's principal function is the conduct of State parliamentary elections and by-elections. The VEC is also effectively the only provider of local council election services in Victoria.

The maintenance of a continuously up-to-date enrolment register is crucial in the performance of these functions, and is therefore an integral part of the VEC's work. The organisation aims to keep the people of Victoria informed about enrolment and the electoral system, and it is legislated to provide public information and education campaigns to inform Victorians of their rights and responsibilities.

A commitment to improve access to electoral services for Victorians with disabilities has resulted in a challenge statement, vision and values statement (see below), and takes into account the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

The VEC's challenge is to stimulate leading thinking and deliver excellence in all electoral endeavours.

The vision is all Victorians actively participating in our democracy.

The organisation's values underpin all decisions made. The articulated values include:

Independence – acting with impartiality and integrity;

Accountability – transparent reporting and effective stewardship of resources;

Innovation – shaping our future through creativity and leadership;

Respect – consideration of self, others and the environment; and

Collaboration – working as a team with partners and communities.

## **The working environment**

Two government agencies are responsible for the conduct of elections in Victoria. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) is responsible for conducting elections for the Federal Parliament, and the VEC is responsible for conducting elections for the Parliament of Victoria. The VEC also conducts local council elections in Victoria.

Victorian State elections are held on the last weekend in November every four years. Barring exceptional circumstances, the next State election will be held on Saturday, 27 November 2010.

State elections are conducted within a legal framework established by the *Electoral Act 2002*. The legal environment in which elections are conducted is characterised by compulsory enrolment and compulsory voting.

In a State election, most Victorians vote by attending a voting centre on election day. However Victorians aged over 70, or those who find it difficult to attend a voting centre, may apply to be a general postal voter. This means that they are automatically sent postal voting material. Electors who will be

unable to attend a voting centre on election day may apply for a postal vote. The VEC also establishes early voting centres during the two weeks prior to election day. More than 3.4 million Victorians will vote in the next State election.

The *Local Government Act 1989* establishes the legal framework in which local council elections are conducted. Voting in local council elections is compulsory for residents and encouraged for non-residents and those over 70, however, *all* voters on the City of Melbourne roll must vote. All 79 councils will have concurrent elections for the first time on Saturday, 29 November 2008. Thereafter, council elections will be held on the last Saturday in November every four years – two years apart from the State elections.

Local council elections are conducted as either attendance or postal elections, with the great majority being conducted by post.

## **Considerations in developing the plan**

### **The legislative framework – disability services**

The Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunity in Victoria, through the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995*. The Equal Opportunity Commissioner for Victoria oversees this legislation. Also at the State level, the VEC observes the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006*.

At the Federal level, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) monitors compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

The VEC has obligations under both Federal and State legislation, regarding minimum standards, and therefore aims to comply with the requirements of both Federal and State

legislation. The Federal and State legislation operate concurrently, and one or other Act may relate to specific circumstances.

## **What is a disability?**

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) defines disability in relation to a person as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person.

## 2007-2012 Corporate Plan

The most recent VEC Corporate Plan takes voters with a disability into account under the section dedicated to 'Voters'. Through the identification of barriers to full participation, the VEC hopes to forge greater accessibility to enrolment and voting, particularly in the area of physical access and information access. The draft plan was sent to members of the VEC's Electoral Access Advisory Group for comment prior to finalisation.

Specifically, in order to increase voter participation (Corporate Plan Objective 5), the VEC's strategy is to enhance accessibility to voting services. Actions include:

- partnerships with agencies and networks;
- promotion and facilitation of early voting;
- expansion of mobile voting initiatives;
- encouraging the extension of electronic voting to those with poor motor skills; and
- ensuring adherence to the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

In order to reduce informal voting (Corporate Plan Objective 6), the VEC's strategy is to improve accessibility and clarity of information so that voters understand how to complete a formal vote. Actions include:

- producing VEC publications in Easy English and alternative formats; and
- identification of strategic partners who may assist to access key communities.

A suggestion from a member of the Advisory Group on the draft version of the plan resulted in the wording of the VEC's employment strategy being amended to read:

“Attract and retain a workforce which is reflective of diversity in the community.”

The abovementioned activities have been included in this Plan.

## **Consultation**

The VEC consulted with a wide range of people and organisations in the area of access and equity in the lead-up to the 2006 State election. These comments and suggestions helped inform the development and delivery of the Disability Action Plan 2005-07. Further consultation has since taken place to report on the delivery of the previous Action Plan and to carry forward successful initiatives to this plan, and also to provide new ideas and suggestions for this Plan. This Plan also takes into account the new VEC Corporate Plan which was circulated to all members of the Advisory Group for feedback, and the submissions made to the Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Matters hearing in August 2007.

As has previously been the case, this plan has been distributed to those groups identified as having a large membership base, as well as to rural and metro access workers with a request for any suggested voting centres that were fully wheelchair accessible. Suggestions for the best means to disseminate information to their members were also sought and will be considered.

Although the Disability Action plan is now complete, it is considered a living document. As such, the VEC will continue to consult through an established Advisory Group (see objective one), as well as working groups and focus groups where necessary.

## **Summary of objective one: Promote partnerships with people with a disability and peak bodies to achieve improved access to enrolment and voting in Victoria**

The VEC will continue to pursue partnership opportunities with disability groups, in order to actively seek advice on access issues for Victorians with a disability.

The Electoral Access Advisory Group will continue to meet as required to further ongoing communication with key agencies in the disability sector. The Advisory Group will be an essential forum to provide advice and expert knowledge to the VEC, as well as continually challenge the VEC to make real improvements in access issues and conduct appropriate research where relevant.

The VEC is committed to ensuring meaningful consultation by sharing election plans, training materials, and communication and education products with the Advisory Group.

It will also be an important mechanism for the VEC through which to provide information about the electoral legislative and operational environment to disability groups. The Advisory Group will meet in the lead-up to the 2008 council elections and the 2010 State election, and also play a role in evaluation at their conclusion.

## **Objective one - responsibilities and timelines**

**Maintain the Electoral Access Advisory Group, comprising those groups/agencies that represent people with a disability or people with a disability, to advise the VEC on relevant issues.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance measure:** The Electoral Access Advisory Group meets as required to assist the VEC implement the Disability Action Plan and advise on disability issues.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Where necessary, establish working parties (from the Advisory Group) and focus groups to provide feedback to the VEC.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance measure:** Decisions that may affect people with a disability are canvassed with people who have a disability.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research and Electoral Access Advisory Group

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**Develop networks with a range of organisations to distribute electoral information and education to Victorians with a disability (e.g. National Disability Services, Carers Victoria, Collective of Self Help Groups, VCOSS)**

**Timeline:** In place for elections in November 2008, November 2010

**Performance measure:** Electoral information and education is distributed via a range of organisations.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Seek feedback from people with a disability and the Electoral Access Advisory Group after the 2008 council elections and 2010 State election (including any complaints).**

**Timeline:** Within three months of the conclusion of both major events.

**Performance measure:** Report is prepared on the progress against VEC's Disability Action Plan.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Review the Disability Action Plan after the 2010 State election, in consultation with the Electoral Access Advisory Group.**

**Timeline:** June 2011

**Performance measure:** New Action Plan is developed.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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## **Summary of objective two: Improving physical access to voting for people with a disability**

The State election in November 2010 will require the VEC to lease approximately 1,600 buildings across the state for use as voting centres. The voting centres need to accommodate the needs of over 3.4 million Victorian voters. Voting is by attendance, with the option for people to register as a general postal voter or apply for a postal vote at election time, if it is difficult for them to reach a voting centre.

The VEC assesses locations as suitable based on many objectives, including:

- prominent locations that are easily identifiable;
- suitable size;
- availability;
- proximity to public transport;
- disabled parking;
- cost; and
- uniformity with Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) locations.

For many years, the VEC has incorporated wheelchair accessibility as an objective and assessed locations as either:

- wheelchair accessible;
- wheelchair accessible with assistance; or
- no wheelchair access.

At the 2006 State election, the wheelchair accessibility rating was promoted on the VEC's website and voting centre 'finder' and also in the press advertisements which listed all voting centres in the State.

In most cases, the VEC is unable to obtain a wheelchair accessibility rating for a venue at the time of booking, as many have not been assessed against relevant standards of access. In addition, the VEC will only utilise a particular part of a building, which may have a different level of accessibility. Therefore it is crucial that the precise room that is to be utilised is adequately assessed.

The VEC therefore undertakes its own assessment of venues as: full wheelchair access; wheelchair access with assistance; or no wheelchair access. This includes providing adequate training for Senior Election Officials on how to assess voting centres. The assessment assists the VEC to choose venues that are wheelchair accessible wherever possible.

While the VEC would ideally like to lease only fully wheelchair accessible venues, in some parts of the State, locations that fit all the VEC objectives do not exist. In addition, as the VEC is unable to make modifications, or direct owners to make modifications, the availability of suitable venues is a significant restriction.

The VEC will undertake to speak to disability groups and disability services to locate possible venues and prior to the finalisation of this plan, had received some suggestions from members of these groups. The VEC will commit to examining any venues that are suggested by the public as being fully wheelchair accessible for their suitability as a voting centre.

The VEC will also assess all current venue ratings to analyse whether the provision of access aids or accessible car parking signs will make the venue accessible.

Where the leasing of a fully or assisted wheelchair accessible venue has not been possible, the VEC will ensure that electors with a disability are provided with an accessible service that facilitates the opportunity to vote.

The accessibility *within* a voting centre is determined by the layout of the furniture, the colour schemes utilised, lighting, and the readability and ease of understanding of the instructions.

The layout of a venue is very important for the efficient running of the election, particularly in terms of limiting congestion and ensuring adequate privacy and security. The layout of the voting centre should consider issues such as ease of entry and egress, and flow-through for people with limited mobility.

The VEC already provides some specialised lower level voting compartments to accommodate a chair or wheelchair.

The VEC will ensure that senior election officials receive training and manuals on the set-up of a voting centre to ensure adequate space in the layout, as well as ensuring that the lower level height voting compartments are used.

A communication campaign will be run during electoral periods specifically to promote accessible venues and accessibility initiatives.

## Objective two - responsibilities and timelines

**Write to all relevant department heads to urge them to consider retrofitting non-accessible public buildings used for voting – provide a list of those most in need/complained about.**

**Timeline:** February 2008 and February 2010

**Performance measure:** Letter sent and monitoring to see if buildings are retrofitted.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Provide training to senior election officials on how to assess voting centres for their wheelchair accessibility.**

**Timeline:** July 2008 and March 2010

**Performance measure:** 100% of voting centres will be assessed and rated as either full wheelchair accessible, accessible with assistance or no wheelchair access.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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**Provide the initial assessment of voting locations to the Electoral Access Advisory Group to seek assistance in locating further venues.**

**Timeline:** April 2010

**Performance measure:** The Advisory Group receive the proposed list of voting centres with sufficient time to suggest further venues.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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**Provide for at least one wheelchair accessible voting compartment in each voting centre. The compartment will either be a lower and wider voting booth, or a tabletop voting compartment.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 and November 2010

**Performance measure:** At least one writing surface will be at the right height for people who need to sit or who are in a wheelchair while voting.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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**Develop a campaign to communicate the wheelchair accessibility of every voting centre and other accessibility initiatives.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 and November 2010

**Performance measure:** 100% of publications and VEC website listing voting locations will include a clear indication of the wheelchair accessibility rating.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Training for voting centre managers provides information on improving circulation and space within a voting centre.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 & November 2010

**Performance measure:** Information is provided to ensure adequate pathways that allows for wheelchairs and those using other walking aides.

**Manager responsible:** Election Administration

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**Promote and expand mobile voting – particularly to agencies or locations which cater for Victorians with a disability.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 and October 2010

**Performance measure:** Increase in number of mobile voting events, especially those at

locations that cater for Victorians with a disability.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services, Communication Education and Research

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**Consider height requirements of table top ballot boxes for completed votes to ensure it is at a height that can be reached by wheelchair users.**

**Timeline:** March 2010

**Performance measure:** Ballot boxes are of a suitable height to allow wheelchair users to place vote in ballot box.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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**Continue to ensure that all voting centres have adequate lighting and standard stock which includes: fat pencils, magnifying sheets, CCTV units for enlarging views of voting material *where possible* and seating.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 and November 2010

**Performance measure:** All voting centres have adequate aids, no complaints.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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## **Summary of objective three: Improve accessibility and clarity of information for Victorians with a disability so that they understand how to enrol and vote correctly**

The VEC has a responsibility to provide Victorians with information on the electoral system, as well as demonstrating the relevance of the democratic system to people's lives and their communities. This includes communicating electoral and enrolment information during and between elections.

The VEC provides the majority of information to Victorians during election times, such as how to update their enrolment, where and how to vote, and the results of the election. Currently services are offered for vision-impaired and hearing and speech-impaired voters, through the provision of a TTY service, audio information and large text files. The VEC will work to expand the services offered, by providing information in 'Easy English'.

The VEC is increasingly using its website as a key repository for information, and will provide for a website that complies with accessibility guidelines. Where appropriate and possible, the VEC will provide audio files, large text and easy English versions of information through the website. It is also understood that many Victorians do not access the website, so printed material will continue to be produced on enrolment and voting rights.

Research has found that for particular groups, the provision of electoral information alone is not sufficient, and education strategies are an important component of increasing participation and engagement with the electoral system. This lower level of engagement translates into lower levels of electoral participation. The VEC will target special schools, adult day programs and sheltered workshops for the delivery of

mock elections to engage young Victorians with a cognitive disability.

## Objective three - responsibilities and timelines

**Identify key publications and convert them into Easy English. Consider appropriate format and distribution.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance measure:** Increase in demand for Easy English versions of these publications

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Continually update information available on the VEC's website about assistance available to Victorians with a disability.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance Measure:** Up-to-date information page on VEC website outlining assistance available.

**Manager Responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Web content complies with accessibility requirements, and key information is available in audio files or large text and Easy English.**

**Timeline:** October 2008 and October 2010

**Performance measure:** Content and navigation comply with web accessibility standards as assessed by an independent consultant.

Information for Victorians with a disability published on VEC website.

\*provision of audio files of candidate statements for the 2008 council elections will not be possible as timelines prohibit the preparation and publication of what will be in excess of 3000 files.

**Manager responsible:** Information Technology, Communication, Education and Research, and Election Services

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**Develop an Easy English guide explaining enrolment and voting for council elections to complement the Easy English guide to State elections.**

**Timeline:** June 2008

**Performance measure:** An 'Easy English' guide is available for distribution.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Target special schools, adult day programs and sheltered workshops to provide enrolment session and/or a 'voting experience' via a mock election, as part of Education Program.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance measure:** Young Victorians with a cognitive disability experience voting and are engaged.

Number of enrolments arising from these initiatives.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Produce, promote and distribute a DVD with instructions on voting correctly (for council and State elections) in Auslan and promote and distribute it.**

**Timeline:** June/July 2008 and 2010

**Performance measure:** DVD produced and distributed.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**During briefing sessions with political parties, encourage them to consider alternative formats for how-to-vote cards.**

**Timeline:** August 2010

**Performance measure:** All parties informed.

**Manager responsible:** Election Administration

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## **Summary of objective four: Provide for more Victorians to have a secret independent vote and where a secret vote is not possible, that the vote is cast as intended.**

The increased size of the Upper House ballot paper as a result of changes to the structure and electoral arrangements for the Upper House introduced in 2006, has meant that it is no longer possible to provide Braille alternatives for vision-impaired Victorians. However there are other options that may still be pursued.

The VEC conducted an electronic voting pilot for people with low vision or blindness at the 2006 State election and the technology is now proven to be safe and secure. The VEC believes electronic voting should be extended past the pilot stage to become a permanent State election feature for those with a visual impairment and be extended to those with a motor impairment who find it hard to mark small squares on a ballot paper, or those with a cognitive impairment (to the extent that they can understand the reason for voting and how to vote if it is explained in simple language).

Another area of focus will be to ensure that carers and/or the management of aged care/nursing facilities understand the importance of, and are equipped to support, voting arrangements for those in their care. This will include ensuring each person's vote is secret and cast in accordance with that person's wishes.

## Objective four - responsibilities and timelines

**Suggest changes to the *Electoral Act 2002* to permit electronic voting at all elections where appropriate and to be extended to cover those with a motor impairment or an intellectual impairment.**

**Timeline:** December 2009

**Performance measure:** Changes to the Act are incorporated.

**Manager responsible:** Election Services

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**Conduct research into barriers faced by individuals with a disability with regard to enrolling and voting and provide the results and recommendations to the Electoral Access Advisory Committee.**

**Timeline:** 2008 calendar year

**Performance measure:** Research conducted

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Conduct an education/awareness program to ensure that carers and management of nursing homes/aged care facilities appreciate the importance of facilitating the vote of a person who is unable to do so without assistance to vote in the manner the person wishes.**

**Timeline:** June-November 2010

**Performance measure:** Program delivered. Greater VEC presence in nursing homes/aged care facilities at election time. 'New' individuals being added to the electoral roll.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

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**Produce a simple carers' brochure that outlines the conditions under which their charges can enrol and vote or be removed from the electoral roll, and the process for doing so.**

**Timeline:** March 2008

**Performance measure:** Brochure produced and made readily available.

**Manager responsible:** Communication, Education and Research

## **Summary of objective five: Improve staff awareness and assistance**

The type and level of assistance made available to a person at an election has a significant impact on that person's voting experience. Electoral officials are appointed to ensure that the election is run within legislative requirements, as well as providing assistance over the phone or in person at voting centres.

At a State election, the VEC appoints approximately 16,000 staff to work at voting locations across the state. Staff are employed on a casual basis for one day, which is a significant restriction in developing training packages. It is important that staff are aware of the particular needs of a variety of electors and that all are treated with dignity and respect.

Due to the numbers of staff that require training, and the volume of those who are casual, the VEC will continue to adopt a training strategy that combines some attendance training, training in the form of printed material, and the introduction of video material. The VEC, with the assistance of the Electoral Access Advisory Group will review the training material to make sure the varieties of abilities are accounted for, and that staff are aware of the level of assistance that can be provided.

To complement new training strategies developed, the VEC will look at employment strategies for people with a disability, as well as actively encouraging people who can provide specialist disability assistance to apply for positions in voting centres. The VEC will investigate appointing one member of staff at each voting centre to be responsible for providing any specialist assistance that might be required.

## Objective five - responsibilities and timelines

**Ensure the VEC's communication team reviews training materials provided to voting centre staff to ensure the use of plain English and inclusion of information on how to assist electors with a disability.**

**Timeline:** May 2008 and May 2010

**Performance measure:** Training manuals are reviewed by the communication team.

**Manager responsible:** Election Administration

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**Staff at each voting centre trained in providing appropriate customer service assistance, including the ability to speak other languages and understanding the range of needs of people with physical, sensory, cognitive and communication impairment.**

**Timeline:** November 2008 and November 2010

**Performance measure:** Training completed.

**Manager responsible:** Election Administration

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**Update recruitment and recruitment advertising policies to ensure that they attract and retain a workforce which is reflective of diversity in the community.**

**Timeline:** June 2008

**Performance measure:** Policies are updated.  
Employment vacancies are advertised through Disability Works Australia.

**Manager responsible:** Human Resources, Manager Communication, Education and Research

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**Work with Disability Works Australia to establish a pool of potential workers with a view to increasing the number of people with disabilities in the VEC workforce - based on ability, not disability.**

**Timeline:** Ongoing

**Performance measure:** An increase in the number of people with a disability employed – either core staff or specific election-related staff.

**Manager responsible:** Human Resources

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**Formally assess and modify, as far as possible, the VEC workplace to ensure that it is a safe and accessible site for employees with a disability.**

**Timeline:** June 2008

**Performance measure:** Workplace is assessed.  
Relevant modifications are made where possible.

**Manager responsible:** Human Resources