Problem statement: Democratic legitimacy depends on inclusivity. People living with disability tend to face more barriers to electoral participation, including a lack of physical access, information access or communication services.



Strategies: Access

Improve physical access to voting centres and services, along with a focus on providing information in various accessible formats and in plain English/Easy English.

Strategies: Changing attitudes

Encourage both staff and the public to focus on ability rather than disability and be respectful of human rights and personal dignity.

Strategies: Community

Engage with communities and disability support services to increase awareness of supports and resources in place for people living with disability to participate in elections.

Strategies: Employment

Update and review VEC and election recruitment and training policies and procedures to ensure they are inclusive and 'walk the talk' through an internship program for persons living with disability.

Intended impacts

- The VEC is an accessible and inclusive workplace for people.
- People with disabilities have increased access to participate in electoral processes.
- Increased enrolment of under-represented groups.
- Increased participation (i.e. formal voting) of underrepresented groups in electoral processes and democracy.
- Maximised participation of all eligible Victorians in democracy and electoral processes.





Evidence and assumptions

- Evidence People with disabilities are not always participating in our democracy fully for several reasons: people with disabilities and their supporters are not always aware of legal rights to vote; access issues at voting centres or to other voting options; VEC staff and people with disabilities are not always aware of support available to vote; inability to have a secret vote if vision impaired or blind and information sent out to public required in accessible formats (Bigby, C et al. [2019]. Strategies to support people with intellectual disabilities to vote; internal and external consultation).
- Assumption 1 Education and outreach activities improve engagement of people with disabilities in democratic processes.
- Assumption 2 The strategies will lead to intended impacts through activities, outputs and outcomes outlined in the DAIP program logic.

Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) program logic

Activities

Access

- Develop access checklist for VEC meetings, events, training, and projects
- Assess and certify the accessibility of the VEC
 website
- Develop guidelines for publishing information in accessible formats
- Promote accessible voting centres
- Advocate for legislative amendments to broaden access to telephone assisted voting
- Provide more voting places in residential settings such as nursing homes

Changing attitudes

- Provide VEC staff with access training
- Conduct research on failure to vote with people with disabilities

Community

- Stakeholder engagement
 Consult with key stakeholders
 Expand sponsorships
 Attend stakeholder events
- Support the Electoral Access Advisory Group
- Develop training for support staff
- Teach voting in disability support worker courses and schools

Employment

- Employ an intern each year through the Stepping into Internship program
- Recruit, train, and support democracy ambassadors with a disability

Outputs

Access

- Access checklist for events, meetings, training, and projects
- Accessible VEC website
- Accessible voting centres
- VEC resources published in accessible formats

Community

- Electoral Access Advisory Group
- Sponsorship and collaboration opportunities within the disability sector

Employment

• Democracy ambassadors with or a connection to disability

Changing attitudes

- · Disability, Access, and Inclusion Plan
- Program report

Short-term outcomes (6 months)

- VEC meetings and training sessions address access requirements
- Plain English letters are standard for all those sent to the public explaining enrolment and nonvoting compliance
- Baseline identified for employment of people with disability across the VEC
- The VEC has better understanding of the barriers and solutions to accessing electoral information and services for people with disabilities
- The VEC has improved relationships with disability stakeholders
- Increased VEC staff awareness and engagement of the DAIP

Medium- and long-term outcomes (>6 months- 4 years)

- People with disabilities have increased opportunities to engage with peer-to-peer electoral education
- Telephone assisted voting options are available to more people (not only those who are blind/vision impaired or have physical disabilities
- The proportion of people with disabilities working across the VEC is maintained or increased
- Organisations that support people with disability, promote electoral education and support their clients to vote
- Increased number of people with disabilities can enrol to vote
- Increased number of young people with disabilities can vote
- Reduced reports of access-related issues in feedback during and after elections
- VEC has robust engagement, visibility, and influence with disability stakeholders
- Disability stakeholders have greater awareness and understanding of the VEC and the importance of electoral participation
- Disability stakeholders are more likely to help community members to effectively participate in elections

Impacts

- The VEC is an accessible and inclusive workplace for people
- People with disabilities have increased access to participate in electoral processes
- Increased enrolment of underrepresented groups
- Increased participation (i.e. formal voting) of under-represented groups in electoral processes and the democracy
- Maximised participation of all eligible Victorians in democracy and electoral processes

Strategic Context

- Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)
- Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2020
- VEC Strategy 2023