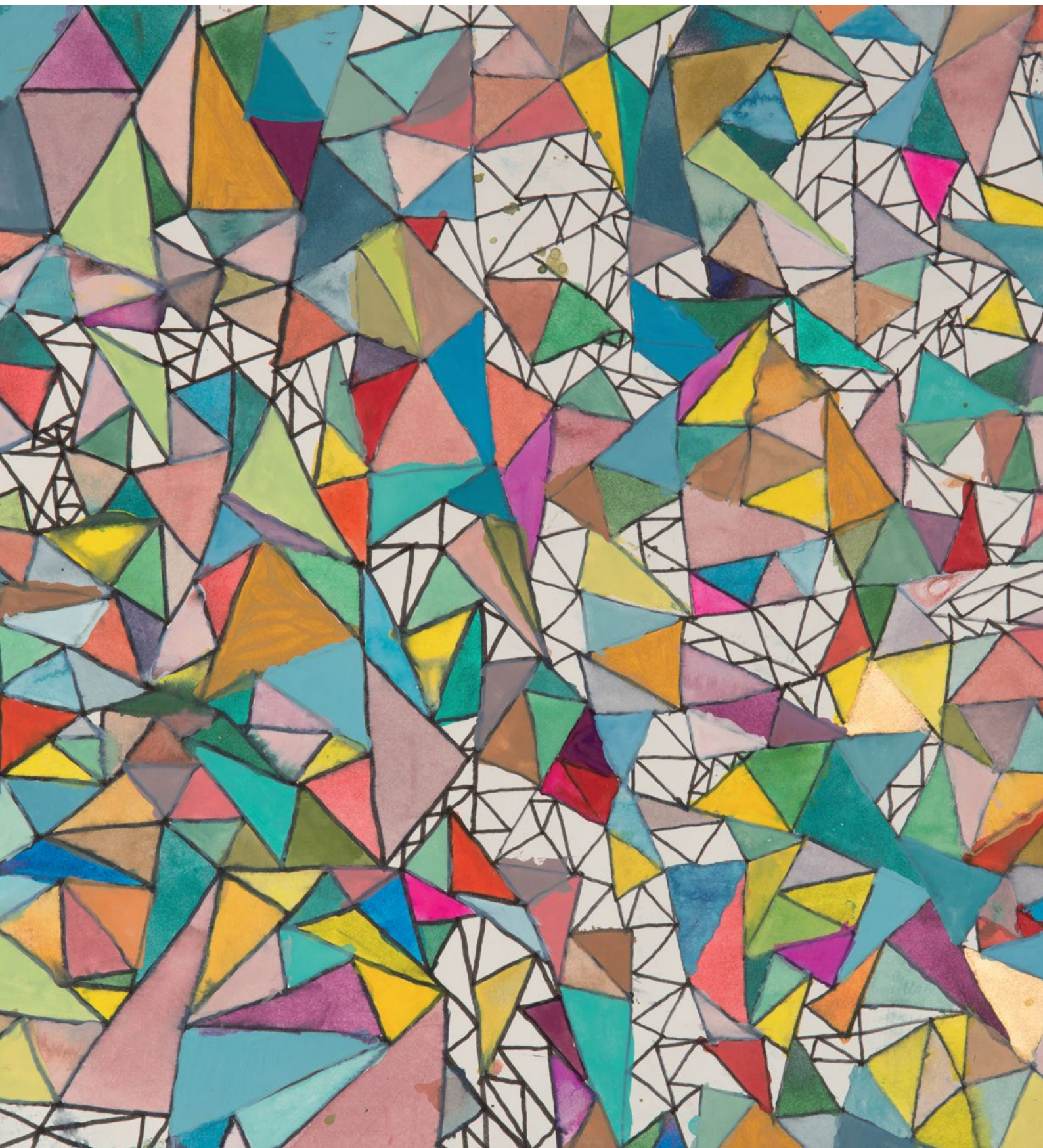
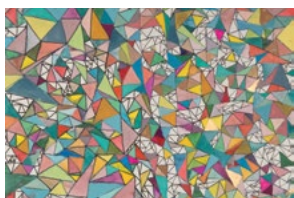


Disability education and engagement plan

Victorian Electoral Commission

2025–27





Lazzari, Monica.

"How Many Triangles Can You See", 2015.

Gouache and marker on paper

35x50cm

Courtesy of the artists and Arts Project Australia

Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of this nation, as the traditional custodians of the lands on which the VEC works and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present, and emerging. The VEC is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

**Disability education and
engagement plan (DEEP)
2025–27**

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Electoral Commissioner's introduction

I am proud to present the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) *Disability education and engagement plan 2025–27*. This plan continues our work to make electoral services accessible, inclusive, and welcoming for everyone.

Over 20% of Victorians are reported to have a disability, which can make the process of voting difficult or out of reach. It is our job to find and remove the barriers to all Victorians engaging as active citizens, and the plan explains how we will do this for people with disability. It shows our plan to make sure voting is inclusive and accessible for all.

All of the VEC education and engagement plans come from years of working closely with Victorian communities. We developed the plan with our Electoral Access Advisory Group (EAAG) which includes people with lived experience. We are thankful for their support, and we will keep working with them to achieve the plan's goals.

I look forward to seeing the plan in action. I sincerely hope that our focus on inclusion will help Victoria's democracy grow and thrive.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Sven Bluemmel'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Sven Bluemmel
Electoral Commissioner

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About us

The VEC is an independent authority set up under Victoria's *Electoral Act 2002*. Our vision is that all Victorians actively participate in their democracy, and our purpose is to provide high-quality, accessible electoral services with innovation, honesty and independence.

Our vision is that all Victorians actively participate in their democracy.

Our responsibilities include:

- › running state, local council, and statutory elections
- › maintaining the register of Victorian electors
- › conducting electoral boundary reviews
- › administering political funding and donation disclosure laws
- › conducting research in the public interest
- › promoting public awareness and understanding of electoral issues
- › regulating obligations under the Electoral Act 2002.

Our values are:

- › 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
- › collaboration – working as a team with partners and communities.

Our advisory groups

We have 5 active community advisory groups. These are the:

- › Young People Advisory Group (YPAG)
- › Aboriginal Advisory Group (AAG)
- › Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Advisory Group
- › Prisons and Without a Home (PAWAH) Advisory Group
- › Electoral Access Advisory Group (EAAG).

Electoral Access Advisory Group

The EAAG has 14 members including people with lived experience of disability, advocates and the following service providers:

- › SCOPE
- › Vision Australia
- › Yooralla
- › Carers Victoria
- › Blind Citizens Australia
- › AMAZE
- › VALID
- › Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities
- › Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

The EAAG gives us community advice, feedback and ideas to improve electoral engagement for people with disabilities.

The EAAG gives us community advice, feedback and ideas to improve electoral engagement for people with disabilities.

Figure 1: Democracy Ambassador provides a Voter Education Session to a self-advocacy community group.



Developing the DEEP

Our work on the DEEP is shaped by the 2 governing documents outlined below.

Strategy 2027

Strategy 2027 sets objectives for our whole organisation until 2027. It reflects the dynamic and complex environment we work in, and responds to new challenges including:

- › changes to the law
- › changes to the way people expect elections to run, including using technology
- › misinformation and disinformation across the media landscape and their impact on political views
- › decreasing trust in democratic systems
- › increasing threats to our systems and applications and a need for better cybersecurity.

The strategy has 4 thematic areas that guide our work and help address these challenges:

- › Trust – we are trusted to deliver electoral services with integrity and high quality.
- › Voters – we deliver a great voter experience.
- › Processes and systems – our processes and systems respond to a complex environment.
- › Wellbeing – our people are capable, engaged and satisfied.

These themes inform the goals and actions of our education and engagement plans.

The VEC Strategy 2027 has 4 thematic areas:

- › trust
- › voters
- › processes and systems
- › wellbeing.

Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) framework

We are committed to providing inclusive and accessible services to Victorians and creating a workplace that reflects the diverse communities we serve. We aim to foster respect and prevent all forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

We are developing an IDEA framework which will explain how we will work with people of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities, ethnicities, cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds. Our IDEA framework will build on our previous diversity and inclusion framework to increase trust in the VEC through recognising and celebrating diversity.

IDEA framework will explain how we will work with people of all ages, genders, sexualities, abilities, ethnicities, cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds.

The VEC has a history of championing inclusion through initiatives such as our democracy ambassador program. The IDEA framework will support the goals of our education and engagement plans to help our staff and communities thrive.

Figure 2: Democracy Ambassador provides Voter Education session to a community group.



Goals of the DEEP

True democracy must be accessible to everyone. People with disability face physical, cognitive, communication, sensory, neurological, and other barriers when participating in elections. We want to make sure that people with disability:

- › are active citizens engaged in electoral processes throughout their lives
- › are considered when planning and delivering electoral services
- › have more opportunities to enrol, vote, and engage in the democratic process.

**True democracy must be
accessible to everyone.**

The DEEP has 3 focus areas:

- › access
- › knowledge and confidence
- › relationships, visibility and representation.

The actions we will take to achieve these goals are outlined under the headings below.

Access

To improve access for people with disability we will:

- › review and evaluate our accessible enrolment and voting options
- › review our building access checklist for reasonable adjustments to voting centres and election offices
- › expand the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative
- › develop disability access keys for our head office and at least 2 voting centres for the 2026 state election
- › support people impacted by the 'cognitive impairment' provision in legislation
- › address barriers for parents, carers, and workers who help people vote.

Knowledge and confidence

To increase knowledge and confidence in electoral processes for people with disability we will:

- › recruit, train, and support people with lived experience of disability to become VEC democracy ambassadors
- › deliver electoral education through democracy ambassadors in specialist schools
- › develop and promote electoral education resources for people with disability.

Relationships, visibility, and representation

To build relationships with people with disability and increase their visibility and representation we will:

- › maintain relationships with, support, and seek advice from the EAAG, people with disability, and other stakeholders from the sector
- › review issues in our customer feedback register that impact people with disability, and seek advice on addressing these
- › build the skills of carers and support workers to help people vote
- › review and evaluate the accessibility of recruitment and training processes for election casuals
- › deliver partnership programs with disability service providers
- › increase representation of people with disability in VEC campaigns and publications.

DEEP outcomes

At the end of the DEEP, some of the outcomes we hope to see are:

- › more accessible and inclusive voting options available to more people including low sensory voting, telephone-assisted voting, large print, and braille ballot papers and postal voting
- › reduced reports of accessibility issues during and after elections
- › more people with disability knowing how and feeling confident to enrol and vote
- › more people with disability enrolling and voting
- › organisations that support people with disability promoting electoral education and supporting their clients to vote
- › having stronger engagement, visibility, and representation from disability stakeholders at the VEC
- › disability stakeholders having greater awareness and understanding of our work and the importance of electoral participation
- › improving our understanding of ‘unsound mind’ provisions, and the impacts of direct enrolment on voters with disabilities.

Measuring the success of the DEEP

The Electoral Commissioner, VEC Executive Management Group and staff are responsible for ensuring we achieve the actions in the DEEP.

We will maintain a progress report for the DEEP and invite feedback twice a year from the EAAG. We will also publish a yearly progress summary in our VEC annual reports.

This education and engagement plan is guided by its own program logic. The monitoring and evaluation plan includes measures and targets, using data from various sources that we report quarterly, annually, and for elections.

For a copy of the program logic, or monitoring and evaluation plan, please contact education@vec.vic.gov.au

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