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Message from the Acting Commissioner

Welcome to the August issue of our eNewsletter.

It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the year.

We recently contributed a joint submission with the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria on the Victorian State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan 2027–2031. Our submission highlights that a safe, high-quality disability workforce is essential to achieving a truly inclusive Victoria. You can learn more about our recommendations in the featured article below.

A reminder that we've released video recordings from our Code of Conduct webinar series and I encourage you to use these to refresh your knowledge and let your colleagues know about these resources. We are planning a new series of

webinars focused on other elements of the Code, so stay tuned. You can find out more about accessing the webinar recordings in this newsletter.

Last month we celebrated NAIDOC Week and were privileged to welcome Aboriginal Elder Uncle Charles Pakana to the Commission. The session provided a wonderful opportunity to learn from his decades of advocacy and storytelling. A highlight for me was the question-and-answer session with staff, where we were able to share stories and hear his valuable insights. Read on to find out more about our NAIDOC celebrations.

A reminder that nominations are now open for the 2026 National Awards for Disability Leadership, honoring Australian disability leaders' achievements in innovation, rights activism, social impact and more. I encourage you to get your nominations in by the deadline in October.

Kate Maddern, Acting Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner

State disability plan and Victorian autism plan submission

The Commission and the Board have contributed a joint submission on the Victorian State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan 2027–2031.

The Commission and Board strongly support the vision and objectives of the Victorian State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan 2027–2031, and the plans' commitment to inclusion, accessibility, dignity, safety, choice and equal opportunity for people with disability.

A genuinely inclusive Victoria requires not only accessible communities and opportunities for participation, but should be underpinned by a safe, high quality disability workforce with strong safeguards that uphold the rights, dignity, safety and wellbeing of people with disability. The Scheme, Commission and Board contribute to these outcomes by strengthening workforce quality, providing accessible complaints and safeguarding mechanisms, supporting systemic reform and promoting public confidence in disability services.

The submission focuses on the role of safe, quality disability support as a fundamental foundation of delivering on the goals of the plans.

You can read our full submission to the State Disability Plan and Victorian Autism Plan 2027–2031 by [Viewing the State Disability Plan Submission PDF](#) or [Downloading the State Disability Plan Submission Word document](#).

Out and about

NAIDOC week celebrations

Last month, the Victorian Disability Worker Commission celebrated NAIDOC Week, reflecting on this year's powerful theme, '50 Years of Deadly.'

We were fortunate to welcome Aboriginal Elder Uncle Charles Pakana to the Commission. Uncle Charles shared invaluable insights with our staff on reconciliation, cultural safety, and what it means to be an ally. The session concluded with an engaging questions and answers, giving everyone the opportunity to reflect on how we can incorporate these teachings into our everyday work.

Continuing the celebrations later in the week, VDWC staff headed to the Aboriginal Housing Victoria's 25th Annual NAIDOC Family Day at the Aborigines Advancement League. It was a fantastic community celebration, providing the team with a wonderful opportunity to connect, listen and celebrate together.

To learn more about NAIDOC Week [visit the official NAIDOC week site.](#)



Image 1: VDWC Director Prue Elletson, Aboriginal Elder, Uncle Charles Pakana and VDWC Acting Commissioner Kate Maddern at the Commission staff all-in.

Image 2: VDWC Director Prue Elletson and VDWC staff at Aboriginal Housing Victoria's 25th Annual NAIDOC Family Day at the Aborigines Advancement League.

Sector news

Nominations Open: 2026 National Awards for Disability Leadership

Nominations are now open for the 2026 National Awards for Disability Leadership, honoring Australian disability leaders achievements in Innovations, Rights Activism, Social Impact and more.

The awards aim to highlight disability leadership changemakers, with submissions closing on October 23, 2026. For more details on award categories and to submit a nomination, [visit Disability Leadership Institute.](#)

Sector resources

New Horizons Podcast from Blind Citizens Australia

Blind Citizens Australia has relaunched its "New Horizons" weekly radio show and podcast, featuring 15-minute, interview-style episodes on topics relevant to people who are blind or vision impaired. This resource provides valuable insights for disability workers into the lived experiences of the community. For more information, [visit Blind Citizens Australia.](#)

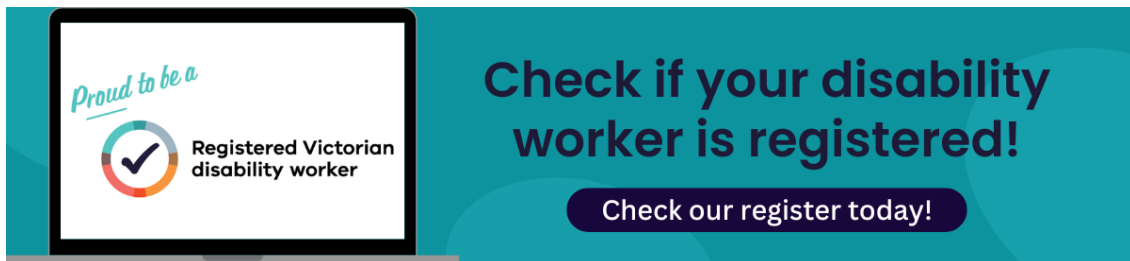
New Code of Conduct resources

A reminder that you can now catch up on our latest Code of Conduct webinars by [watching the recordings on our website.](#) This series is for all Victorian disability workers, breaking down your responsibilities under the Disability Service Safeguards Code of Conduct. Learn how to provide safe, quality services in your everyday work.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission has also released a new educational video to help providers better understand the NDIS Code of Conduct. It focuses on preventing sexual misconduct, which is one of the eight core elements of the NDIS Code of Conduct. The resource clarifies that sexual relationships between disability workers and participants are never appropriate due to the inherent power imbalance, and it details provider obligations to develop policy and guidance to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct, relating to the delivery of their supports and services. For more information and to view the series, visit the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission Code of Conduct videos page](#).

Women with Disabilities Australia Launches Neve Hub

Women with Disabilities Australia has launched "Neve", an accessible digital platform designed by and for women, girls, and gender-diverse people with disabilities. The site offers resources on awareness and advocacy, safety, storytelling and wellbeing, alongside a dedicated professional development section with free courses for families and sector workers. For more information, [visit Women with Disabilities Australia](#).



Want to know if a disability worker is a Victorian registered disability worker?

Victorian registered disability workers show they are safe, skilled and professional. In Victoria, disability workers can voluntarily sign up to professional registration. The Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria is responsible for assessing skills, experience and suitability for registration and registering disability workers that meet set standards for registration.

To check if a worker is registered [visit and search our register](#).

For more information on disability worker registration or to register for free, [head to our disability worker registration webpage](#).

Sector events

Explore these free events across the disability sector:

Disability Support Pension Information Session Melbourne

- Date and time: Friday, 28 August, 10:30 am to 12 pm
- Location: Northcote Library - Northcote, VIC
- About: Presented by Services Australia, this session will explain the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and Carer Payment.
- For more info, [visit the Disability Support Pension Information Session event page](#)

NDIS Disability Expo at Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre

- Date and time: Friday 28 August, 10:30 am - 3 pm
- Location: Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre, South Morang, VIC
- About: A free community event bringing together NDIS participants, families, carers, support coordinators, allied health professionals, service providers and community organisations under one roof.
- For more info, [visit the NDIS Disability Expo at Plenty Ranges Arts & Convention Centre event page](#)

Advance Your Advocacy Practice: Mental Health Units

- Date and time: Wednesday, 23 September, 10:00 am to 11:00 am
 - Location: Online via Zoom webinar
 - About: Enhance your advocacy skills in this free session focused on supporting people with psychosocial disabilities or mental health issues in mental health units. Presented by the Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU) and the Mental Health Legal Centre.
 - For more info, [visit the Advance Your Advocacy Practice event page](#)
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Have an event you'd like us to promote? Send us an email at info@vdwc.vic.gov.au

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For more information visit vdwc.vic.gov.au



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