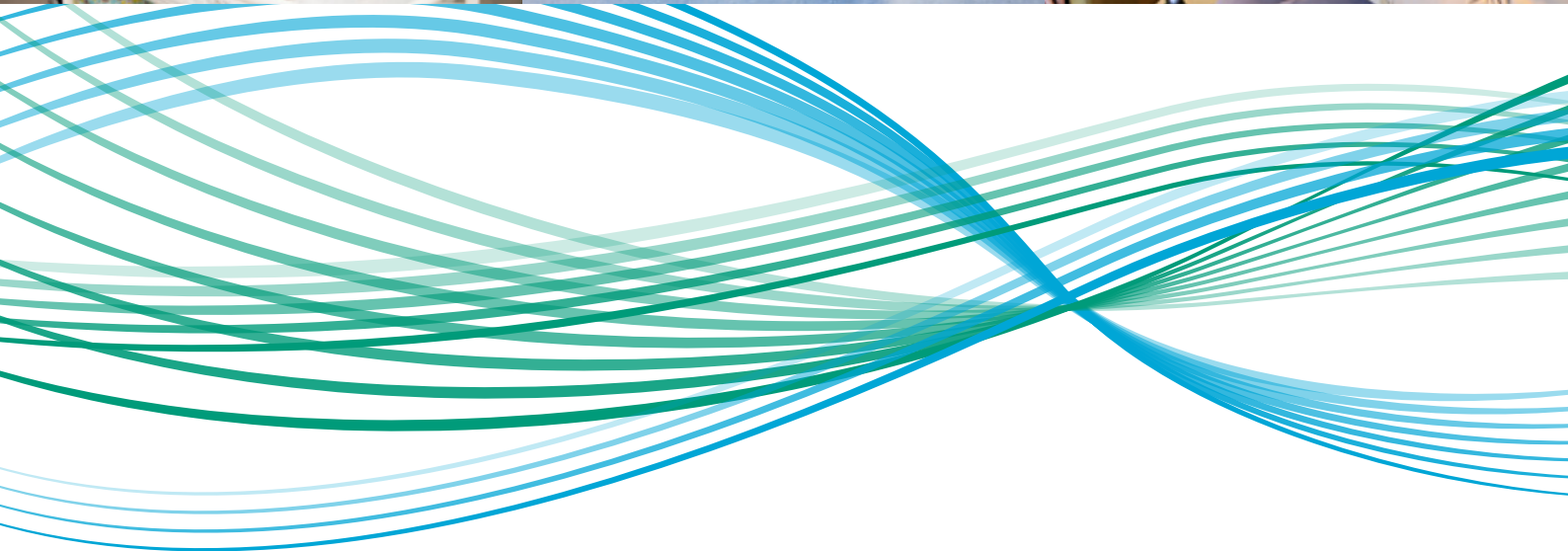




Mercy Health

*Care first*



2019  
2022

# ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN



*This page: Mercy Health Home Care Services client Dan O'Keefe with Home Care Worker Kevin McNulty. Cover L-R: Midwife Claire Dewar with baby Flynn in Werribee Mercy Hospital's Special Care Nursery; Werribee Mercy Hospital corridor; Barbara Crisp with Mercy Place Montrose resident Peter Crisp (centre) and his husband Mark De Roy.*

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## FOREWORDS

The inaugural Mercy Health Accessibility Action Plan will help us advance equality for people with disability by supporting employment opportunities, providing accessible physical environments and enhancing the care we provide.



**Group Chief Executive Officer**  
**Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen**

It gives me great pleasure to present Mercy Health's first Accessibility Action Plan. This document highlights our commitment to improving outcomes for our employees and those who access our services and to reducing and removing barriers experienced by people with disability.

Mercy Health acknowledges and celebrates the rich diversity of our workplaces and the communities we serve. Our diversity encompasses gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion and disability.

Mercy Health appreciates that with one in five Australians impacted by disability we have a responsibility not only to care for those affected but also to provide meaningful employment opportunities. We believe in the dignity of every person without exception.

I look forward to reporting on the progress of our Accessibility Action Plan.



**Executive Director People, Learning & Culture**  
**Ms Kate McCormack FAHRI**

At Mercy Health, equity and inclusion is about accepting and embracing the individual differences that make each of us unique human beings. We value the diverse backgrounds of our employees and the people we serve, and we are committed to ensuring that our organisation and services are equitable, inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Key to the success of Mercy Health's first Accessibility Action Plan is enhancing our understanding of the number and needs of people in our workforce affected by disability, which will in turn help inform the range of initiatives and supports we seek to implement.

In compiling the plan, we consulted across all of Mercy Health's business divisions as well as the Mercy Health Equity and Inclusion Committee. Feedback was also sought from those who access our services.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this Accessibility Action Plan. I look forward to following its progress and success.





# INTRODUCTION

## About Mercy Health

Mercy Health is a Catholic organisation grounded in a 2,000-year tradition of caring for others. Founded by the Sisters of Mercy, Mercy Health is made up of 10,000 people who provide acute and subacute hospital care, aged care, mental health programs, maternity and specialist women's health services, early parenting services, home care services and

health worker training and development. Mercy Health employs people from many cultures and backgrounds who, irrespective of their beliefs, share a common bond to care for those in need.

Mercy Health cares for communities in Victoria, southern New South Wales, northern Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Our values

Our values guide us in all that we do and reflect the key behaviours that inform our interactions with each other and everyone we serve. Below are some examples of how each of Mercy Health's values relate to and promote inclusion for people with disability:

## Compassion

We are present for others in their time of need

## Hospitality

We welcome people with warmth and comfort

## Respect

We act with integrity and justice and value each person's dignity

## Innovation

We draw on research, evidence and teaching to inform what we do

## Stewardship

We advocate for those in need and strengthen our ministry and its resources

## Teamwork

We work together to progress the Mercy mission

# PRIORITISING ACCESSIBILITY

The *Mercy Health Strategic Framework 2018-22* recognises how our foundations as a Catholic ministry couple with contemporary influences in shaping our goals for the future. Our Accessibility Action Plan is informed by this framework and considers the dynamic environment in which we work.

An estimated four million people in Australia are living with disability, some of whom will access Mercy Health services in the course of their lives. It is essential that we have the right people and the right spaces in order to continue providing the best care for every person, every time.

Mercy Health also continues to champion equity and inclusion in the workplace. Having a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and tapping into the benefits of diversity puts us in good stead for the future.





# OUR APPROACH

Mercy Health’s Accessibility Action Plan will focus on three key areas — our care, our community; our people, our talent; and our settings, our spaces — in order to support all people with disability who choose to work with us or who access our services.



# WHAT IS DISABILITY?

There is no universal definition of disability. The Australian Network on Disability describes disability as *“any condition that restricts a person’s mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible.”*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also provides a useful definition in the context of this plan:

*“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”*

In the absence of an Australian charter of human rights, Mercy Health refers to the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004* to inform this

plan. The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* recognises that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It is founded on a number of principles, including the principle that human rights belong to all people without discrimination, including disability. Similarly, the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004* recognises that everyone has the right to enjoy their human rights without distinction or discrimination of any kind, including disability.

Mercy Health Home Care Services client Tracy Stonehouse.



# DISABILITY IN AUSTRALIA

One in five Australians has some form of disability and rates of disability increase as people age. About four per cent of children under the age of five have a disability. This increases to 32 per cent by age 60 and 85 per cent by age 90. <sup>[1]</sup>

### Did you know?



I in 5

Australians has some form of disability  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 2.1 times more likely to be living with disability than other Australians <sup>[2]</sup>



2.1 million

Australians of working age have a disability <sup>[3]</sup>

I million

Australians with disability are in the workforce

115,000

are looking for work <sup>[4]</sup>



45%

of Australians aged 16-85 years experience a mental health condition during their lifetime <sup>[5]</sup>

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2015*, cat. no. 4430.0, ABS, Canberra.  
[2] First Peoples Disability Network Australia, 2019  
[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2015, *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2015*, cat. no. 4430.0, ABS, Canberra.  
[4] Ibid.  
[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of results 2007*, cat no. 4326.0, ABS, Canberra.

# OUR CARE, OUR COMMUNITY

Caring for and advocating on behalf of people in need is the most important job we have at Mercy Health. **Our care, our community** is about ensuring Mercy Health employees are well-equipped to meet the needs of patients, residents and clients with disability.

Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
Education			
Training	Offer targeted training using a client-centred, enablement framework to support the needs of clients, residents and patients (adults and children) with disability	Relevant learning managers and human resources business partners to identify employees to be trained and determine appropriate training	Ongoing
	Ensure training aligns to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards and NDIS Code of Conduct		
	Update Learning Ladders as appropriate		
	Offer mental health first aid training to better support the needs of clients, patients and residents	Relevant learning managers and human resources business partners to identify employees to be trained and determine appropriate training	Ongoing
	Update Learning Ladders as appropriate		
	Add the NDIS worker orientation module to MercyNet to increase awareness of the NDIS Code of Conduct for all staff	Group Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator	2020



Mercy Hospital for Women Emergency Department Registered Nurse Wendy Milne speaking to a patient.



Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Consultation</b>			
<b>Feedback, compliments and complaints management</b>	Ensure opportunities for consumer and community engagement and feedback channels are accessible to people with disability	Group Manager Consumer Participation and Experience	Ongoing
	Seek feedback from consumers with disability as part of stakeholder engagement process	Group Manager Consumer Participation and Experience	Ongoing
	Publish regular reporting of feedback, compliments and complaints, taking into account any privacy considerations	Group Manager Consumer Participation and Experience	Ongoing
<b>Advocacy</b>			
<b>Ambassadors</b>	Appoint a Mercy Health Executive sponsor	Executive Group	2020
	Appoint a minimum of two manager-level 'Mercy Health Accessibility Action Plan Ambassadors' within Health Services, Aged Care, Home Care and Support Services	Health Services Leadership Team and Aged and Community Care Leadership Team	2020
<b>Child safety</b>	Ensure the needs of children with disability are integrated into relevant plans across the organisation	Project Director, Family Violence and Child Safe Standards	2020
<b>Procurement</b>	Embed principles of disability inclusion in all future outgoing tender requests to ensure Mercy Health is aligned with organisations that support diversity and inclusion	Group Manager Procurement and Supply Chain	2020
<b>Care</b>	Develop a plan to support residents in Mercy Health's Residential Aged Care homes who have dependents with disability	Aged Care Leadership Team	2020
<b>Partnerships</b>			
<b>Membership</b>	Maintain organisational membership with the Australian Network on Disability	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager	Ongoing
<b>External alignment</b>	Develop and enhance relationships with organisations that support disability inclusion	Group Manager Procurement and Supply Chain	2020

## OUR PEOPLE, OUR TALENT

Mercy Health is committed to employing people with all forms of disability, including those with intellectual disability. **Our people, our talent** focuses on actions and initiatives we will undertake to create a workplace that is respectful, inclusive and reflects the communities we serve.

Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Recruitment</b>			
<b>Build capacity of hiring managers</b>	Review and update mandatory Recruitment and Selection training to enhance hiring manager confidence in employing people with disability, including intellectual disability	Head of Talent	2020

National Human Resources Manager Sandra Cinar, Organisational Development Consultant Paul Campbell, and Executive Director People, Learning and Culture Kate McCormack



Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Partnerships</b>	Partner with disability employment service organisations to attract candidates from an increasingly diverse talent pool	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager	2020
	Partner with Mercy Health's preferred recruitment agencies to ensure prospective talent is identified and sourced from a diverse talent pool	Head of Talent	Ongoing
<b>Pre-employment</b>	Ensure pre-employment processes and psychometric testing practices are accessible	Head of Talent	2020
	Support a guaranteed interview process for clients who have been referred to us by disability employment service organisations and who meet the inherent requirements of the job vacancy	Head of Talent	2020
<b>Careers website</b>	Include a link to the National Relay Service on the Mercy Health careers website to enhance accessibility for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment	Group Human Resources Services Manager	2020
<b>Learning and development</b>			
<b>Training</b>	Develop disability awareness content in Mercy Health's mandatory Equity and Inclusion online competency	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager	2020
	Develop and deliver face-to-face disability awareness education sessions	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager and human resources business partners	2020 then biannually
	Offer mental health first aid training to enable our people to better support each other	Relevant learning managers and human resources business partners to identify appropriate employees for training and training provider	Annually

Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Promoting awareness</b>			
<b>Engagement</b>	Measure the engagement of our people with disability to understand what we are doing well and opportunities to improve	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager	Ongoing
<b>Share stories</b>	Publish stories of our people with disability internally and externally	Organisational Development and Diversity Manager; Communications Manager	Ongoing
<b>External engagement</b>	Participate in forums with other organisations including the Australian Network on Disability and Department of Health and Human Services Diversity Community of Practice to share experiences and learnings	People, Learning and Culture	Ongoing
<b>Policies</b>			
<b>Policies and procedures</b>	Ensure that all applicable policies and procedures consider accessibility requirements	People, Learning and Culture	Ongoing

*Baby at Mercy Hospital for Women.*





## OUR SETTINGS, OUR SPACES

Mercy Health is dedicated to creating inclusive spaces that encourage participation, for those who choose to work for us and the people for whom we care. **Our settings, our spaces** will focus on ensuring our spaces are safe and welcoming for everyone.

Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Accessible spaces</b>			
<b>Principles of disability inclusion</b>	Embed disability inclusion principles that meet or exceed Building Code of Australia accessibility standards into all future briefs for capital design or redesign and apply best practice in these briefs	Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Major Projects	2020
	Ensure physical spaces are accessible and safe for children with disability	Group Work Health and Safety Manager, Quality, Risk and Service Improvement	Ongoing
	Seek stakeholder feedback where possible to provide guidance on new service or building works	Group Manager Consumer Participation and Experience	Ongoing

Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Audit</b>	Review results from Design for Dignity accessibility audit of Richmond and Hughesdale offices and make changes where required	Property Manager	2020
	Conduct an accessibility audit of Residential Aged Care homes and Home Care Services offices and make changes where required	Property Manager	2020
<b>Training venues</b>	Ensure all venues for face-to-face learning and development opportunities are accessible	Relevant learning managers or human resources business partners	Ongoing
	Training invitations to seek any accessibility requirements	Relevant learning managers or human resources business partners	Ongoing
<b>Events</b>	Mercy Health events to be guided by the Australian Network on Disability 'Event Accessibility Checklist' so that, where possible, events are accessible for people with disability	Marketing and Events Manager	Ongoing





Theme	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Information and communication</b>			
<b>Video production</b>	New, internally produced video clips to be accompanied by an accessible transcript or captions	Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations	2020
<b>Policies and procedures</b>	Ensure policies and procedures can be viewed in accessible formats	Quality, Safety and Innovation	Ongoing
<b>Website</b>	Include a link to the National Relay Service on Mercy Health websites to enhance accessibility for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment	Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations	2020
	Ensure Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 are considered in any review of Mercy Health's websites	Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations	Ongoing

LOOKING AHEAD

Mercy Health’s Accessibility Action Plan will continue to evolve in step with best practice and our own learnings. We will continue to monitor progress, seek feedback and make improvements as we work together towards an equitable, inclusive and accessible society.

Governance

The Mercy Health Accessibility Action Plan was developed by the Accessibility Action Plan Steering Committee. This group included Health Services and Aged and Community Care executive officers, Communications Manager, Group Manager Consumer Participation and Experience, Organisational Development and Diversity Manager and Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. The committee consulted across business divisions and sought expert input from external organisations. The plan was reviewed by consumers and endorsed by the Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Reporting

The Mercy Health Equity and Inclusion Committee will monitor progress against the Accessibility Action Plan and report annually to the Executive and Board. We will use the Australian Network on Disability’s Access and Inclusion Index to gauge progress, as well as feedback and consultation with external disability experts as required.

For further details about this plan please contact:

Organisational Development and Diversity Manager  
 Mercy Health  
 03 8416 7777

General Manager Capital Development and Planning Roman Lemke and Group Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator Erana Tito.



For assistance for those who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech or communication impaired please contact National Relay Service:

Speak and Listen number  
1300 555 727

TTY number  
133 677

SMS relay number  
0423 677 767

internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mercy Health would like to acknowledge and thank the following groups who contributed to the development of our Accessibility Action Plan:

- Mercy Health Accessibility Action Plan Steering Committee
- Mercy Health Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Mercy Health Community Advisory Committee
- Australian Network on Disability
- Culturise.



Pursuant to section 67 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Mercy Health's Accessibility Action Plan is registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission.



*This page: Staff at the Mercy Health Prevention and Recovery Care service in Deer Park.  
Opposite page: Mercy Place Fernhill resident Sr Rosaleen McCaffrey.*



CELEBRATING  
**100 YEARS**  
*of* **MERCY HEALTHCARE**  
 1 9 2 0 - 2 0 2 0

*Group Chief Executive Officer  
 Adjunct Professor Stephen  
 Cornelissen (right) speaking with  
 Sr Moira Sheedy RSM at Mercy  
 Place Montrose*



**Mercy Health**  
*Care first*

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Mercy Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the first Australians. We acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous Australia. We respectfully recognise Elders past, present and emerging. This report was produced on Wurundjeri Country.