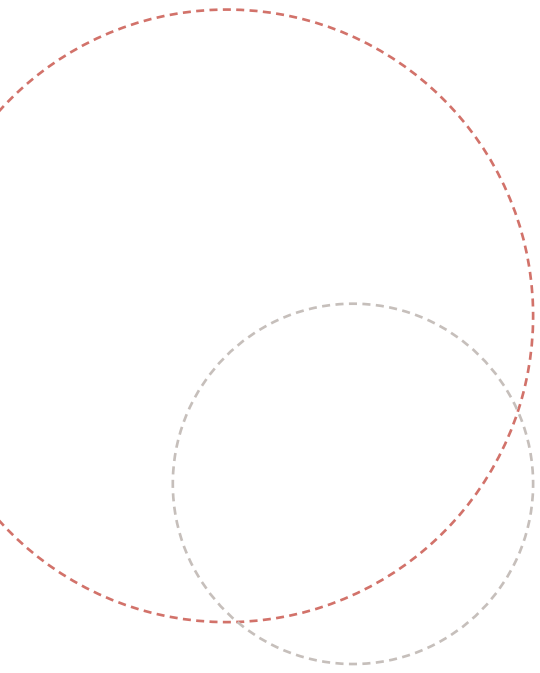


# Disability Inclusion Plan

2023 – 2027





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We respectfully acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of *lutruwita* / Tasmania.

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# Foreword

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We all have a part to play in increasing accessibility and inclusivity for all Tasmanians.

The Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) is committed to delivering inclusive services to all community members and improving opportunities for both current and future DPFEM employees and volunteers with disability.

Our commitment to inclusivity extends to every aspect of our activities, including emergency services and first responders who play a crucial role in keeping the Tasmanian community safe.

The DPFEM Disability Inclusion Plan 2023–2027 sets out our goals and objectives for the next four years, as we build upon and further strengthen DPFEM as a disability-confident workplace, and ensure that we actively foster a supportive, positive and inclusive environment for all.

Through our Inclusion Plan, we commit to working together to break down barriers, eliminate discrimination and foster a more compassionate and equitable Tasmania.

Our Inclusion Plan is a significant step towards ensuring that every member of our community feels and is valued, respected, and supported. The Plan contains actions that are designed to improve our interactions with the community and within DPFEM through better service, information and infrastructure accessibility.

I would like to thank the work areas and individuals who have contributed to the development of this Inclusion Plan – in particular, the feedback and insights provided by people with a disability and members of the DPFEM Disability Working Group. Thank you for your efforts in strengthening our relationships and supporting our staff and volunteers, and identifying actions which are both meaningful and achievable.

I am proud to endorse the DPFEM Disability Inclusion Plan 2023–2027, and look forward to making DPFEM a leading government agency in supporting disability inclusion within our community.

**Donna Adams PSM APM**

Secretary

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management

# Background and objective

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## What is disability?

As identified in the DPFEM *Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines*, disability is just one characteristic that can result in disadvantage and discrimination.

There are different forms of disability, with the National Disability Insurance Agency recognising the following<sup>1</sup>:

- physical
- visual
- hearing
- neurodevelopmental – includes intellectual/cognitive disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Communication disorders, Specific Learning Disorder, motor disorders (coordination difficulties, movement disorder, and tic disorders).
- psychosocial – a disability that occurs because of a mental health issue such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

Each presents its own challenges and, as such, there is no single path to success.

Compounding this is 'intersectionality', where a person or a group of people can be affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, such as gender, age, religion, and/or cultural background, as well as disability.

## How does the Disability Inclusion Plan fit in?

The Australian Government has published a ten-year disability strategy to provide guidance to state governments: [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#).

Tasmania's Disability Framework, which sits beneath the national strategy, is still being developed. Consequently, our DPFEM Disability Inclusion Plan actions currently align directly with the national strategy outcomes and policy priorities. Once the Tasmanian Disability Framework is in place, additional initiatives may be included in our Disability Inclusion Plan to support the state government approach.

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<sup>1</sup> National Disability Services, 'Disability Types and Description', n.d., accessed 19 September 2023, <https://www.nds.org.au/disability-types-and-descriptions#PsychosocialDisability>

## What is the objective of the Disability Inclusion Plan?

The DPFEM Disability Inclusion Plan's objective is to:

1. Improve the relationship DPFEM has with people with disability in the community.
2. Improve opportunities for existing and potential DPFEM employees and volunteers with disability.

The Disability Inclusion Plan supports the objective through a range of actions to improve interactions with the community and within DPFEM, including via:

- service accessibility
- information accessibility
- infrastructure accessibility.

# Organisational context

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DPFEM is a multi-faceted organisation comprising employees and volunteers across five distinct service arms:

- Tasmania Police
- Tasmania Fire Service (TFS)
- State Emergency Service (SES)
- Forensic Science Service Tasmania (FSST)
- Business and Executive Services (BES)

We deliver varied emergency services to the community, with both an outward and inward focus. Outwardly, we plan and respond to keep the community safe; and inwardly, we strive to be an employer of choice by empowering our staff to be their best. The Disability Inclusion Plan outlines actions that aim to improve both the outward and inward aspects of our organisation.

The Disability Inclusion Plan complements and supports other DPFEM plans, including:

- *Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement*
- *Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines*
- *Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Action Plan*
- *Closing the Gap DPFEM Implementation Plan* (new plan in draft)
- *TFS/SES Volunteer Sustainability Strategy* (new 5-year plan in draft)
- *TFS and SES Strategic Plan* (new five-year plan in draft)
- [\*Tasmania Police Strategy – Our way forward: 2023-2028\*](#)



# Key outcome areas

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This Inclusion Plan aligns with [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#) outcome areas, which are underpinned by the National Strategy Policy Priorities:

## **Employment and financial security**

People with disability have economic security, enabling them to plan and exercise choice and control over their lives.

## **Inclusive homes and communities**

People with disability live in inclusive, accessible, and well-designed homes and communities.

## **Safety, rights and justice**

The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld, and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law.

## **Personal and community support**

People with disability have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities.

## **Education and learning**

People with disability achieve their full potential through education and learning.

## **Health and wellbeing**

People with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

## **Community attitudes**

Community attitudes support equality, inclusion, and participation in society for people with disability.

# Consultation

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## **Within the agency**

Agency-wide consultation occurred to inform development of the Disability Inclusion Plan. This enabled individual work areas to enhance their own awareness of the challenges facing people with disability, the barriers that exist in their workspace, avenues for improvement, and sharing of ideas across the organisation.

Specific work areas were targeted to contribute their specialist knowledge and expertise toward development of the Disability Inclusion Plan. These areas included Diversity and Inclusion, Employment Advisory Services, Work Health and Safety, Education and Training, Youth Crime Intervention Unit, Property Services, Media, Communications and Engagement, and Coronial Services.

## **People with disability**

Development of the Disability Inclusion Plan incorporated feedback from people with disability directly, and from associated bodies/plans that have been informed by people with disability. Primarily these include members of the DPFEM Disability Working Group, the Premier's Disability Advisory Council, and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.

## **DPFEM Executive**

The Agency Executive Group was consulted to confirm that proposed actions will be achievable in conjunction with other agency priorities. The Disability Inclusion Plan has been endorsed as an interim plan pending release of the Tasmanian Disability Framework.

## **Disability Working Group**

The DPFEM Disability Working Group, led by Strategy and Support, collated information gathered from across the agency to develop the final version of the Disability Inclusion Plan. The aim was to include actions that are both meaningful and achievable. The Disability Working Group comprises representation from all service arms, all geographical regions, and members with lived experience.

# Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

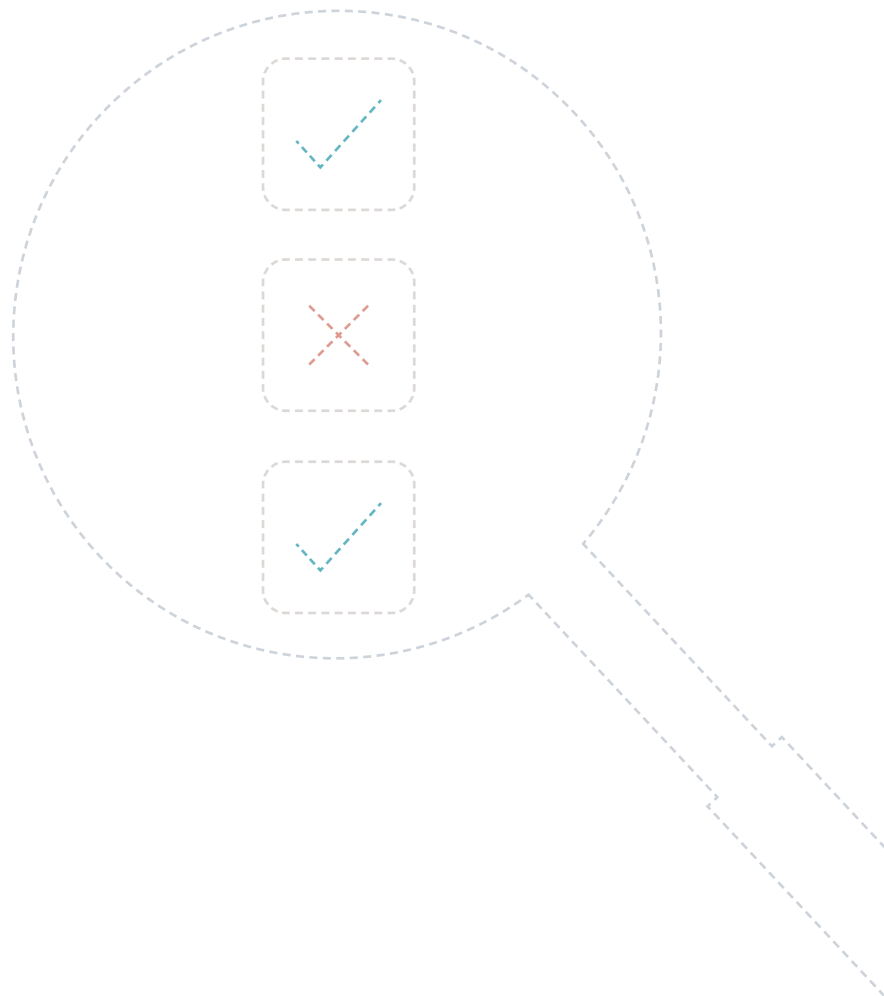
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The DPFEM Strategy and Support unit will be responsible for monitoring progress of the Disability Inclusion Plan and reporting back to the Disability Working Group.

The Disability Working Group will provide annual updates of the four-year plan (1 July 2023 – 20 June 2027) to the Agency Executive Group; and there is also a requirement for the DPFEM Secretary to report to the Premier’s Disability Advisory Council, traditionally on an annual basis.

Publication of the Tasmanian Disability Framework will trigger an evaluation of our Disability Inclusion Plan. There should be no need to remove any actions, but additional initiatives may be added.

Strategy and Support will evaluate the plan in conjunction with the annual reporting requirement to assess progress against each action; as well as assess if the plan remains fit for purpose.



# DPFEM actions

## OUTCOME AREA 1: Employment and financial security

Employment and financial security are central to improving outcomes for people with disability. This includes increasing employment and improving the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.

**We have already** introduced strategies to enhance awareness of the value people with disability can bring to our organisation.

**We will continue** to make our agency more accessible to people with disability and their support networks.

**We could do better** forming relationships with disability employment services and work toward increasing the number of our services and buildings being fully accessible.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
1.1	Establish disability champion/s within DPFEM to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engage with disability employment services and Tasmanian State Service initiatives</li> <li>provide advice, internally, about employment of people with disability</li> </ul>	Establish relationships with disability employment service providers and increase DPFEM staff awareness of the barriers facing people with disability	Dec 2023, annual review	PP1 PP3
1.2	Increase employment opportunities as part of the state-level framework (state framework currently being drafted; this action to be reviewed upon publication)	Improve employment opportunities for people with disability	Pending release of Tasmanian Disability Framework	PP1 PP2
1.3	Consider the use of goods and/or services provided by disability employment providers within the Treasurer's Instructions	Provide opportunity to members of the public with disability to gain work experience	Annual review	PP1 PP3
1.4	Review and, where deemed appropriate, have vacancy advertisements and statement of duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>state that our agency can accommodate diverse needs</li> <li>use inclusive language</li> </ul>	Formal acknowledgment of our agencies' support for people with disability and other identified groups	Annual review	PP1 PP3

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
1.5	Actively promote employment opportunities for people with disability via <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The People with Disability Employment Register,</li> <li>• Peak bodies' and stakeholders such as University of Tasmania (UTAS)</li> </ul>	Increase the number of people with disability employed by DPFEM	Annual review	PP1 PP3
1.6	Promote DPFEM employment and engagement opportunities (such as volunteering), showcasing the broad range of roles that support frontline staff	Increase the number of people with disability employed by, and engaged with, DPFEM	Annual review	PP1 PP3
1.7	Develop a DPFEM Workplace Adjustment Policy	Implement an agency endorsed Policy to support people with disability in the workplace	Jul 2025	PP1 PP3
1.8	Continue to support DPFEM managers to facilitate individual reasonable adjustment plans for employees with disability. Establish centralised recording of adjustment plans	Increase the number of DPFEM staff with effective reasonable adjustment plans, increase the number of adjustment options available, keep a record of reasonable adjustments	Annual Review	PP1 PP3
1.9	Review guidance available regarding flexible work arrangements available to DPFEM employees, promote flexibility in work via the onboarding process	Increase the number of DPFEM staff who have disability accessing flexible work options	Dec 2024	PP1 PP3
1.10	Conduct an audit of data capture processes and reporting capacity regarding employment of people with disability, including the number of people employed, type of disability, and adjustments required. Identify opportunities for improvement and implement as whole of government framework dictates	Enhance organisation's understanding of disability employment to enable targeted improvements	Pending release of Tasmanian Disability Framework	PP1 PP3
1.11	Update DPFEM Employee Self Service to reflect disability leave introduced in State Service Award (T14934 of 2022)	Enable reporting mechanism to monitor employees accessing disability related leave	July 2024	PP1 PP3
1.12	Provide disability awareness training (practical workshop style) for core group of DPFEM staff	Enhance knowledge and skills of DPFEM staff who will contribute to organisational change related to accessibility of people with disability	Dec 2023	PP1 PP3

## OUTCOME AREA 2: Inclusive homes and communities

Having appropriate housing and a community that is accessible and inclusive is central to how people with disability live, work and socialise.

**We have already** commenced ensuring compliance with building standards of new and renovated police housing and DPFEM buildings.

**We will continue** to ensure building works and public facing information is accessible to people with disability.

**We could do better** expanding compliance with building standards for existing DPFEM buildings.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
2.1	Continued involvement in and promotion of the National Assistance Card initiative	Increase DPFEM staff awareness of the initiative, to improve the experience of people with disability with our agency	Annual review	PP3 PP4
2.2	Promote the Creating Accessible Events Guidelines, and encourage use of an Auslan interpreters during emergencies	Improve accessibility for people engaging with DPFEM	Annual review	PP3 PP4
2.3	Review and work toward Departmental internet and intranet sites meeting WCAG 2.1 Standards	Improve information accessibility for members of the community and DPFEM staff	Annual review	PP6
2.4	Introduce Departmental policy that, wherever possible, all new internet and intranet content must meet WCAG 2.1 Standards	Improve information accessibility for members of the community and DPFEM staff	Jul 2024	PP6
2.5	Promote completion of the online learning training 'Creating accessible documents and webpages'	Increase the number of staff completing the training, increase document-compliance	Annual review	PP6
2.6	Conduct an audit of existing DPFEM buildings to assess compliance against the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i> and relevant provisions of the Building Code of Australia. Prioritise non-compliance upgrades in the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) to secure budget allocation in a phased approach. SAMP to include new builds, existing buildings, purchases, and leases.	Improve access to DPFEM buildings for people with disability	Annual review	PP4

### OUTCOME AREA 3: Safety, rights and justice

People with disability have the same rights as people without disability. These rights are promoted, upheld, and protected, and people with disability are protected from discrimination and feel safe and enjoy equality before the law. Policies, processes, and programs for people with disability promote gender equality and prevent violence against groups at heightened risk.

**We have already** introduced specialist training and processes for police to better accommodate the intersectionality of vulnerable members of our community.

**We will continue** to develop policies and processes to diversify our agency and ensure equal access to the justice system.

**We could do better** to collect meaningful data to inform enhancement of the experience when engaging with our agency.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
3.1	Monitor and respond to findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and other relevant Commissions and Inquiries as they arise	Improve the experience for people with disability engaging with the justice system	Annual review	PP1 PP3
3.2	Continue to integrate lived experience into ongoing development of the Sexual and Family Violence Structural Reform process, including Arch Centres	Identify, and where possible, address barriers	Annual review	PP1 PP3 PP4 PP6
3.3	Continue to ensure people with disability are considered and engaged in development of training, policy, and process, particularly as it relates to family and sexual violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation	Develop training, policy and processes that meet the needs of people with disability	Annual review	PP1 PP3 PP4
3.4	Continue to engage in inter-agency groups and initiatives related to disability and discrimination, including active input into development of the state-level framework	Inform the development of actions and policies that support people with disability and are attainable by DPFEM	As required	PP1
3.5	Be guided by a trauma-informed approach in the development of policy and practice	Improve service delivery to members of the community with disability	Jul 2025	PP1 PP2
3.6	Promote the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Standards via training regarding gender equality and prevention of violence	Improve the health, wellbeing and safety of women and children within the DPFEM workplace	Annual review	PP3 PP5
3.7	Raise awareness of the importance of plain English in departmental communications, through the promotion of resources and training.	Improve how DPFEM staff communicate with members of the community with disability – to make DPFEM’s messaging more accessible	Jul 2025	PP4 PP5

## OUTCOME AREA 4: Personal and community support

Personal and community support including both specialist disability supports and mainstream services available to the general public, are fundamental to improving overall outcomes for people with disability.

**We have already** enhanced community emergency preparedness by building relationships with disability service providers and peak bodies; and improved information accessibility.

**We will continue** to build relationships that will further support the needs of the community.

**We could do better** to facilitate accessible options for members of the public to engage as DPFEM volunteers.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
4.1	Educate DPFEM employees on the significance of informal and formal support networks utilised by people with disability, and facilitate avenues to enable efficient contact to these networks in crisis and emergency situations	To provide assurance and safety to members of the community with disability	Annual Review	PP1 PP3
4.2	Build capacity for members of the community with disability to be involved as Departmental volunteers	Enhance opportunities for people with disability to participate in TFS and SES volunteer activities	Annual Review	PP1 PP4
4.3	Identify and acknowledge the role of DPFEM employees who support a person with disability, while respecting individual privacy, and facilitate flexibility and adjustments to accommodate unique personal circumstances	Increase the number of people who support a person with disability formally recognised by DPFEM and associated flexible work options	Annual Review	PP3
4.4	Continue to develop and promote disability support resources for DPFEM staff	Improving our staff awareness will in turn improve accessibility for people engaging with DPFEM	Annual Review	PP1



## OUTCOME AREA 5: Education and learning

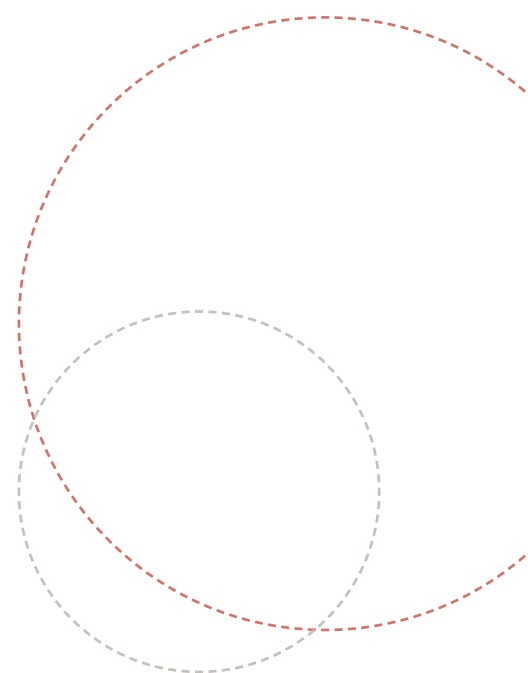
Access to formal and informal education provides pathways to employment, financial independence, and enriched lives. Greater support to prepare children<sup>2</sup> with disability for school, and to work with young people with disability throughout their education is required to improve attainment of secondary and tertiary qualifications.

**We have already** introduced individual adjustment plans to facilitate training opportunities for DPFEM staff with disability.

**We will continue** to explore and introduce training opportunities for employees.

**We could do better** to expand the range of reasonable adjustments available to facilitate employees with disability engaging in professional development.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
5.1	Provide Diversity and Inclusion training to as many DPFEM employees and volunteers as possible, including as part of induction	Foster a culture of respect and support; and increase the number of staff who have completed Diversity and Inclusion training	Annual Review	PP4
5.2	Support DPFEM staff with disability to access professional development opportunities. For example, by facilitating reasonable adjustments to enable access to courses/ programs, or work experience across work areas	Increase numbers of people with disability completing professional development training	Annual Review	PP2 PP3



<sup>2</sup> \*DPFEM commits to the provision of ongoing adult education for its staff.

## OUTCOME AREA 6: Health and wellbeing

Good health and wellbeing, including mental health, are critical determinants of a person's quality of life. This is especially the case for people with disability. Greater support is needed to lift the health and wellbeing of people with disability including before, during and after disasters and public emergencies.

**We have already** expanded awareness and improved our response to mental health across the organisation.

**We will continue** to ensure accessibility to mental health support for people with disability.

**We could do better** to ensure existing policies and procedures include factors specific to disability.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
6.1	Ensure disaster preparedness, risk management plans, and emergency responses are inclusive of people with disability, and support physical and mental wellbeing	Make public messaging more accessible to enhance the safety of members of our community with disability	Dec 2025	PP4
6.7	Continue to provide Mental Health First Aid training to all DPFEM staff (employees and volunteers)	Increase the number of staff completing Mental Health First Aid training	Annual Review	PP3
6.3	Continue injury and illness prevention strategies, continue improvement of 'return to work' support for employees who suffer injury or illness	Improve the overall health and wellbeing of our staff; increase the number of employees returning to their substantive role after injury or illness	Annual Review	PP2
6.4	Develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) template for our DPFEM staff with disability, and integrate information pertaining to PEEPs into DPFEM induction.	Ensure DPFEM staff with accessibility challenges are safe in the event of workplace emergencies	Jul 2024	PP4

## OUTCOME AREA 7: Community attitudes

Building positive community attitudes towards people with disability is central to achieving an inclusive society and improving all outcomes for people with disability. Addressing stigma, unconscious bias, and lack of understanding of disability will contribute to positive daily experiences and recognition of the contribution that people with disability can make to society.

**We have already** increased information available to DPFEM employees regarding disability resources and services; and improved accessibility of information related to our organisation and what we do.

**We will continue** to develop training, and ensure contemporary accessible information is available.

**We could do better** to increase the number of employees and volunteers with disability engaged with our agency, to better represent the community we serve.

Action No.	Action description	Intended outcome	Due date	NSPP
7.1	Mark key dates publicly and internally eg mental health month, and International Day of People with Disability	Enhance awareness of the barriers faced by people with disability, both externally and internally	Ongoing	PP1 PP4
7.2	Extend 'Disability Confidence in the Workplace' training to DPFEM volunteers	Increase the number of volunteers who have completed the training	Jul 2026	PP1 PP2 PP4
7.3	Ensure new employees undertake Disability Confidence in the Workplace training and introduce mandatory completion by recruits (both fire and police)	Increase the number of employees completing the training, and enhance respectful interactions with people with disability	Jul 2025	PP2
7.4	Continue to offer and expand specialised investigative training to police, eg taking a trauma-informed approach. Develop broader DPFEM training as part of the whole-of-government framework	Increase the number of DPFEM staff with specialist training	Jul 2025	PP2

