



# Disability Advisory Council of Victoria

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OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

Mr Elton Humphrey  
The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

26 July 2006

Dear Mr Humphrey

**Re.** *Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into The Funding And Operation Of The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement.*

The Disability Advisory Council (DACV) is pleased to have the opportunity to make a submission to the *Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into The Funding And Operation Of The Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement.*

## **About the Disability Advisory Council (DACV)**

The Disability Advisory Council of Victoria's principal purpose is to provide advice to the Victorian Minister for Community Services on issues concerning people with disabilities in order to assist the Victorian Government achieve its stated policy objectives as detailed in the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002 – 2012.

## **A Whole of Government Approach**

In Victoria there are 992,300 people with disabilities, of that 494,100 are aged between 25 to 54 years. The disability rate increases with age from 4% of children with a disability to 41% of people aged 65 to 69 and 92% of people 90 years and over. The DACV believes that policy needs to be developed to encompass whole of government action, importantly taking account of the ageing population. Currently only 45,000 people with disabilities access services provided by the Disability Services Division of Department of Human Services. This means that well over ninety percent of Victorian Citizens with a disability do not have a relationship with Disability Services.

Children and adults with a disability interact with all parts of governments. In some cases there is an over representation of people with a disability in government services such as public housing, in the criminal justice and the child protection systems and an under representation in employment programs or post secondary education.

The development of the CSTDA has the potential to enable a stronger coordinated inter-governmental and interdepartmental approach to ensuring that Australian society is more



inclusive of people with disabilities and strives to meet their needs. However, the CSTDA has not achieved this potential. The DACV also believes that to date the CSTDA has yet to achieve its vision:

*that Australian, State and Territory Governments work cooperatively to build inclusive communities where people with disabilities, their families and carers are valued and are equal participants in all aspects of life* (National Disability Administrators, 2004:5).

Nor has it fully achieved its objectives to:

- *strengthen access to mainstream and generic services for people with disabilities*
- *strengthen across government linkages*
- *strengthen individuals and families*
- *improve long-term strategies to respond to, and manage demand for, specialist disability services and*
- *improve accountability, performance reporting and quality of specialist disability services.* (FACSIA, undated).

People with disabilities continue have limited choices available to them when attempting to access community services, facilities, education, housing or employment. They should not be discouraged for wanting to have an independent life just because Governments have not fully addressed *barriers to opportunities* that reside in existing legislation, regulations, policies and programs and are a legacy of a time when segregation was an endorsed public policy option.

Currently, community access, respite services, open employment services and advocacy and information services are severely under-funded in the CSTDA. (SCRGSP 2006: 13.8). Additional funding should be made available to fund these areas since they enable people with disabilities to participate more fully in their community, and, in the case of advocacy and information services, promote and protect their human rights.

DACV believes that all tiers of government need to introduce a stronger and more coherent whole of government approach to disability to ensure that all people with a disability are considered in government policy making and resource allocation. The DACV supports in particular a National Disability Employment Strategy.

If you have any further inquiries please contact us at the above address.

Yours sincerely

Claire Thorn,  
Executive Officer  
Disability Advisory Council of Victoria