

# Funds in Court

## Access and Inclusion Plan

July 2016 - 2020



### **Funds in Court**

Supreme Court of Victoria  
210 William Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

<http://www.fundsincourt.vic.gov.au/>



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# Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I present the Funds in Court (FIC) Access and Inclusion Plan 2016-2020.

FIC is an Office of the Supreme Court of Victoria. Our vision is: “To enhance beneficiaries’ lives with compassion and superior service”.

This vision is guided by the ancient doctrine of *parens patriae* which empowers the Court to protect people who are legally unable to act on their own behalf, including people with a disability. The *parens patriae* jurisdiction of the Court is exercised by the Judges and Associate Judges of the Supreme Court of Victoria,

FIC works to ensure that its efforts are compatible with individual autonomy and freedom and that it balances the need to protect people’s interests with the recognition of basic human rights. Part of this recognition and responsibility is to provide our services in a respectful, positive, fair, and impartial manner.

This plan is a key step towards ensuring that FIC addresses barriers that may prevent people with a disability from, not only, accessing goods and services but from also having meaningful inclusion in the community.

It is developed keeping in mind the rights of, not only our beneficiaries, but all people with disability.

FIC will continue to work closely with its beneficiaries, staff members, disability service providers, government, and advocacy groups towards the development of a more inclusive Australian society.

***Associate Justice John Eftim***  
***Senior Master***

## Our Vision

To enhance beneficiaries’ lives with compassion and superior service.

## Our Mission

To act in the best interests of beneficiaries by providing excellent service at the lowest cost and ensuring safe and effective investment of their funds .

# Planning and Review

## Why is an Access and Inclusion Plan Important?

An Access and Inclusion Plan is about ensuring that everyone, regardless of their disability, has an opportunity to access the services that are available to all Australians, and ultimately, encourages the development of an inclusive Australian society. At Funds in Court (FIC), an Access and Inclusion Plan is especially important as it ensures we continue to provide the best and most accessible service to our beneficiaries.

## Consultation and Participation

FIC has consulted with people with disabilities and their carers on this Access and Inclusion Plan. Beneficiaries were given the opportunity to offer feedback regarding the effectiveness of FIC services, and what the plan means for them. The inclusion of beneficiaries in this process means that it is more likely their needs will be taken into account in the evaluation of our services and the development of this plan. All Executive Managers have been consulted during the development of this Access and Inclusion Plan.

## Communication of the Plan

All FIC staff have had an opportunity to contribute to this Access and Inclusion Plan and the plan will be made available to staff via the Resource Centre. The Plan will be made available for download via the FIC website in this format and in Easy English. Following approval from Executive Management, the Plan will be submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

## Review and Outcomes

FIC has utilised ongoing feedback from a wide range of beneficiary, parent, community and industry stakeholders about its services in the development of this plan and will continue to respond to feedback to inform adjustments to this Plan as required over time. This includes ongoing consultation with a wide range of individuals and organisations representing the interests of people with disability, their families and carers. It is up to FIC as a whole to ensure that the key objectives and message are entrenched in FIC workplace culture and values.

# Disability Discrimination Act

## What is Disability Discrimination and the Disability Discrimination Act?

Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability, or their friends, family, and/or colleagues are treated less fairly than people without a disability. The Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (The Act) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. It recognises that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as all other Australian residents, including the right to participate fully in community life.

## Who Does It Protect?

The definition of "disability" in The Act includes:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disfigurement
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

The Act also covers people with a disability who may be discriminated against because:

- They are accompanied by an assistant, interpreter or reader
- They are accompanied by a service animal
- They use equipment or an aid, such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid.

The Act covers a disability which people:

- Have now
- Had in the past
- May have in the future
- Are believed to have/

The Act also protects people who have some form of personal connection with a person with a disability if they are discriminated against because of that connection. For example, it is unlawful discrimination if:

- A parent is refused a job because the employer assumes he or she will need time off work to look after a child with a disability
- People are refused access to a restaurant because they are with a friend who has a disability
- A carer is refused accommodation because of his or her association with the person with a disability
- A worker is hassled about working with a person with a disability.

# Key Objectives and Goals

## OBJECTIVE ONE: Supported and Inclusive Decision Making

FIC will support beneficiaries and their carers to be involved in decision making and planning processes within the organisation and their own lives.

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
FIC's Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC) continues to help to facilitate the flow of information and ideas between FIC and key stakeholders. Beneficiaries are invited to submit suggestions to the Senior Master regarding decisions that impact the lives of FIC's current and future beneficiaries, their families and/or support networks. The group includes a range of participants including staff, beneficiaries, their carers, industry professionals, etc.	The BAC continues to provide feedback on issues impacting the lives of beneficiaries, their families and/or support networks. The group includes a range of participants including staff, beneficiaries, their carers, industry professionals, etc.	Ongoing	Senior Master
The Beneficiary Focus Group will provide valuable feedback on FIC services and projects that is relevant to beneficiaries and their families.	The group, made up of beneficiaries, will continue to present ideas/offer feedback on FIC services and projects, including this Plan. The Group meets once a year.	Annually	Beneficiary Services
FIC's Human Rights Working Group (HRWG) becomes a productive group heavily involved in decision making, new FIC projects, and human rights issues that impact the lives of current and future beneficiaries and the lives of all people with disability.	The Working Group should include people who identify with a disability and a balanced representation of age, gender, and geographic location. The Working Group continues to provide feedback on services and human rights issues and new members are invited to participate annually.	Ongoing	Director of Strategy, Government and Community Relations

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
FIC will seek to encourage beneficiaries to participate in opportunities, both internal and external to the organisation that will encourage their personal growth.	External organisations (such as VALID) that offer opportunities to people with disabilities are invited to speak at committee and focus group meetings.	Ongoing	Whole of organisation
Trust Officers will continue to provide a supportive framework for beneficiaries to make suitable decisions about their financial choices.	The number of complaints made each year regarding financial decisions will remain low.	Ongoing	Beneficiary Services
Client Liaison Officers will continue to provide a facilitative service to connect beneficiaries with other service providers that will enable the beneficiaries to live as independently as possible.	Client Liaison Officers will make regular visits to beneficiaries and link them in with any required service providers such as recreational specialists, neuropsychologists, etc. after their initial visit. CLOs will maintain contact with these clinical teams and progress will be recorded within the beneficiary's file. Any additional suggestions by the clinical team, for example, the hire of an Educational Psychologist, will be progressed to the Trust Officer. A review process will be put in place for existing beneficiaries who have not been visited by a Client Liaison Officer for a certain length of time. These visits will be at the beneficiary's discretion and on an as needs basis.	Ongoing	Beneficiary Services
FIC will take into account the needs of our beneficiaries when developing new services – for example, the website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints will be monitored and feedback incorporated into service design</li> <li>Expert service providers will be consulted regularly for new and emerging services</li> <li>The Beneficiary Focus Group will be consulted on new services. Their feedback will be incorporated into the service design.</li> </ul>		The Senior Master and Executive Team

## Key Objectives and Goals

### OBJECTIVE TWO: Information Accessibility and Clear Communication

By promoting clear communication and training staff to understand disability, FIC will ensure that beneficiaries have access to all the information they need and are supported to make the most of FIC services.

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
Continue to provide online information in a range of accessible formats and ensure FIC's website is accessible for people with a disability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FIC website home page allows for adjustments of font size, contrast, and language</li> <li>Information brochures in Easy English are readily available for download.</li> <li>The website uses BrowseAloud for those who require online reading support.</li> <li>The website features videos to help explain the complex legal and financial information in a format that is easier to understand.</li> <li>The website will meet the World-Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 1.0 AA standard.</li> </ul>	June 2018	ICT Manager under the direction of the General Manager and the Senior Master
Improve the level of confidence in FIC staff and services available to beneficiaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client/Beneficiary satisfaction will be recorded in twice yearly random telephone survey.</li> <li>Complaints will be monitored.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	The Senior Master and Executive Team
Staff communication with beneficiaries will continue to be considered 'user friendly'.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will be given the opportunity to attend training that includes: fraud and ethics, communication skills, etc.</li> </ul>	Twice yearly – ongoing	The Senior Master and Executive Team

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security specialists will run courses on conflict management and personal protection every two years. Attendance will be monitored.</li> <li>• Complaints will be monitored.</li> </ul>		
Staff understand the behaviour/traits of individuals which can be directly linked to a beneficiary's disability.	Staff training and induction will include information about acquired brain injury, and training attendance will be recorded.	Annually or as required	The Senior Master, Executive Team and Human Resources
FIC will continue to communicate investment performance regularly with beneficiaries and their carers in a way that is clear and easy to understand.	Twice a year, beneficiaries receive a statement from FIC regarding their investment in Common Fund No. 2 and a separate statement if they also have an investment in Common Fund No. 3. A simplified breakdown of investment performance will be available to beneficiaries via facts sheets that are sent with the statements. They are also published on the FIC website.	Twice yearly - ongoing	Investment Team

# Key Objectives and Goals

## OBJECTIVE THREE: Supporting an Inclusive Society

FIC will raise awareness of disability issues more broadly across the community. By ensuring all events meet universal access guidelines and that people with a disability are actively included, FIC will provide an opportunity for all members of the community to come together and support the development of an inclusive Australian society.

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
Ensure FIC's vision— <i>to enhance beneficiaries' lives with compassion and superior service</i> — is promoted through all FIC activities and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beneficiaries will be consulted in event planning processes</li> <li>Beneficiary feedback from FIC events will be collected and used to improve future events.</li> </ul>	Within 20 working days of the end of the event.	General Manager
Enrich and improve the accessibility of FIC events through the inclusion of people who have a disability on all event planning committees.	Each event planning committee includes at least one person with a disability as members as well as industry professionals who can provide important information on issues such as physical access, communication, type of venue and transport.	Ongoing	General Manager
Ensure FIC supports the growth of its beneficiaries.	Embrace concert will continue to be held bi-annually and all beneficiaries invited to perform/attend.	Bi-annually	General Manager
Ensure FIC supports the development of an inclusive Australian society — recognising people with disability for their contributions/achievements rather than their disability.	The Inspire Awards® will be held annually and improved on each year through feedback and consultation with people with disability.	Annually	Director of Strategy, Government and Community Relations
Maximise the accessibility of FIC events and increase our ability to foresee and overcome potential accessibility issues.	An event management checklist and procedure document is completed for FIC events to ensure accessibility is maximised.	As needed	General Manager
Ensure all FIC promotional material consistently displays positive images, empathy and sensitivity on disability issues.	Promotional material is reviewed before publication and, where possible, reviewed by the Beneficiary Advisory Committee prior to release.	As needed	The Senior Master, General Manager and Director of Strategy, Government and Community Relations
Collaborate with local media	Press releases regarding FIC are	As needed	The Senior

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<p>outlets to help ensure reports on disability or people with a disability reflect increased levels of empathy, sensitivity and positivity.</p>	<p>reviewed before publication and local media outlets agree to adhere as closely as possible to this information.</p>		<p>Master and General Manager</p>
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# Key Objectives and Goals

## OBJECTIVE FOUR: Universal Access

FIC will ensure that the outcomes for people with a disability will not be limited by buildings that have access constraints. FIC understands the barriers imposed by a non-accessible environment and the negative impact that has on a person's life.

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
Ensure the FIC site is accessible for people with physical, psychological, intellectual and sensory disabilities, as much as possible (given that the office may be located in a rental building).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual maps, signage and information on accessible parking, entrances and exits and toilets are available at FIC. Engage the services of a disability access consultant to review FIC.</li> <li>Public transport is easily accessed from the FIC office.</li> </ul>	June 2017	General Manager
Develop an Access Plan that will facilitate the review and implementation of access standards at FIC.	Access at FIC will meet the Disability Access to Premises Standards 2010.	June 2017	General Manager
Address and rectify any access issues at FIC where possible. Where the access issue cannot be rectified, such as in a rental building, the access issue will be clearly identified and appropriate measures or actions are taken to prevent any negative impact.	FIC's Access Plan is annually reviewed and issues regarding access are identified and rectified in a timely manner and to a level that meets the Disability Access to Premises Standards 2010.	Ongoing	General Manager
Ensure all new buildings, rented, built or purchased by FIC, are accessible for all potential users.	All new buildings (rented, built or purchased) comply with universal access codes as confirmed by disability access consultant.	As needed	General Manager
Undertake regular accessibility audits to ensure FIC premises are kept in compliance with the Disability Access to Premises Standards 2010.	Audits include reviews of the organisation's access policies and associated procedures. Access policies and procedures are up-to-date.	June 2017 then annually	General Manager

## Key Objectives and Goals

### OBJECTIVE FIVE: Non-Discriminatory Employment Practices

FIC will maintain its status as an equal opportunity employer and embrace an employment policy that reflects diversity.

What we aim to do	How we will measure it	Timeline	Responsible
Encourage people with a disability to consider FIC as an employer of choice.	All advertised positions will include the modified statement: "At FIC, we continually strive to create a high performance workplace that is characterised by creativity, innovation, flexibility, <b>diversity</b> and quality delivery" and list that FIC is an equal opportunity employer	March 2017	Human Resources and Executive Team
Ensure recruitment processes are inclusive and accessible for all people with a disability.	The content of all advertised positions on the FIC website is available in accessible formats, for example, text, contrast and language can be changed, and guidance on recruitment processes can be provided if requested.	March 2017	Human Resources and Executive Team
Ensure employees with disability/carer responsibilities can be a part of FIC's workforce knowing that these responsibilities will not stop them from having the opportunity to participate in the workplace.	FIC offers flexible work arrangements such as part-time work and personal leave (which includes carers leave).	Ongoing	Human Resources and Executive Team
The Reasonable Adjustment Policy continues to be adhered to and all employees understand the policy	The policy is available to all employees. Data on the number and type of requests will be recorded. All new employees will be made aware of the Reasonable Adjustment Policy as part of their induction.	March 2017 and then ongoing	Human Resources and Executive Team
Give employees with a disability the confidence to voluntarily disclose their impairments and take comfort in knowing that FIC will listen and make improvements to accommodate their needs by providing adaptive technologies as needed.	An annual FIC staff satisfaction survey will include demographic information related to disability or impairment experienced by staff, adaptive technologies and how effective the support is. Requests for adaptive technologies will be recorded.	March 2017 then annually	Human Resources and Executive Team

## Contact Us

**If you would like further information regarding this Disability Action Plan, or to request a copy in easy English, please contact us on:**

**Phone: 1300 039 390**

**Email: [fic@supremecourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:fic@supremecourt.vic.gov.au)**