

# Disability Sport & Recreation Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Better choice, better access and better  
participation in sport and recreation  
for **all** Victorians with disability



DISABILITY SPORT  
& RECREATION



# Message from the Chair and CEO



**We are pleased to release the new Strategic Plan for Disability Sport & Recreation. It's a bold vision that seeks to make participation in sport and recreation a reality for all Victorians with disability.**

Our Strategic Plan is the result of a process throughout 2019 involving the DSR Board and staff, in consultation with key stakeholders.

This process has helped us to redefine our purpose, services and membership while remaining true to our core purpose of helping Victorians with disability to find greater health through taking part in sport and active recreation.

The plan builds on the vast history of the organisation since it commenced over 57 years ago as the ParaVics Sports Club, led by Victorians who had competed at the 1960 Rome Paralympics.

We intend to continue working positively with the various components of the sport, recreation and disability sectors, but with a revised focus – as we lead a movement, or alliance, with key partners and participants to enhance choice, access and participation in sport and recreation for people with disability.

Ultimately, more Victorians with disability should be able to enjoy the many benefits associated with being involved in sport and recreation. To enjoy 'an ordinary life' of being active with friends and colleagues, a life with benefits that many take for granted, yet can be challenging without appropriate support and environments.

With all the data indicating that current participation rates are amongst the lowest of

any cohort of society, the time is right for a significant change on many levels to address this important social issue.

Importantly, the new plan must be owned and shaped by people with disability. With the NDIS rollout and the rapidly changing disability landscape over recent years, the plan needs to reflect the emerging policy landscape and be bold about the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead.

Whether you are an individual with disability, a parent/carer, a health professional, a sports administrator or just a community member with a positive social conscience about equality and inclusion, this is your plan.

We look forward to the involvement of many individuals and stakeholders so that we can move forward together as a movement, to create important lasting change to forge a brighter future for people with disability.

A blue ink signature that reads 'S. Anderson'.

**Sarah Anderson**  
Chair

A black ink signature that reads 'R. Amon'.

**Richard Amon**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Where we have come from

In 1962, the ParaVics Sports Club was formed to help a group of eight athletes with disability compete in national and international sporting competitions. We are proud to be the birthplace of the Victorian Paralympic movement, with our founders Kevin Coombs OAM and Bruno Moretti.

The organisation grew from the grassroots actions of a small group of athletes who were united by the ambition to compete in paraplegic sporting events at an international level.

The group challenged preconceptions and dispelled societal prejudices toward disability in order to achieve this. The organisation demonstrated the potential for a united group of determined individuals to effect lasting social change.

The Club transitioned to Wheelchair Sports Victoria (WSV), where it became the leading provider of sport and recreation for people with physical disability. At this stage, the majority of WSV members were Victorians with spinal cord injury, lower limb amputees, spina bifida, cerebral palsy and other physical conditions affecting mobility.

WSV was the governing body for a range of disability sports including basketball, athletics, swimming, rugby, tennis, hand cycling, lawn bowls and shooting.

In 2010 the organisation made a strategic decision to renew its focus and expand its support to

include all types of disability, as well as include recreation to cover all types of physical activity. WSV was rebranded as Disability Sport & Recreation (DSR), as it is known today.

With this change in direction, DSR encouraged state sporting associations (SSA) to take ownership of inclusive sports and recreation activities in their community of interest.

With SSAs now delivering inclusive programs on behalf of Sport and Recreation Victoria, DSR took on a person-centred approach to programs and service delivery. This included the introduction of a membership structure and services like one-on-one consultations, the adaptive equipment library and camps for children, while still being responsible for wheelchair rugby and supporting AFL Wheelchair.

In 2019, our board and management group began reviewing the DSR strategic plan and focus to make sure our work, now and into the future, reflects the needs of all Victorians with disability. We believe this requires a shift in focus from person-centred service delivery, to developing our sector as a whole as well as educating the broader community, to make sure it is inclusive of people with disability.

The time is right to create a movement for change where all individuals and organisations who believe in greater choice, access and participation in sport and recreation for people with disability are on board.

# Our renewed vision, mission, values and principles

## Our vision

A Victoria where **all** people with disability can choose and access any sport or active recreation they want to engage with.

## Our mission

To provide and promote positive outcomes for people with disability, through meaningful engagement in sport and active recreation.

## Our values

We are:

- Friendly
- Accountable
- Open
- Respectful
- Appreciative
- Progressive

## Our principles

- We listen to the voice of people with disability and advocate for change, with them and on their behalf.
- We celebrate people with disability who exercise their choice to take part in sport and active recreation.
- We collaborate with sport and active recreation providers, so they can offer better choice and better access for all disability types to increase participation.
- We help identify and address gaps in knowledge and resources.
- We highlight best practice, here and overseas.
- We celebrate providers who do more to offer better choice and better access and increase participation.
- We campaign to raise awareness of the benefits of increasing choice and access so people with disability can participate.
- We take a big picture view of the sector so we can work with others to reduce program and resource duplication and provide positive responses to identified needs.
- We seek revenue from a range of sources to support our mission.

**1 in 5**

Over 1.1 million Victorians identify as living with disability.<sup>1</sup>

**40%**

Victorians with disability are 40% less likely to be physically active than Victorians without disability.<sup>2</sup>

**25%**

Victorians with disability are 25% less likely to feel positive about their community and half as likely to feel safe walking around alone during the day as people without disability.<sup>2</sup>

**8%**

There is an 8% gap in sport and physical activity participation rates for Victorians with and without disability.<sup>3</sup>

**75%**

75% of people with disability who already play sport, want to play more.<sup>4</sup>

**83%**

83% of people with disability who don't play sport, want to become active.<sup>4</sup>

### Key barriers

The attitudes of the wider community (including welcoming environments), awareness of what's available, costs, transport, support personnel (when required), club fees and lack of peer support networks (to feel socially connected and included) appear to be major barriers to participation.<sup>2,4</sup>

1 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings - 2015  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4430.0Main%20Features202015?>

2 VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 Supplementary report: Disability  
<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/2015-supplementary-report-disability>

3 Sport Australia AusPlay survey results January 2018 - December 2018  
<https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/smi/ausplay/results/state>

4 Getting Involved in Sport: A report about people with disability taking part in sport, Australian Sports Commission (2012).

# Types of disability

We acknowledge that:

- disability can be complex
- many people live with more than one type of disability
- everybody experiences disability differently
- most disabilities are invisible
- the barriers that people with disability experience around taking part in sport and recreation are different for everyone.

In general, disability affects the way a person can engage with, or take part in, everyday activities - like sport and recreation.

The changes that sport and recreation providers need to make in order to offer inclusive and safe opportunities for people with disability, will differ depending on the type of disability and the individual.

## Intellectual disability

People with an intellectual disability may have trouble with day-to-day living skills, communicating and socialising.

## Sensory disability

Sensory disability affects one or more of the senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste or spatial awareness - and how the person experiences the world around them.

## Physical disability

Physical disability can temporarily or permanently affect a person's mobility or ability to carry out day-to-day tasks.

## Mental health conditions

Mental health conditions can affect the way a person thinks, behaves and interacts with others. Severe mental health conditions can cause psychological disabilities.





# A powerful voice for people with disability

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A core element of our new strategic plan is to focus on understanding the many needs and goals of people with disability and those who care for, or support, them.

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This will allow us to be a more powerful voice with and for people with disability in the sport and active recreation sector.

We can then support and work with sport and active recreation organisations and providers, and the broader community, to increase choice, access and participation.

## Choice

Our vision is a Victoria where people with disability have more sport and active recreation opportunities to choose from. They can make decisions, set goals and receive the support they need to meaningfully engage with the sport or active recreation opportunity they choose.

## Access

Our vision is a Victoria where more sport and active recreation opportunities will be accessible to people with disability by taking into consideration:

- physical access
- program design
- provider expertise and understanding
- cost
- equipment required
- time
- transport
- communication methods
- ease of finding information about opportunities.

For example:

- **Physical accessibility** of the service (inside and outside of the service)
- **Informational accessibility** of materials (print and electronic resources)
- **Procedural accessibility** of the service (including policies and processes)
- **Attitudinal accessibility** of the service (including staff attitudes, language and culture)

## Participation

Our vision is a Victoria where more people with disability will meaningfully engage with sport and active recreation as a direct result of increased choice and access. Our primary focus is to increase physical activity, however, we recognise that participation may also include other types of engagement with sport and active recreation that deliver social and mental health benefits.

# Leading a movement for change

Much like other movements around important social issues, we want to help create a 'movement' that encourages behaviour change among sport and active recreation organisations and providers in Victoria, as well as the broader community.

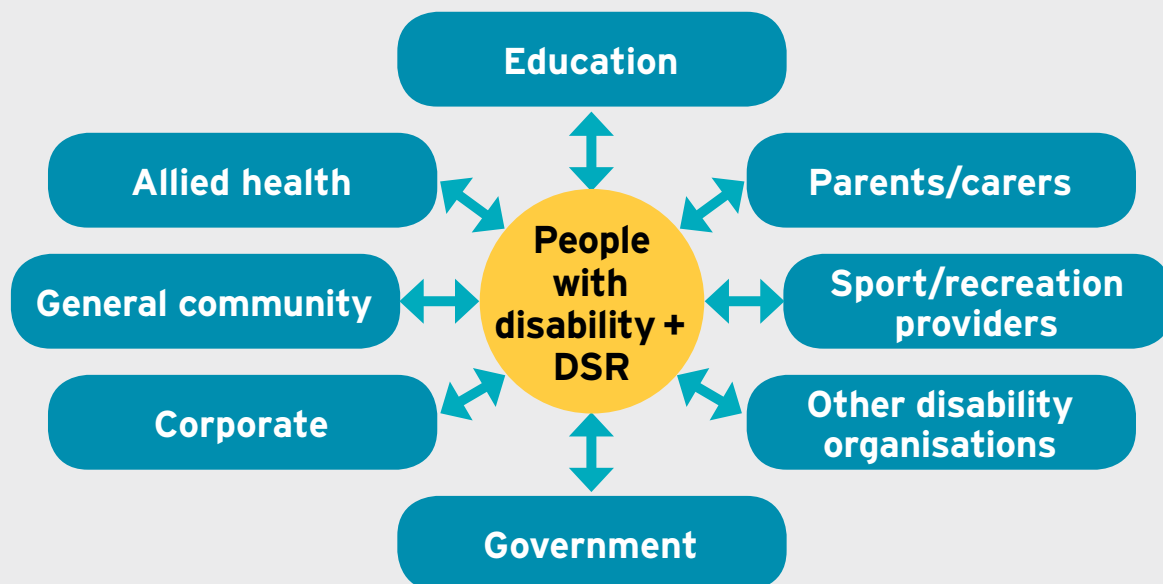
This movement will create change that sees better choice and access for people with disability who want to meaningfully engage in sport and active recreation.

We will work with stakeholders to prioritise better choice, better access and better participation.

This will lead to more participation and improved physical activity for health, social inclusion and belonging.

We seek a better life for **all** Victorians with disability through sport and active recreation.

We welcome all individuals and organisations who believe in these outcomes to join the movement.





# What will success look like by 2025?

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Our vision is a Victoria where people with disability can choose and access any sport or recreation they want to engage with.

Simply put, success is a powerful voice of people with disability in sport and recreation leading to more Victorians with disability enjoying the benefits of engagement with sport and recreation.

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## To achieve this, we will help create a movement for change by:

- engaging with people with disability to make sure their voice is accurately presented to the sector
- maintaining and building on existing relationships with sport and active recreation organisations and providers
- developing new partnerships with organisations aligned with the movement
- working with sport and active recreation organisations and providers to increase their capacity and knowledge of inclusive practices relating to people with disability
- becoming a first point of contact for organisations and providers that want advice and guidance on how to become more inclusive of people with disability
- contributing written submissions to government, where relevant, on topics involving the participation of people with disability
- supporting research on participation rates for people with disability
- working to change community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability taking part in sport and active recreation
- engaging new audiences
- creating opportunities for people with disability to tell their stories about the benefits of taking part in sport and active recreation
- mapping pathways for different stakeholders to get active, including accessing support from the NDIS
- working with all levels of government
- sourcing alternative revenue streams to support our program delivery
- developing mentoring and ambassador programs
- creating a co-working space that drives collaboration in the sector
- making sure co-design is at the forefront of our planning principles.

## Increasing choice

We will continue to:

- showcase the choices available to people with disability, at our annual Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Festival
- work with our partners to give children undergoing rehabilitation the opportunity to take part in sport and active recreation through our hospital program
- showcase greater inclusion in sport and recreation through DSR TV - a disability sports channel covering Victorian sporting events that feature athletes with disability
- contribute to increased exposure for disability and inclusive sport in mainstream media
- work with sport and active recreation providers to promote their programs through our monthly e-newsletter *Vortex* and social media.

We will start to:

- encourage sport and active recreation organisations and providers to:
  - understand what people with disability want
  - acknowledge and address the barriers that people with disability face around taking part in sport and active recreation
  - commit to increasing opportunities for people with disability in both playing and non-playing roles
  - increase funding and resources for inclusive practices that offer more choice, including employment and volunteering.

## Increasing access

We will continue to:

- highlight sector best practice at our annual Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards
- provide opportunities for the sector to learn and progress through education programs, including our involvement with the annual National Sports Convention

We will start to:

- encourage sport and active recreation organisations and providers to:
  - increase capacity and skills by training staff and coaches in how to work with people with disability
  - work together to reduce program, resources and training duplication
  - actively remove barriers that stop people with disability from engaging in sport and active recreation
  - develop action plans for improving access to their sport and active reaction programs and activities
  - audit their facilities against best practice standards.



## Increasing participation

We will continue to:

- manage Wheelchair Rugby Victoria and support the delivery of AFL Wheelchair
- work with our partners to give children with disability the opportunity to take part in sport and active recreation through our kids camps and hospital programs
- educate and develop awareness of how people with disability can include sport and active recreation in their NDIS plans
- grow our WheelTalk program to reach more mainstream schools and corporate organisations - improving community attitudes and behaviours towards people with disability, to encourage increased participation
- develop connections with local communities by working with our partners to deliver come and try initiatives.

We will start to:

- educate and develop awareness for NDIS planners, so they can help people with disability include sport and active recreation in their NDIS plans
- work with allied health professionals to make sure children with disability have a pathway to participation
- develop better awareness in the health and social services sectors of the benefits of people with disability taking part in sport and active recreation
- find innovative ways to engage our members and attract new members to the movement.

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## Acknowledgement

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Thank you to the following individuals and organisations that contributed to the initial development of our Strategic Plan:

Belgravia Leisure	Monash City Council	Sport and Recreation Victoria
Dawn O'Neil & Associates	Parks Victoria	Tennis Australia
Hockey Victoria	Powerchair Sports Victoria	VALID
Leisure Networks	Reclink	VicHealth
Maccabi Victoria	Rusty Brown Consulting	Vicsport
Maurice Gleeson OAM	Special Olympics Australia	YMCA Victoria

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When developing our Strategic Plan, we considered the following documents:

*Active Victoria - A strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017-2021*

*Victorian state disability plan 2017-2020*

*Sport 2030 - National Sport Plan*

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