



'Empowering People for Health'

Accessibility and Inclusion Plan
2023-2026

Foreword:

Health equity is about everyone in the community having the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to achieve and maintain good health and wellbeing (Source: World Health Organisation)

Tallangatta Health Service is committed to ensuring that access to our health services are equally available to people within the diverse society in which we live. People who have been identified with access and equity concerns are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- Socio-economically disadvantaged
- Living in rural or remote areas
- Living with a mental illness or intellectual disability
- Living with abuse or neglect
- Living with a physical disability (including communication deficits)
- Affected by discrimination, social exclusion or incarceration
- From cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly refugees and survivors of torture and trauma.

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan seeks to identify and address barriers to access and equity across all of our organisation's services. It aligns with our Strategic Direction 2018-27 vision, and strategic priorities, and sits alongside our Reconciliation Action Plan and Gender Equality Action Plan. We also reflect our alignment with the Victorian State Disability Plan (2022 – 2026) and its pillars and priority areas.

Supporting Standards, Frameworks and Policies:

- Department of Health 2009, Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria
- Department of Health 2017, Language Services policy
- Department of Health 2009, Cultural Responsiveness Framework- guidelines for Victorian health Services
- Department of Health 2009, Well Proud. A guide to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex inclusive practice for health and human services
- National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS)- Sept 2012
- Home Care Common Standards
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Victorian State Disability Plan 2022-2026
- Aged Care Accreditation Standards
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, Interim Report 2020

Glossary of terms:

Ableism Describes discrimination based on a person's disability. Ableism interacts with other forms of discrimination, such as gender inequality, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and ageism. This creates multiple and intersecting forms of systemic discrimination for Aboriginal people, women, LGBTIQ+ people, multicultural people, older people and young people.

Aboriginal self-determination The ability for Aboriginal people to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. It also describes self-determination as a right that relates to groups of people, not only individuals.

Accessibility The extent to which people with disability can access something like an office, worksite or public area.

Co-design The process of involving people with disability in designing, delivering and evaluating a policy, program or service.

Disability Act The Disability Act 2006 (Vic) provides a whole-of-government and community response to the rights and needs of people with disability including a requirement to have four-year state disability plans.

Intersectionality Refers to a way of understanding a person with disability's unique experience of multi-layered and intersecting discrimination and disadvantage based on their personal characteristics, including age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnic origin or race including the particular situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability.

LGBTIQ+ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer.

National Agreement of Closing the Gap Enables Aboriginal people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by Aboriginal people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

NDIA The National Disability Insurance Agency, which is the government agency responsible for the NDIS.

NDIS Jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the National Disability Insurance Scheme provides access to disability supports for eligible people with disability.

Person-first language Person-first language puts the person before their disability – for example, 'person with disability'. Person-first language is used to emphasise a person's right to an identity beyond their disability.

Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Seeks to understand the experiences of people with disability and recommend important safeguards. The commission is due to conclude in September 2023.

Safeguards Actions taken to prevent abuse and neglect.

Systemic Reform These are new areas of focus that will help the Victorian Government work differently to deliver inclusion and access and uphold rights. There are six areas:

- Co-design with people with disability
- Aboriginal self-determination
- Intersectional approaches
- Accessible communications and universal design
- Disability-confident and inclusive workforces
- Effective data and outcomes reporting

Universal design Making spaces, policies and programs that are inclusive, accessible and can be used independently by all people

A message from the Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

Tallangatta Health Service's (THS) Accessibility and Inclusion Plan (the plan) has been developed with reference to the Victorian Disability Act 2006 and the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. It outlines priority areas for us to focus on, in accordance with the requirements of the Acts and the Victorian State Disability Plan (2022-2026), in meeting the needs of patients, community and staff with disabilities.

Tallangatta Health Service is located within the Towong Shire and has been providing local health services for over 100 years. Our services and programs are delivered on-site but also in homes and communities across a broad geographical footprint. It should not matter where you live in this community, as accessibility and inclusion are a consistent commitment and a consistent message.

Tallangatta Health Service is very proud of the progress made in meeting the needs of patients, community and staff with disabilities. We remain committed to implementing the specific actions included in this next plan and will monitor progress and outcomes over the next 3 years. This will ensure the organisation continually improves its services and facilities with a view to delivering a truly accessible healthcare service for all of the community.

The vision and role of Tallangatta Health Service

About us

Tallangatta Health Service is a publicly-funded, small rural health service located on one site in the township of Tallangatta. The service provides on-site care from its Tallangatta base and off-site care to the community throughout the region.

Who we serve

Tallangatta Health Service has been providing health services to the community of Towong Shire and surrounding area for over 100 years.

How we serve

Our Vision

'Empowering People for Health'

To enable the best health possible, focusing on the individual's best interests, a person must feel empowered to make decisions. Empowering people is aimed at making each person in our community stronger and more confident, to give them authority in decision-making for health.

Vision Enablers

Our Values

Achievement of our vision relies on a positive culture. The values of Tallangatta Health Service will drive our culture and it is respected that the values will be "lived" by staff, volunteers and Board Directors. All members of the service will hold true to the following values.



integrity



caring



adaptable



respect



excellence

Strategic Direction

Our Strategic Direction 2018-27 outlines how Tallangatta Health Service will achieve our vision. Our strategic direction and vision will be achieved through four purposeful strategic priorities underpinned by the five pillars for a strong foundation.

Our Pillars

1. Person Centred approach - the person will be at the centre of all we do and we will empower them in health decisions.
2. Evidence based decision making- our decisions will inquire, looking for best practice to inform our decisions.
3. Sustainability – our decisions ensure that success can be maintained
4. Culture of excellence, innovation, learning and development- we will be the best we can by embracing new ways.
5. Robust clinical; and corporate governance – our governance systems will provide assurance that we are providing the best care possible and our strategic vision is being achieved.

Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority One <i>Our Care is relevant, high quality responsive services</i>	Strategic Priority Three <i>Our Partnering with communities cultivates connections</i>
Strategic Priority Two <i>Our Infrastructure is planned for future needs</i>	Strategic Priority Four <i>Our Workforce is adaptive, skilled, and compassionate</i>

Phased Approach

Our strategic direction is phased over the 10 years. This is a living plan and as such must be adaptive to changing circumstances that may influence the direction of Tallangatta Health Service. Each year the Board will review the strategic priorities, phase timelines and adjustments may be made to the priorities.

Phase One 2018 – 2020 Building on the current platforms and creating new platforms

Phase Two 2021 – 2024 Implementing the priorities into reality, and building and enabling success

Phase Three 2025 – 2027 Embedding achievements from the past and continuing to build and enable, while anticipating future direction

Strategic Priority One - *Our Care is relevant, safe, high quality and responsive*

Our community deserves the best quality care possible that will promote health and well-being. Our services must be able to meet the demands of our ageing population into the future. The care we provide must be relevant, high quality and responsive.

Strategic objectives		What will be the outcome?
1.1	Identify future direction of the service	A Service Plan, which Tallangatta Health Service is capable of delivering, to meet community needs.
1.2	Review business and care models of the service	Improved business and care models that support the Service Plan and build safe, high quality, responsive services.
1.3	Review marketing and communication of current services	A Marketing and Communication Plan that supports service delivery and ensures consumers understand the capability of Tallangatta Health Service.

Strategic Priority Two - *Our Infrastructure is planned for future needs*

To be able to provide person centred, high quality services, our infrastructure must support contemporary models of care and innovative business models. Tallangatta Health Service's buildings are over 60 years old and whilst there has been some refurbishment the question of 'fit for purpose' into the future needs to be considered. The site has the availability of land to develop.

Strategic objectives		What will be the outcome?
2.1	Identify and prioritise infrastructure in line with the Service Plan	A detailed site infrastructure plan that ensures Tallangatta Health Service has the right physical resources to support the Service Plan
2.2	Identify and seek funding sources to enable infrastructure upgrades	The ability to plan for infrastructure upgrades as funding opportunities are realised

Strategic Priority Three - *Our Partnering with communities cultivates connections*

We must work in a partnership arrangement to enable a holistic service capability utilising skills, knowledge and expertise which we have, and can share, and which others have to share. We must seek and be connected to the communities around us to enable collective impact and the achievement of best health by enabling people with a variety of resources.

Strategic objectives		What will be the outcome?
3.1	Value community engagement	An enhanced Consumer Engagement Plan
3.2	Engage meaningfully with the community	A Community Engagement Advisory Group with a Community Charter
3.3	Cultivate partnerships	Partnership arrangements that add value for all partners

Strategic Priority Four - *Our Workforce is adaptive, skilled, and compassionate*

Our workforce includes clinical and non-clinical staff, contractors, volunteers and our Board. We must invest in a workforce to meet our communities need in line with our service plan. We are a learning organisation with an adaptive and flexible workforce and board in an innovative environment, competent and to deliver our vision and compassionate in care.

Strategic objectives		What will be the outcome?
4.1	Identify the workforce required to support the Service Plan	A Workforce Plan that supports the Service Plan and promotes Tallangatta Health Service as an employer of choice
4.2	Prioritise workforce needs	A Workforce Plan that identifies high priority areas of workforce needs
4.3	Enable a learning environment	Safe, high quality care delivered by skilled staff members who embrace opportunity

Our care

Tallangatta Health Service provides hospital care (15 beds), residential aged care (51 beds), and community and primary care. The 15 funded hospital beds provide a range of levels of hospital care, including general-sub acute care, post-surgical and medical care, and palliative care. Residential aged care consists of high and low care on a permanent or respite basis. Primary and community care includes the Medical Centre, the My Community and Home Care Department which offers programs such as Home and Community Care (HACC), Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), Veterans Home Care, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and health education and promotion.

Our people

Tallangatta Health Service employs approximately 190 people who provide services on-site or within the community. Our health workforce is multidisciplinary with a dedicated team of nursing, allied health and medical professionals. Our corporate services workforce provides a range of services underpinning operational aspects of Tallangatta Health Service.

Plan Objective and Processes for Implementation

Aim

The purpose of this plan is to provide equitable access to the services and facilities provided by Tallangatta Health Service.

Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Better meet the needs of people with a disability who access Tallangatta Health Service.
- Meet legislative requirements under *the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and the *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)* in all areas of our service delivery including its role as a responsible employer
- Foster and create a healthcare service where people with a disability are afforded the same opportunities as the broader community.
- Promote and increase awareness about the rights and needs of people with disabilities to our employees and the broader community.

- Focus on practical, achievable and deliverable initiatives to enhance the physical and visual environment.
- Enhance communication and reduce attitudinal barriers that may discourage people with a disability from using the organisation's services.

Policy and legislation

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) requires respect for the basic human rights of people with disabilities and defines 'disability' in relation to a person as:

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

And includes a disability that:

- Presently exists.
- Previously existed but no longer exists.
- May exist in the future.

The *Disability Act 2006* (Vic) requires all public sector bodies to ensure a Disability Action Plan (Accessibility and Inclusion Plan as named by THS) is prepared for the purpose of:

- Reducing barriers to people with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities.
- Reducing barriers to people with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment.
- Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of people with a disability.
- Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with a disability.
- Lodge their Accessibility and Inclusion Plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
- Report on the implementation of their Accessibility and Inclusion Plan in its annual report.

Development and review of the plan

The Tallangatta Health Service Leadership Team are responsible for overseeing the review, update and implementation of the Action Plan and will engage with key consumer agencies and individuals.

The development of the new Action Plan includes the engagement of Tallangatta Health Service staff in:

- Determining the extent that people with disabilities currently use our services or facilities.
- Assessing staff knowledge and awareness of the specific needs of people with disabilities.
- Identifying our obligations under the Victorian and Commonwealth Acts.
- Identifying areas and opportunities for improvement.

Governance

The implementation of the Action Plan will be overseen by the Executive Committee with reporting to the Board.

Alignment with the Victorian State Disability Plan 2022 – 2026

Tallangatta Health Service is part of the Victorian Health System and our operations are aligned to Victorian State as well as Commonwealth priority areas. As such, our Accessibility and Inclusion Plan is designed to outline the areas of State priority that we as a publicly funded health service can address.

Pillars and priority areas (Victorian State Disability Plan 2022-2026)

Inclusive communities	Health, housing and wellbeing	Fairness and safety	Opportunity and pride
Changing attitudes	Health	Safety in emergencies	Education
Transport	Mental health	Disability advocacy	Employment and economic participation
Digital inclusion	Housing	Preventing abuse and neglect	Creative industries
Assistance animals	Supporting a high-quality NDIS	Family and sexual violence	Voice and leadership
Sport and recreation	Children and families	Access to the justice system	Pride and recognition
Parks and tourism		Right to expression of sexuality and gender identity	

To achieve an inclusive Victoria, the State has committed to a series of systemic reforms:

Co-design with people with disability

We will work more with people with disability when putting together government policies, programs and services.

Aboriginal self-determination

We will work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to make changes and improve the lives of Aboriginal people with disability. We will make sure we listen and that Aboriginal people lead the change they want to see to the system.

Intersectional approaches

We will focus on how ableism connects with other forms of wider discrimination. We will consider this in all our policies, programs and services.

Accessible communication and universal design

We will work across government to put in place universal design principles in everything we design and build.

We will help government agencies to provide inclusive, accessible and targeted communications for people with disability.

Disability confident and inclusive workforces

We will make sure public sector workers understand disability and how to deliver inclusive services. This will include making sure everyone understands:

- the social model of disability
- how all forms of discrimination connect with each other
- how to work with Aboriginal people in a respectful way.

Effective data and outcomes reporting

We will improve the way we collect and use data about people with disability across government. This will make our policies and programs stronger and our reporting better.

Tallangatta Health Service alignment with Priority Areas

Based on the Victorian state priority areas, our health service will implement the following actions:

Pillar	Inclusive Communities
Priority Area (State)	Tallangatta Health Service alignment / actions
1.1 <u>Changing attitudes</u> Work across government and the wider community to shift attitudes towards people with disability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise media opportunities and community publications to broadcast messages of inclusion 2. Implementation of Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan initiatives to raise awareness and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this catchment 3. Reinforce the Leaders Live the Values concepts 4. Collaborative approach working with consumers to develop our Model of Care
1.2 <u>Transport</u> Work with Victorians with disability to create a transport system that is easier to use	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide transport for consumers with disability in order to access programs and services offered by THS
1.3 <u>Digital Inclusion</u> Foster a more inclusive digital economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to telehealth appointments 2. Option for staff to work from home 3. Availability of iPads for consumers to borrow
1.4 <u>Assistance animals</u> Continue working with the Commonwealth Government on guiding principles to accredit assistance animals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumers requiring assistance animals to be freely welcomed into our facility 2. Pet Therapy program for Residential Aged Care
1.5 Sport and Recreation	Out of scope
1.6 Parks and Tourism	Out of scope

Pillar	Health, Housing and Wellbeing
Priority Area (State)	Tallangatta Health Service alignment / actions
2.1 <u>Health</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All communication regarding Tallangatta Health Service services will be made available in a range of

<p>Work with people with disability to ensure they have better access to healthcare delivered by staff who understand their needs</p>	<p>accessible formats and promoted via an inclusive communication strategy. This includes the handbook in Easy English and adherence to style guide considerations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. All people will have appropriate access to complaint handling, rights and responsibilities, and confidentiality procedures within services and to independent complaint authorities. 3. All people have improved physical access to buildings and facilities where health services and programs are provided. Identify buildings and facilities that may disadvantage staff with a disability. 4. Provide opportunities for staff to raise inclusion needs during induction (e.g. uniform modifications, catering requirements etc) 5. By growing a diverse and inclusive workforce we will build organisational capacity for people with a disability. 6. Review policy framework to ensure alignment with systemic reforms 7. Undertake an equipment audit to ensure our equipment is suitable to meet consumer's needs 8. Consult with consumers during care planning process as part of person-centred care approach 9. Access to interpreters (including Auslan) as required to ensure appropriate communication 10. Maintain privacy and confidentiality for consumers and staff 11. Staff training and survey tools to understand staff 12. Use visual images and promotional materials in the workplace that build a vision of a diverse workforce
<p><u>2.2 Mental Health</u> Make sure the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System are put in place. Work with people with disability to make sure these meet their needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Mental Health providers in this area to improve access for people with disability 2. Be mindful of reception areas in terms of light and sound and possible impacts for consumers
<p><u>2.3 Housing</u></p>	<p>Out of scope</p>
<p><u>2.4 Support a high-quality NDIS</u> Continue to promote the needs of Victorians with disability on the NDIS. Work with the Commonwealth Government to build the size and skills of the disability workforce.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain NDIS accreditation to support the delivery of services for NDIS participants 2. Greater promotion of services to community
<p><u>2.5 Children and families</u> Help families with children with disability and parents with disability to improve their health</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review access to breastfeeding facilities 2. Support access to primary care 3. Participate in Respond project 4. Adherence to Child Safe Standards

and safety. Help children thrive by supporting the whole family.	
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Pillar	Fairness and Safety
Priority Area (State)	Tallangatta Health Service alignment / actions
<p>3.1 <u>Safety in emergencies</u></p> <p>Make sure the way we prepare, respond and recover from emergencies includes people with disability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the Vulnerable Persons Register to ensure people with disability in our community receive assistance as required when responding to emergencies 2. Maintain emergency contact details 3. Maintain Emergency Response Plans 4. Issue notifications for community safety including heat health alerts
<p>3.2 <u>Disability advocacy</u></p> <p>Ensure all Victorians have equal rights and can challenge discrimination. Do this through a strong disability advocacy sector led by and for people with disability.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invitation for membership to all THS Committees for people with disability in our community
<p>3.3 <u>Preventing abuse and neglect</u></p> <p>Develop new Victorian social services rules and standards to ensure all Victorians get better social services.</p> <p>Work with the NDIA and the Commonwealth Government to find and deal with gaps in how we protect people with disability.</p> <p>Build the skills of the workforce to improve specialist behaviour support. This is a major protection for people with disability who are subject to restrictive practices.</p> <p>Work across the Victorian Government to ensure consistent rights and protections for people living in disability supported accommodation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinforce mandatory reporting requirements 2. Conduct risk assessments 3. Undertake multi-disciplinary team approach
<p>3.4 <u>Family and sexual violence</u></p> <p>Work with people with disability to stop family and sexual violence. Help people understand the causes of violence against people with disability. This includes violence based on gender.</p> <p>Continue to roll out the family and sexual violence reforms. These changes will improve the way the family violence and sexual assault sectors respond.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue participation with the Tallangatta and Surrounds Family Violence Prevention Committee including events and campaigns to raise community awareness 2. Participation in information sharing schemes as per legislation 3. Continued roll out of Strengthening Hospital Response to Family Violence (SHRFV) initiatives 4. Alignment of policies and procedures with the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management (MARAM) framework
3.5 Justice system	Out of scope
3.6 <u>Right to expression of sexuality and gender identity</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender Equality Action Plan implementation

Work with people with disability to support their right to fully express their sexuality and gender identity.	
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Pillar	Opportunity and Pride
Priority Area (State)	Tallangatta Health Service alignment / actions
4.1 Education	Out of scope
<p>4.2 <u>Employment and economic participation</u></p> <p>Improve job prospects for people with disability. Work with existing Victorian Government programs, networks and Jobs Victoria to achieve this.</p> <p>The public sector benefits from the skills and talents of people with disability. Continue to build a diverse Victorian public sector that reflects the community it serves.</p> <p>Support people with disability who have been in the criminal justice system take part in the community. Focus on meaningful economic, educational and social inclusion.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review Occupational Health and Safety hazard reporting to improve the safety and accessibility of the physical work environment 2. Ensure all new buildings and upgrades comply with guidelines, legislation and Australian Standards including the Building Code of Australia 3. Develop and build on Tallangatta Health Service's current attraction, recruitment, retention activities that support workforce diversity and inclusion. 4. Collect, monitor and report on staff and volunteer data regarding diversity (e.g. Age, gender, race, cultural heritage, ethnicity, disability, A&TSI Australians, CALD background, etc.). 5. Survey staff attitudes to diversity and inclusion. Seek to understand the unique challenges faced by minority and groups of disadvantage in gaining work and remaining in the workforce. 6. Develop and promote a learning culture that supports and addresses systematic barriers to diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
<p>4.3 <u>Voice and leadership</u></p> <p>Work across government and the community to ensure people with disability are in leadership positions.</p> <p>Include young people with disability in government decision making. Increase their chances to take part.</p> <p>Work with the community to better engage people with disability in Victoria's system of government.</p>	
4.4 Creative industries	Out of scope
<p>4.5 <u>Pride and recognition</u></p> <p>Work with people with disability to promote disability pride. Design inclusive recognition approaches.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage local business who employ people with disabilities

Evaluation / Reporting

1. Statement of Priorities alignment in the Annual Report
2. Consumer feedback
3. NDIS Accreditation
4. Medical Clinic Accreditation
5. Aged Care Standards Accreditation
5. National Safety Quality Healthcare Standards Accreditation

Stakeholders / Advisors

1. Regional Disability Advocacy Service. Wodonga, 1800 250 292. admin@rdas.org.au
2. Towong Shire Council