

Supporting Students with Disability

June 2023

Independent assurance report to Parliament
2022–23:20



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Independent assurance report to Parliament

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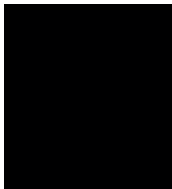
The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Melbourne

The Hon Maree Edwards MP
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Under the provisions of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my report *Supporting Students with Disability*.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
21 June 2023

The Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters throughout Victoria. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their continuing culture, and to Elders past and present.

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Audit snapshot

What we examined

We examined the Department of Education's (the department) Disability Inclusion (DI) program.

Our focus was on whether the program is set up to provide reasonable adjustments that allow students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. To do this, we looked at how the department is implementing DI in its first year of statewide rollout. We did not examine DI outcomes for students with disability as part of this audit.

Why this is important

About one quarter of all Victorian students receive reasonable adjustments at school due to disability.

Schools must provide these adjustments so that students can take part in education on the same basis as students without disability.

In 2021, the department introduced its DI program, with \$1.56 billion in funding for 4 years. It replaces the Program for Students with Disabilities.

The program aims to help all students with disability and diverse learning needs by improving inclusive education practices in all Victorian government schools.

The DI program could improve education outcomes for many Victorians and make every classroom more inclusive. It is essential that the program is set up so schools can implement it as the department intended.

What we concluded

The department's DI program is designed to provide reasonable adjustments that allow students with disability and diverse learning needs to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

However, some regions and areas are not implementing the program as effectively as others. In these cases, schools are less likely to take up all DI elements and put them into practice as the department intended.

The department's oversight of the program rollout means it is addressing barriers to implementation and continually improving DI for schools. Building on its program oversight and monitoring in the regions will help improve access and participation in education for students with a disability and diverse learning needs.

What we recommended

We recommended that the department:

- ensure all regions and areas use effective DI implementation approaches
- take a stronger role in oversight so it can proactively address barriers to effective and timely DI implementation.

[→ Full recommendations](#)

Key facts



Nearly **25%**
of Victorian students receive
reasonable adjustment



\$1.56b
to implement Disability
Inclusion



Staged rollout across Victoria
2021–2025

Source: VAGO.

Our recommendations

We made 2 recommendations to address 2 issues. The Department of Education has accepted them.

Key issues and corresponding recommendations			Agency response
Issue: Disability Inclusion implementation is most effective when it is closely coordinated at region and area level			
Department of Education	1	Ensure that current and future regional and area implementation plans contain effective practices, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">close coordination between Disability Inclusion implementation teams and School Improvement and School Support workforces, so the links between tiered funding and support models, and the system capability initiatives, are embedded in early implementationdata monitoring that shows how each school is progressing in each element of Disability Inclusion, so regions and areas can make strategic decisions at the local levela single and organised pathway for schools to access Disability Inclusion expertise in their region, so they receive timely support to help them implement all elements of Disability Inclusion. (See Section 2.)	Accepted
Issue: The Department of Education's role in ensuring effective implementation across regions and areas			
Department of Education	2	Proactively work with regions and areas to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">identify barriers to implementation at the local leveladopt better practices to address those barriers, such as close regional coordination or improved data monitoringensure that Disability Inclusion rollout remains timely, so schools make consistent progress in taking up all elements of Disability Inclusion. (See Section 3.)	Accepted

What we found

This section summarises our key findings. The numbered sections detail our complete findings.

When reaching our conclusions, we consulted with the Department of Education (the department) and considered its view. The department’s full response is in Appendix A.

Disability Inclusion in Victorian schools

In 2021, the department introduced Disability Inclusion (DI), a program to support all students with disability in government schools, not just those funded for targeted support. This replaces the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), which focused on supplementary funding for individual students needing extensive adjustments to their education.

The DI program includes a tiered system of funding, workforce capability initiatives, new disability support roles and dedicated teams to support schools in making education more inclusive in all classrooms.

The department is committed to implementing DI in all government schools by 2025.

Department’s communication and monitoring role

DI is designed to lift inclusive education capability across Victoria. To achieve this, the department needs to ensure schools can access the support they need, by:

- communicating the program offering to all schools, so schools can work out what is best for them
- ensuring its regional teams share information and monitor school performance to identify what DI programs and information each school needs.

Our key findings

Our findings fall into 2 key areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Implementing DI is most effective when it is closely coordinated at region and area level. |
| 2 | The department has a role in ensuring effective implementation across regions and areas. |

Key finding 1: Implementing DI is most effective when it is closely coordinated at region and area level

A statewide reform, rolled out by region

Victoria’s government school system is made up of 4 regions and 17 areas. While DI is a statewide reform, its implementation is being led by the department’s regional offices and their area teams.

Within each region, 2 separate teams manage 2 discrete aspects:

- implementing the tiered model of funding and support
- implementing the Diverse Learners Hub (DLH) and Inclusion Outreach Coaching (IOC) system capability initiatives.

These teams in the department must fully integrate their approach to ensure every school and student gets the full benefit of DI reforms.

Varying levels of coordination Implementing DI is most effective when there is close coordination at a region and area level.

At the beginning of 2022 – the first full year of the DI reform – the department’s regions had varying levels of coordination. By the middle of that year, some of the regions had detailed implementation plans and organisational structures that brought together all aspects of the reform. They linked their DI implementation teams and local workforces, had clear communication pathways for schools and closely monitored their progress.

Early data showed that schools in those regions led in taking up all elements of DI.

One region that lacked these features lagged behind in implementation. However, that region has since improved its structures for collaboration. Its schools are now taking up some parts of DI at the same rate as other regions.

A single pathway for schools to access DI expertise is key Of the 3 regions we examined, one had a better-developed system of communication and monitoring than the others. This included a single pathway for schools to get support on all DI matters. This means schools in this region have one entry point to access DI implementation support from regional or area workforces.

We found schools in this region had a greater uptake of both the DI tiered funding model and DI system capability initiatives. The key to this region's success was the single pathway to DI expertise. This pathway gives schools easy access to expertise, because it is based on:

- a regional department team structure integrated across DI, School Improvement and School Support workforces. This allows the region to analyse and triage requests for support, drawing on the knowledge of DI implementation teams and local workforces
- a monitoring system that helps it understand schools’ pre-existing use of inclusive education.

The other 2 regions we audited have communication and coordination structures that are not as integrated across each element of DI and the workforces that support implementation. Schools' take-up of DI programs, particularly the system capability initiatives, has not been as widespread.

Key finding 2: The department has a role in ensuring effective implementation across regions and areas

Regions have autonomy but the department promotes best practice The department provides guidance and support to regions and areas to implement DI, but it does not direct them on how they should implement DI. Under its Learning Places model, regions have autonomy, within some constraints, to implement DI according to their context and ways of working.

However, the department understands that variation in the way different regions implement DI is a risk to achieving a consistent offering and experience across all schools. To mitigate this, it works to identify better implementation practices in schools, areas and regions, and promotes these practices across the state.

Opportunities for the department to strengthen regional implementation Regional and area implementation that focuses on close coordination and a strategic understanding of schools’ practices and progress is most effective in implementing DI. However, not all regions’ and areas’ implementation plans include effective collaboration and monitoring.

The department analyses data on implementation progress, but does not always do this by region and area. If it did this for all data, it would help the department:

- identify regional variations
- identify implementation practices associated with effective school implementation
- respond proactively to barriers to a region’s progress.

Department governance is supporting the DI rollout

The department has central, regional and area level governance groups to oversee and monitor the implementation of DI.

To understand how the implementation is progressing and to identify issues, the department and its governance groups use data provided by:

- the regional implementation teams (RITs)
- regional and area governance groups
- the department's own evaluation and monitoring activities.

The department and its governance groups receive this data in a regular and timely manner. The groups appropriately identify and respond to issues to improve the rollout of DI for schools.

Department monitoring and reporting based on appropriate data

To understand how implementation of DI is progressing, the department collects an appropriate range of data. This includes:

- data on DI profiles requested and completed by schools
- how schools use Tier 2 funding allocations
- schools' use and experience of the system capability initiatives
- staff professional development
- data collected by its external evaluators.

It also uses the annual Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) on school students receiving reasonable adjustments at school due to disability and diverse learning needs.

The department receives this data regularly and uses it to identify implementation issues, such as schools' need for updated guidance on DI profiles.

Department evaluation framework based on clear program logic

In 2020, the department commissioned a three-and-a-half-year (June 2021 to December 2024) external evaluation of:

- the implementation of DI
- progress towards intended outcomes.

Its evaluation framework is underpinned by a clear program logic and theory of change. The evaluation will shift progressively from focusing on progress in implementation to progress on achieving outcomes. The first annual report, based on 2021 data, found that system-level implementation was on track.

The department is improving its data quality

The department has improved the quality of its data on outcomes for students with disability and diverse learning needs. It has done this through linking NCCD data on students with reasonable adjustments to systems that report on student achievement and engagement.

It has also improved the design of its survey of students' attitudes to school so it is accessible to students with disability, particularly those in specialist schools. This means the department will better understand the attitudes and experiences of students with disability.

The department is working with its evaluators to identify how it can reliably understand changes in schools' inclusive practice and culture.

1.

Audit context

In 2021, the department introduced its DI program. Replacing the PSD, the DI program is designed to support all students with disability in Victorian schools – not just those funded for targeted support.

To support schools in making education more inclusive, the DI program has introduced a tiered system of funding and new disability support roles, including dedicated school teams.

The department has fully committed to rolling out DI to all government schools by 2025.

Ensuring students with disability have equal access to education

Legal requirements

Under the federal *Disability Standards for Education 2005*, schools must make 'reasonable adjustments' for all students with disability, so they can take part in education on the same basis as students without a disability.

The 4 levels of reasonable adjustment

Reasonable adjustments vary according to student needs. For example, they may involve providing different ways to access information, allowing extra time, or finding an alternative space to finish class work. In other cases, students may need different assessment options or access to school support services.

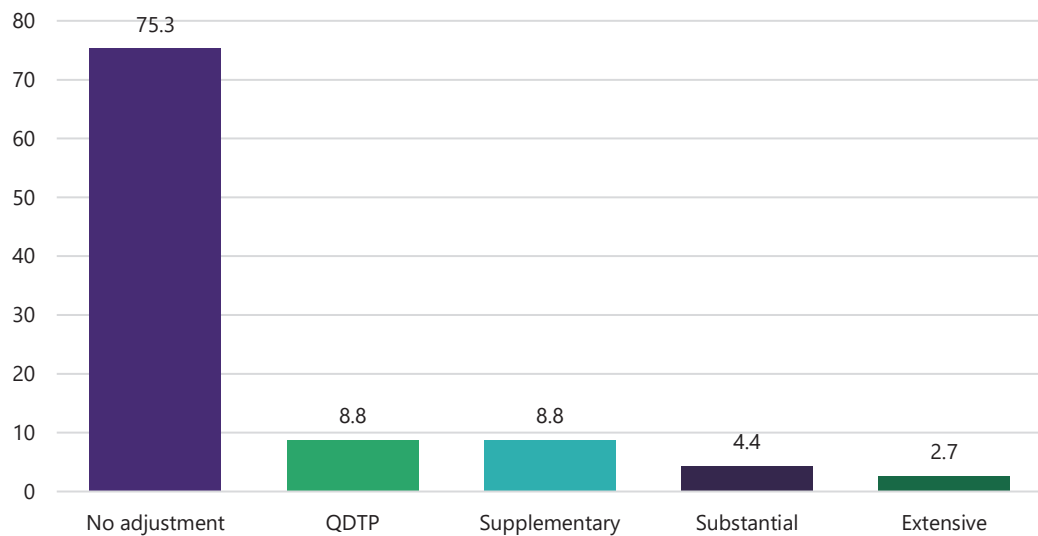
Schools use 4 broad levels of adjustment as described by the NCCD:

Adjustment level	Examples
Within quality differentiated teaching practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Managing class background noise for a student with mild hearing loss.Informing teachers of the self-management strategy for a student with generalised anxiety disorder.
Supplementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Breaking information into smaller chunks for a student with a learning disability.Giving a student access to a quiet learning area for sitting tests and examinations.
Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Making adjustments to the curriculum and providing remote access for a student unable to attend school.Providing individualised instruction and work samples for most assessments for a student with autism spectrum disorder.Making changes to the school environment and transport for a student with paraplegia.
Extensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providing constant adult support for a student who cannot work independently or who depends on staff for all self-care needs.Providing a signing interpreter in all classes to support a student who is profoundly deaf.

Reasonable adjustments for Victorian students

Figure 1 shows the proportion of all Victorian students across government and non-government schools who receive a reasonable adjustment, and what level of adjustment they need.

Figure 1: Percentage of Victorian students receiving reasonable adjustments in 2022



Note: QDTP is quality differentiated teaching practice.

Source: VAGO, from Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (based on NCCD).

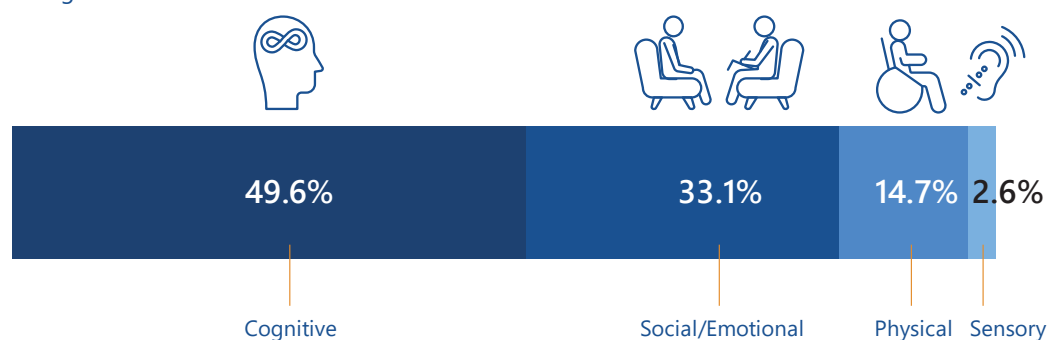
Students with disability in Victorian schools

The NCCD groups disabilities into 4 broad categories:

- cognitive
- social/emotional
- physical
- sensory.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of students with disability across Victorian government and non-government schools receiving adjustments at school to access and participate in education, and the broad category of disability identified as the main reason for the adjustment. Making reasonable adjustments requires understanding and meeting the needs of these students.

Figure 2: Percentage of students with 4 categories of disability in Victorian government and non-government schools in 2022



Source: VAGO, from Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Victoria's DI program

Purpose of the DI program

The purpose of the DI program is to support every student with disability in government schools, rather than funding only students identified for targeted support, as PSD did. The department aims to achieve this through a tiered support funding model and system-wide capability improvement.

The department introduced DI in 2021. It has committed to fully replacing PSD funding eligibility processes by the end of 2025.

Changes from PSD

PSD began in 1995. Unlike DI, it focused on supplementary funding for individual students needing extensive adjustments to their education. In 2016, a government review recommended a reform of the program to strengthen inclusive practices and support all students with disabilities, not just those requiring extensive adjustments.

To enact this reform, the department has introduced 3 new measures as part of DI:

- A DI profile for students who need extensive, substantial or supplementary adjustments. This profile involves evidence collected by the school to take to a meeting with a DI facilitator about the student's strengths and functional needs. Funding decisions from this meeting will replace historical PSD funding.
- A tiered funding model for schools, as described below. This introduces a new stream of funding to strengthen whole-school capacity and capability to deliver adjustments and inclusive practices.
- New system capability initiatives to help school workforces practice inclusive education.

The department considers each of these elements essential to DI and expects that when the program is fully rolled out, schools will use all of them to provide inclusive education for students with disability and diverse learning needs.

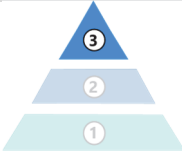
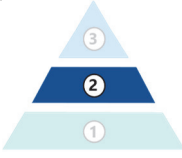
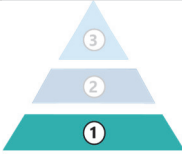
Cost of the DI program

Implementing DI will cost \$1.56 billion over 4 years. This includes:

- \$1 billion to support schools to continue delivering adjustments and supports for students with disability with complex and high needs. This also supports the existing PSD program until the DI rollout is complete
 - \$400 million to transition to a new funding and support model for students with disability
 - over \$100 million to introduce and scale up resources and initiatives to build the required system-wide capability in the education workforce.
-

DI funding and support model

DI introduces a 3-tiered funding and support model. As shown below, this is based on increasing levels of student need for educational adjustments and targeted support.

Tier	Purpose	How funding is awarded
 <p>Student-level funding</p>	To support schools to deliver adjustments for individual students with complex and high needs.	<p>A. School collects evidence about the student and level of adjustment needed for 31 activities (for example, reading, regulating behaviour, interpreting spoken messages).</p> <p>B. A facilitator leads a meeting to discuss the student's needs and complete a DI profile.</p> <p>C. If the department finds the student is eligible, it provides a calculated level of funding to the school.</p>
 <p>School-level funding</p>	To strengthen whole-school capacity and capability to deliver adjustments and inclusive practices for students with disability.	Tier 2 funding is calculated based on the number of students enrolled at the school and characteristics of students at the school, using student family education – which is an indicator of socio-educational advantage. It awards this funding annually.
 <p>Universal funding</p>	Core funding for all students' learning needs.	This comprises all student-based funding provided through the Student Resource Package.

Tier 2 (school-level funding) is a new stream that the department has introduced as part of the DI program.

DI system of capability initiatives

The DI program includes several initiatives to help school workforces build capacity in inclusive education. This includes 2 new programs:

The ...	Is designed to ...	And is funded for ...
DLH	<p>provide coaching and support to school leaders on whole-school changes to inclusive practices through subject matter experts, and supporting teachers' professional development with an online knowledge hub focusing on best-practice, evidence-based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance • information and resources • professional learning 	\$19 million over 4 years.
IOC program	<p>build capability in inclusive practice for the benefit of all students, by placing coaches in specialist schools to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mainstream schools • their base specialist schools 	\$20 million over 4 years.

Timing of the DI rollout

The department introduced DI in 2021, beginning the rollout in the third term with 3 areas and 5 supported-inclusion schools.

Due to the scale of DI, the department has chosen to stagger its rollout of the funding and support model over 5 years. This approach is designed to help:

- schools and the school system manage the change
- the department enact learnings and refine its processes while DI is being implemented.

Supported-inclusion schools

These are mainstream schools designed to support more students with a disability than a typical mainstream school.

Staged rollout of the DI tiered funding model

Figure 3 shows how the department is staging the rollout of the DI funding model over 5 years, by region and area.

Figure 3: Timing of the DI tiered funding model rollout by region and area

Rollout year	South Eastern Victoria	South Western Victoria	North Eastern Victoria	North Western Victoria
Year 1 (2021)	Bayside Peninsula	Barwon		Loddon Campaspe
Year 2 (2022)		Central Highlands	Outer Eastern Melbourne	Mallee
Year 3 (2023)	Inner Gippsland	Western Melbourne	Ovens Murray	
Year 4 (2024)	Southern Melbourne	Brimbank Melton	Goulburn	North Eastern Melbourne
Year 5 (2025)	Outer Gippsland	Wimmera South West	Inner Eastern Melbourne	Hume Merri-bek

Source: VAGO.

Access to capability initiatives

The department has made DI system capability initiatives available to all areas, in advance of the rollout of the funding model. The exception is the IOC initiative that is part of the staged rollout.

The department's implementation approach

Support to rollout DI

DI is a significant change in the way schools assist students with disability and diverse learning needs. The department is providing regions, areas and schools with new resources and staff to help them introduce all new elements of DI for their students.

Inclusive Education Division

The Inclusive Education Division (IED) leads the implementation of DI. It manages program rollout and is responsible for:

- writing policy and guidance for schools on DI
- communication and engagement with stakeholders, including disability organisations
- managing the DI Facilitator Service to deliver DI profiles
- integrating new DI systems into the department's business-as-usual systems
- system-wide monitoring and analysis
- support for RITs.

DI regional implementation teams

To help schools implement DI, the department has invested in new disability support roles and dedicated teams, called RITs.

The RITs are intended to:

- offer direct guidance to prepare schools for the new program
- be the main point of contact for schools and families on DI
- collect data to monitor the impact of DI.

Each RIT has a manager and senior implementation officer roles.

The department plans to employ 40 RIT staff across its 4 regions over 4 years.

Managing rollout in regions and areas

For the first year of rollout in an area, RITs work with leaders and staff from the region and its selected areas to rollout DI in schools.

Areas develop their own area implementation team (AIT) from existing staff to support this. The make-up of AITs and their working relationship with their RIT is a decision for the area leadership.

After the first year of rollout, the RIT gradually reduces its support to the area. While RITs remain available for queries and support, the department expects that AITs will be primarily responsible for leading the continued implementation of DI in schools in that area.

Other staff involved in the system capability initiatives, such as IOC and DLH, have ongoing roles. These initiatives are permanent features of DI and will require continued coordination.

RITs are time-limited because the department intends that these roles will cease once the staged DI rollout is complete.

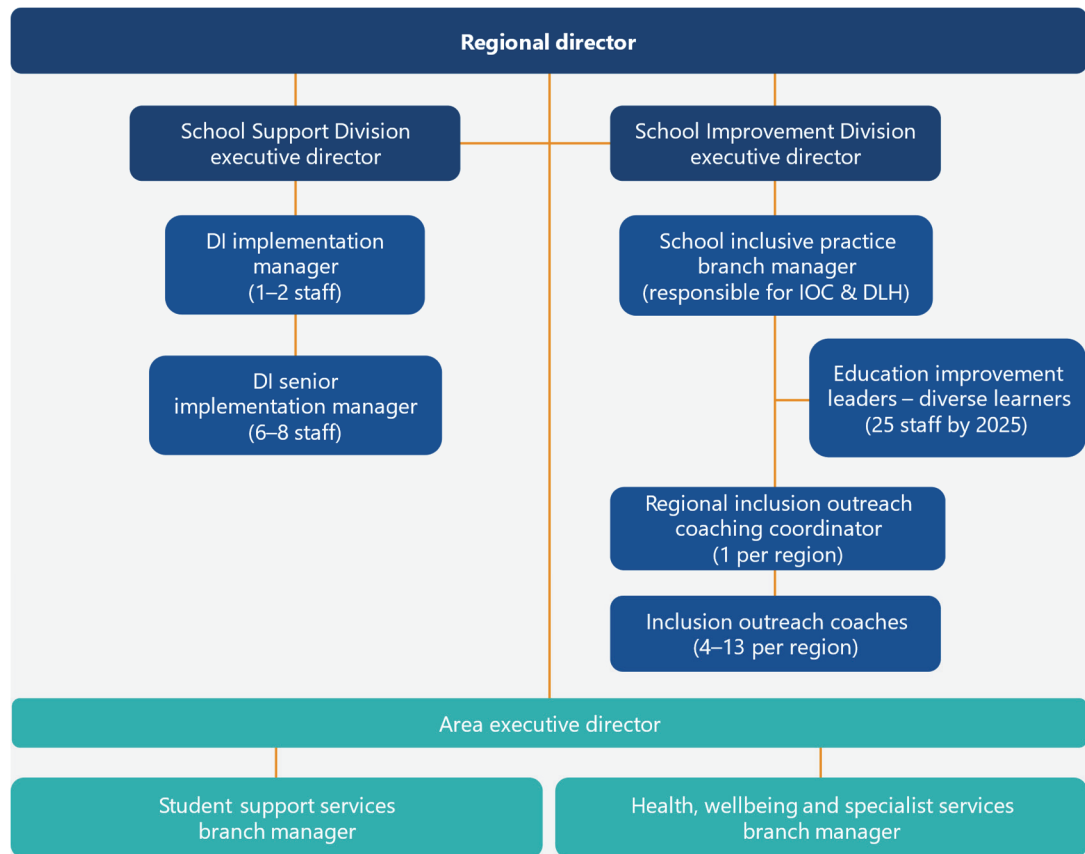
Regions, areas and RITs working together

Figure 4 shows how RITs and other DI implementation staff work within regions and areas. Of the 3 divisions in each region, 2 in particular work with DI implementation:

- School Support (including the RIT)
- School Improvement (responsible for DI system capability initiatives).

In addition, each of the region's areas has a Health, Wellbeing and Specialist Services Branch, which reports to the area executive director and plays a lead role in area-level implementation of DI.

Figure 4: The relationship between DI implementation staff, regions and areas



Source: VAGO.

What we examined and how we refer to the areas

In this audit we have examined the 3 areas that began DI in Year 1.

We have de-identified the areas and their corresponding region, and refer to them as regions A, B and C in this report.

2. Implementing DI in schools

The department's implementation model supports schools to identify, assess and implement reasonable adjustments for students with disability. However, there is variation in each region's implementation approach, which means that some are more successful than others in rolling out all elements of DI.

Context

The department's approach and expectations

Dedicated RITs The department expects that the dedicated RITs will engage deeply with their area teams. The area teams help local networks and provide direct support and expertise to schools.

The RITs also visit schools, provide advice to school leaders and help train educational workforces.

Supporting an integrated approach To support an integrated approach, the department also expects RITs to advise other regional workforces on implementation. The department gives autonomy to regions and areas to manage the coordination of DI workforces with other regional workforces, due to the unique circumstances of schools and students in each region and area.

Developing and maintaining a DI communications strategy The department has a communications strategy for DI and implements this by issuing 6-monthly communication action plans.

The core of the strategy is 'sequenced engagement', which ensures regional and area staff understand DI prior to communicating to school leaders, then school staff, then the wider school community. This means each group can learn about DI from a close source. For example, a teacher's questions on DI may be better answered by an informed assistant principal than by the RIT team itself.

The department also expects each region to have its own communication plan to ensure staff in the region, area and schools understand DI. We discuss this later in this section.

How regional and area workforces are implementing the DI program

Coordinating all parts of the DI program Effective implementation means that region and area workforces combine DI capability initiatives with the tiered funding and support model. This provides the best opportunity for DI to provide inclusive education for all students with disability.

The RITs are most effective when regional leadership sets clear expectations and accountability for:

- collaboration between regional workforces across divisions
- each area's engagement with its RIT
- monitoring to understand and improve implementation at region, area and school level.

Need for coordination and co-leadership within regions

To integrate the capability initiatives with the tiered model of funding and support, it is essential that regions, areas, teams and leaders coordinate their implementation work. If these groups do not effectively coordinate their work, schools may not have the opportunity to take advantage of the full breadth of the DI reform and students with disability may not receive inclusive education.

Effective coordination involves co-leadership between the School Improvement and School Support directors. A key element of this is having a clear, detailed implementation plan that:

- is aligned to all objectives of the DI reform
- sets out responsibilities for each program.

Findings

Regional variations in how DI is being implemented

Some regions achieving better results

There are variations in the way the 3 audited regions are implementing DI. This is not necessarily a problem – regions have autonomy to meet the unique needs of their schools and students. However, we observed that some practices and procedures were more successful than others:

Example of the department's practice	Impact	Regions this applies to
Providing clear direction and support for RITs through detailed implementation plans and operating mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brought together all aspects of DI reform.• Schools strongly engaged with DI implementation supports, such as professional learning and seminars.	A and C.
Not providing sufficient direction or support for its RIT (first half of 2022).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools engaged less with DI implementation supports than in the other 2 regions.	B.
Taking a more coordinated approach to DI implementation (late 2022), including creating a dedicated AIT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved attendance at professional seminars.• Survey results showing principals understand DI.• Increase in the completion of DI profiles.	B.

Impact of COVID-19 shutdowns

In all 3 regions, COVID-19 school shutdowns in late 2021 delayed aspects of the early DI implementation. Schools in Region B were consistently the worst affected, which may have been a factor in the low school engagement early in the rollout.

Communicating the DI reforms to schools

The department communicates directly to schools on a range of education policies and programs, including DI. It does this through its Policy and Advisory Library web pages and through professional learning for teachers and school leaders.

However, it is the RITs and AITs who shape how well a school understands the DI reforms and how it responds, due to their direct contact with school leaders. To help realise the benefits of DI for students, it is critical that these regional teams help their schools see DI as a cultural and system shift through comprehensive and strategic communication plans.

Some regions' communication practices more effective

The implementation teams in regions A, B and C all approach communication differently, with varying degrees of success. Schools benefited where their RIT and AIT had put formal plans and processes in place:

In ...	The RITs and AITs ...	Meaning they ...
Region A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a well-developed and strategic communication plan extensively monitor schools' engagement with DI communications, giving them a full understanding of schools' engagement 	can respond to schools' DI information needs precisely and proactively.
Region B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have not developed their own communication plan but use existing informal networks to promote DI have not established clear mechanisms for schools to share knowledge and learnings with each other on DI programs 	cannot be sure that schools have easy access to the best information on DI.
Region C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have customised communication to school needs through tailored presentations have offered simple pathways for schools to obtain and use information about DI 	are able to promote sharing of information and success stories between schools.

Mechanisms for collaboration are key

The area teams in each region are the schools' primary contact for implementing education reforms, including DI.

To give schools easy access to the expertise and support they need, it is essential that each region has mechanisms to promote close collaboration between its RIT and the area teams.

In ...	They ...	Meaning ...
Region A	<p>use an implementation model that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> integrates region and area workforces provides schools a single, dedicated pathway to access support for DI. This means that when schools contact the region about DI, it triggers a data collection and consultation process that involves the region's School Improvement and School Support branches, and the relevant area team 	<p>the region offers timely DI support to schools when they need it on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capability initiatives tier 2 and 3 support.
Region B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not have a single, dedicated pathway for schools to access DI support (Note: In late 2022 Region B established a specific DI AIT to address an acknowledged lack of collaboration with the regional team) initially over-relied on pre-existing connections between schools and area teams to promote DI programs 	schools in this region may not have been clear on supports for them to implement DI.

In ...	They ...	Meaning ...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did not have their regional and area teams working together to develop an implementation strategy for the IOC and DLH programs did not have a clear implementation plan to support schools to apply the tiered model 	schools may have missed opportunities to take part.
Region C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> have strong collaboration between regional and area teams provide schools with a single, dedicated pathway have embedded DI system capability initiatives as part of the department's broader school reform program 	although there is not a specific collaboration platform for DI as in Region A, it does leverage existing programs to assist the new DI programs.

Regional variations in monitoring of schools' uptake and progress

Need for insight into schools' experience To ensure the program is working as intended, it is essential that RITs and area teams know:

- how schools are implementing DI
- whether it is improving their capability in inclusive practices.

Variations in regional monitoring

Each region has different monitoring arrangements to track the progress of DI. Again, this highlighted successful approaches and opportunities for the department to share and for regions to adopt those practices.

In ...	They ...	Meaning ...
Region A	have robust data monitoring with a detailed dashboard to give insights into schools' implementation of DI	they have the data to provide targeted support so that schools apply the tiered model as intended.
Region B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do have data monitoring that tracks overall take up of DI, and one-on-one relationships with schools in which they discuss DI issues do not have clear mechanisms for school by school monitoring 	they do not have a strong evidence-base and strategic understanding of necessary supports.
Region C	conduct data analysis on schools' implementation of DI, and cross reference with AITs' school knowledge	they have data and the knowledge of area workforces to inform targeted support to schools on how to apply the tiered model.

We look at Region A's approach and experience further in the example below.

**Good practice
example:
Region A**

Region A's robust approach makes it more likely that schools will deliver on the intended benefits of the DI program.

Case study: In Region A, both regional and area staff have access to a rich set of output and outcomes data. They are using this to guide how schools implement the DI program.

Of the 3 regions we audited, only Region A has set clear KPIs and outcomes for its implementation of DI.

Tracking DI inputs and outputs

A key element of Region A's data monitoring is a dashboard that tracks how every school is implementing DI. This dashboard tracks input and output measures such as:

- staff completing professional learning
- applications for Tier 3 (individual student) funding (dashboard tracks DI profile completions)
- requests for service
- engagement with IOC
- engagement with the DLH.

Where a school has engaged with IOC or the DLH, the dashboard also tracks outcome measures such as changes in the school's *Student Attitude to School Survey* results for 'respect for diversity' and 'differentiated learning challenge', and whether there is an inclusion goal in the school's annual implementation plan.

Assessing risks to implementation, school by school

Using these inputs and outputs, the dashboard calculates a risk rating for each school's DI implementation.

In its regular meeting with area staff, Region A's RIT presents this data to them. They then discuss and agree on any interventions needed for high-risk schools.

Source: VAGO, based on information supplied by the department.



Source: Stock image.

How schools are using DI for their students

Early signs of variations between schools

DI is still being rolled out and the department understands that schools will differ in how they develop their inclusive education capacity and capability.

Nonetheless, early data from the first year of DI suggests that schools in different regions have had differing experiences of implementation, and that students in some regions may have had greater access to its benefits so far.

Notably, schools in Region A appear to have the most successful rollout so far, in both DI profile completion rates and system capability initiative take-up. This corresponds with our finding that Region A has the most extensive support for DI implementation.

Schools' progress in completing DI profiles

The department does model how schools should use DI profiles to understand demand. However, it does not have yearly school or area targets for DI profile completions.

Schools with students who already have individual funding under the PSD model have 3 years to complete a DI profile for each student, though the department can extend this term.

As shown in Figure 5, Region A schools have made the most progress in transitioning to the DI funding model. We attribute this to effective practices from RITs and AITs in supporting schools to apply DI.

Figure 5: DI profile requests and completions by region at December 2022

Region	Students who need extensive adjustments	DI profiles completed	% of impacted students	DI profiles requested	% of impacted students
A	1,130	286	25.3%	682	60.4%
B	2,645	435	16.4%	930	35.2%
C	1,076	160	14.9%	307	28.5%
Total	4,851	881	18.2%	1,919	39.6%

Source: The department and NCCD.

Not every student who needs extensive adjustments will necessarily need a DI profile, and there may not be an exact match between these 2 groups of students. However, schools we spoke to were clear that the students they have classed as needing extensive adjustments will also be among those considered for a DI profile.

For the first year of rollout in each area, we accept that the department considers the number of schools having undertaken a DI profile an important measure of progress. That is, even if many schools have completed only one DI profile, this shows that they are taking up DI. On this metric, 91 per cent of schools in Region B have completed a DI profile, compared to 92 per cent of Region A schools and 62 per cent of Region C schools. The rollout area for Region C includes many small, rural schools that may not have any students who need a DI profile.

However, the objective of DI is to ensure that all students with disability and diverse learning needs receive assistance to achieve their education goals. This means it is reasonable to also understand DI progress through the proportion of students receiving a DI profile that currently receive extensive adjustments as recorded in NCCD.

Schools' plans for using Tier 2 funding

As of April 2022, 88 per cent of all schools had planned how they will use their Tier 2 funding. Of the intended uses, 40 per cent were for education workforces and/or assigning existing staff to inclusive education duties. Of this:

- 34 per cent went to education support staff
- 31 per cent to a DI coordinator or inclusion leader.

This is consistent with the department's intended usage of Tier 2 funding.

Tier 2 funding in practice: positives and limitations

Schools told us they used the funding to expand their inclusive capabilities for all students. For example, one school used it to help pay for a literacy support team and to upgrade its playground so a student of short stature could access it. Other schools have used it to pay for an English learning specialist or for programs in social skills or emotion regulation.

However, several schools told us that while their Tier 2 funding had helped them to hire a DI coordinator, that worker spent most of their time planning DI profile meetings. Due to the heavy workload caused by these meetings, the coordinator did not have time to devote to enacting inclusive practices for the whole school.

Due to the small sample of schools we spoke to, we cannot be sure this is a widespread occurrence. However, it is important that the department helps schools in these circumstances to refine their use of Tier 2 funding once the school embeds the DI profile process.

System capability initiatives in practice

Although schools started implementing DI in 2021, the DI system capability initiatives did not start until midway through 2022. This was partly due to relevant staff being needed for other department initiatives.

As a result, schools and students have not yet fully felt the impact of these initiatives. However, schools that have engaged with the IOC and DLH initiatives have given positive feedback about the impact on their inclusive education capability.

As of October 2022, schools in Region A have by far the highest use of the IOC programs:

Schools in ...	Have used the IOC program for ...
Region A	22 engagements.
Region B	8 engagements.
Region C	13 engagements.

Region A is also the only region in which most engagements with the IOC program occurred outside the Year 1 rollout area. This indicates strong engagement and communication across the region, not just in the initial implementation area.

Need to fully integrate system capability initiatives

Region A’s relative success in implementing DI capability initiatives across the region is due to the way it has closely integrated them with the rest of the DI reform, primarily through communication between the School Support and School Improvement teams, and by providing a single dedicated pathway for DI information and help for schools. Region A also proactively identifies schools that may benefit from the capability initiatives.

If system capability initiatives are not fully integrated as a key part of DI reform, they risk being neglected. Schools may view DI as simply a change to the PSD funding model and not a reform designed to uplift the capability of every school in educating students with disability and diverse learning needs.

3.

Monitoring and oversight by the department

The department's monitoring and oversight of DI is timely, and it is identifying and addressing issues in order to improve DI rollout.

However, the department can do more to ensure its regions and areas adopt the most efficient and effective implementation practices. It also needs to closely monitor the regional rollout so it can address any barriers or delays to implementation.

The department's governance and oversight of the DI program

Governance groups oversee the DI program

The department's governance groups oversee and monitor the implementation of DI at a:

- central level
- regional level
- area level.

This structure means that significant issues arising on the ground with the DI implementation are identified and escalated appropriately, from regional to central working and governance groups.

Central governance: the IEPCB

Centrally, the department's Inclusive Education Project Control Board (IEPCB) works to:

- monitor progress
- resolve major issues
- make critical decisions on the implementation of DI.

The IEPCB reports to the department's executive board.

Central operations: the DIIWG

The IEPCB is supported by the Disability Inclusion Implementation Working Group (DIIWG), which focuses on operations. This working group informs and tests implementation through cross-departmental collaboration and planning.

Sources and timeliness of the department's data and information

The department's IED and governance groups use data from a range of sources to understand DI implementation and identify issues. These sources are:

- the RITs
- area and regional governance groups
- the department's own evaluation and monitoring activities.

The department and its governance groups receive this data in a regular and timely manner.

Effectiveness of the department's response to data

Using the data they receive, the IED and governance groups appropriately identify and respond to issues in order to improve the rollout of DI.

For example, the department has addressed issues about:

- roles and responsibilities for IOC
- coordination of work between the Inclusive Education and Performance divisions
- progress and support for teaching staff to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Education and the Master in Inclusive Education courses.

Case study: Addressing a significant 'on the ground' issue

This case study is an example of the department's governance and monitoring arrangements identifying and addressing a significant 'on the ground' issue:

Case study: The department identified that specialist schools were struggling with the workload required to transition all their students to the new DI program.

A related issue was the time it was taking schools to prepare evidence and complete DI profiles.

The DIIWG considered these issues and proposed solutions to the IEPCB, which then approved adjustments to the DI implementation.

Adjustments made to address issues

Adjustments made during the rollout included the:

- IED revising the supporting information guidance so that schools could better understand the most effective evidence for a DI profile meeting
- department extending the transition period for specialist schools to move from PSD to DI to more than 3 years, if needed
- department putting transitional funding arrangements in place to support schools moving from PSD to the DI tiered funding and support model.

Schools' response to these adjustments

Schools we spoke to agreed that having greater clarity about evidence for DI profiles contributed to less time spent preparing for and attending DI profile meetings.

The department also monitored this and found there was a reduction in meeting duration times in all rollout areas.

Impact of funding adjustments

Specialist schools are funded in a way that recognises the whole student cohort will generally receive substantial or extensive adjustments. However, the more individualised results of the DI profile may mean that some students receive slightly less than they did with the PSD model. The transitional funding smooths the difference between DI and PSD, giving schools greater certainty about their funding as they plan to transfer students from the old program to the new.

This funding model also allows specialist schools to adjust their transition period so they can manage demand for DI profiles according to their resources.

The department's oversight and support in regional implementation

Risks caused by regional variations	<p>A 2021 external evaluation report commissioned by the department identified regional variation as a potential risk for the DI implementation.</p> <p>We found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• there are variations in the regions' implementation approaches• a lack of strong collaboration and coordination within and between the DI and other regional School Support and School Improvement workforces may hinder implementation progress. <p>To address this, the department has a role to play in identifying and managing barriers to effective DI implementation in regions and schools.</p> <hr/>
Emerging challenge identified by the DIIWG	<p>In late 2022, the DIIWG identified that achieving a consistent and strategic statewide approach was an emerging implementation challenge.</p> <p>The working group noted that regional autonomy in the set-up and operations of the RITs led to varied practices. It identified a need for the department to continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promoting best-practice approaches across the regions• pursuing agreement from the regions to take consistent approaches to key activities, such as promoting professional learning in DI. <hr/>
How the department works with the RITs	<p>The department works closely with the RITs to discuss and improve implementation. It does this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regular meetings and planning days with RIT managers• statewide RIT meetings. <p>The department also shares better-practice implementation tools, templates and data monitoring practices with the regions, although these are not mandatory.</p> <hr/>
Department initiatives to improve regional insight on progress	<p>In response to the 2021 external evaluation report, the department has begun work to help the region and area teams better understand their DI progress. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• improving implementation and outcome indicators• sharing evaluation findings across the state• developing a DI outputs dashboard• developing a dashboard to give insights on students with disability• developing and sharing case studies of effective DI implementation in schools (work in progress). <hr/>
Department's role in directing better practice regional implementation	<p>The department is working with the regions and areas to improve the rollout of DI. Drawing on its governance, monitoring and reporting, it is sharing good practices with the regions so they can better implement the program.</p> <p>The department does not direct the regions or areas on how they should implement DI. Its Learning Places model gives regions the autonomy, within some constraints, to implement DI according to their own contexts and ways of working.</p> <p>However, the department could play a stronger role in ensuring that regional and area implementation plans contain better-practice approaches to collaboration and monitoring. This would mean that the department identifies those regional practices that lead to schools</p>

implementing DI as the department intended and ensures that these practices are adopted consistently. This would mean that more schools adopt all elements of DI more quickly and are better able to make reasonable adjustments for all their students with disability and diverse learning needs.

Sharing the benefits of coordination

As discussed in Section 2 of this report, we found that where a region focused on close coordination between DI teams and local workforces and a strategic understanding of schools' practices and progress, its implementation of DI was more effective. That is, schools in these regions were more likely to:

- receive timely support and expertise from DI implementation teams
- understand how each element of DI works together to effectively assist students with disability and diverse learning needs – for example, how IOC, the DLH and the tiered funding and support model are related and applied.

The department does share examples and details of successful approaches like this to strengthen the DI program. But it can do more by ensuring that regions and areas adopt effective approaches so that it delivers the intended benefits to students, their families and to schools.

The department's role in identifying and mitigating risks

Department's evaluation of DI

The department has contracted external providers to evaluate DI, covering the implementation period between June 2021 and December 2024.

The department's evaluation framework for this is underpinned by a clear program logic and theory of change. Its objectives are to:

- support successful implementation and continuous improvement
- monitor and assess issues and risks for mitigation and management.

For each year of the evaluation, the department will receive an annual report, as well as reports on progress, participation and issues. It will receive a final evaluation report at the end of the three-and-a-half-year implementation period. The evaluation will shift progressively from focusing on progress in implementation to progress on achieving outcomes.

This means the department receives timely information about DI's implementation progress and early indicators that DI is achieving its outcomes.

The first annual report, based on 2021 data, found that system-level implementation was on track.

Department's action plan

In response to the first year (2021) evaluation report, the department developed an action plan. The department is taking the following actions:

- improving its understanding of workforce challenges
 - revising and updating its resources and guidance for schools
 - identifying and disseminating good practices in schools, regions and areas
 - improving the collection of student, family, teacher and school staff perspectives on DI.
-

Evaluation of the DLH and IOC initiatives

The department has also contracted external providers to evaluate the 2 key DI initiatives – the DLH and IOC.

This evaluation began in November 2022 and will run for 3 years.

Statewide data collected for internal reporting

The department, including the IEPCB, collects data from a variety of sources and receives updates on planning, monitoring and reporting of each element of DI. This is in addition to information given by the three-and-a-half-year evaluation.

The ...	Monitors/collects data on ...
IEPCB	implementation across 12 different workstreams on a monthly basis, including DI profile facilitators, the IOC and DLH initiatives and workforce capability, from monthly dashboards
department	DI profiles, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demand • duration of profile meetings • outcomes • expenditure financial reporting systems school planning data its workforce, including recruitment and participation in professional development NCCD insights into schools' provision of adjustments for students with disability and diverse learning needs.

Regional data used to monitor implementation

Each term, RITs give the department data on how their implementation is progressing. These reports include data for staff and schools on:

- training and engagement
- challenges and positive feedback
- professional development schedule
- recruitment and locally developed resources.

Having this information gives the department insight into each region's progress and helps them identify local implementation issues.

Using data to identify and respond to issues

The DIIWG regularly monitors reports and evaluation findings and is responding to issues as they arise in implementation. These issues include:

- principal support
- workforce capacity
- supporting schools' use of Tier 2 funding as intended
- professional learning
- performance data sharing.

However, the department also needs to consider implementation progress by region and area. The IEPCB meets monthly to consider implementation progress according to DI's different workstreams, such as the DI profile tool and process, the DLH and other elements of DI. It was not until late 2022 that the IEPCB explicitly examined progress by region and area.

When it did this, the IEPCB was able to identify that one of the emerging challenges for RITs was a consistent and statewide approach. It discussed how RITs can continue to share successful and best-practice approaches.

However, the department can do more to identify and respond to challenges arising from local approaches to implementation that may impede progress.

Improving the quality of data on student outcomes and inclusive education practices

Department's 5-year strategy to improve quality of student outcome data

The department has a 6-year strategy (2020–25) to improve the quality of its data on students with disability and diverse learning needs.

This strategy identified ...	In response, the department ...	This means ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some weaknesses in the department's data collection 	has adopted the NCCD as the primary identifier for students with disability across most of its administrative data collections	The department can identify outcomes for students with disability who receive adjustments at school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions for improving data quality 	<p>is working with schools so that they understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the purpose of the NCCD how the department uses this data how to enter good-quality data <p>is reducing barriers to data collection and sharing</p>	Previously, outcomes data was only identifiable for the subset of students with disability who received support through PSD.

Accessible version of Student Attitudes to School Survey

As part of improving the quality of data, the department has also implemented an accessible version of the *Student Attitudes to School Survey* for all school settings. The accessible version is based on universal design principles, can be used across all year levels and has a reduced number of survey items.

This will significantly improve the representation of students with disability in the survey respondents, particularly the nearly 14,000 students in specialist schools who were not previously represented.

The department has integrated data and analysis of students with disability into its Panorama reports, its main system for understanding school performance and student outcomes.

Understanding changes in school inclusive education practice

The department and its external evaluators found that measuring change in schools' inclusive education practices will require focused effort. Its current datasets help it report student outcomes but are less effective in identifying practice change.

This means that schools hold evidence of practice change in different formats. For example, a student's individual education plan describes the adjustments their teachers make so that the student can achieve their education goals. This document is held by the school but its contents are not recorded in the department's central reporting systems for school planning, funding and student engagement and achievement.

The department's DI evaluation framework identifies the following key sources of information about improvements in inclusive education practices:

- school case studies
- surveys and consultations with school staff, students and families.

The department is working with its evaluators to identify which elements of its current datasets may be reliable indicators of change in schools' inclusive practice and culture.

Appendices

[Appendix A: Submissions and comments](#)

[Appendix B: Abbreviations and glossary](#)

[Appendix C: Audit scope and method](#)

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with the department, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Responses received

Agency	Page
Department of Education	A-2



Department of Education

Secretary

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone +61 3 9637 2000

BRI23121379

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Dear Mr Greaves

Proposed report: Supporting Students with Disability performance audit

Thank you for your letter of 24 May 2023 and the opportunity to comment on the proposed report for this audit. The department is committed to making inclusive education a part of everyday practice in all schools and classrooms, and to improving the achievement, participation and wellbeing outcomes for students with disability.

The department appreciates the collaboration from your team throughout the audit. The proposed report's findings and conclusions reflect positively on the department's implementation approach and progress to date, while highlighting opportunities for refinement to implementation settings to ensure schools implement Disability Inclusion as intended.

The department has reviewed the proposed report and has attached an action plan to address the recommendations in the report. Should you wish to discuss the department's response, please contact Shamiso Mtenje, Acting Executive Director, Integrity, Assurance and Executive Services Division on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely



Jenny Atta
Secretary
06/06/2023

Encl.: DE's action plan

Your details will be dealt with in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. Should you have any queries or wish to gain access to your personal information held by this department please contact our Privacy Officer at the above address



DE action plan: Supporting Students with Disability

#	Recommendations: That DE:	Response	#	The Department will:	By the end of (MM/YY):
1	<p>Ensure that current and future regional and area implementation plans contain effective practices, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • close coordination between DI implementation teams and School Improvement and School Support workforces so that the links between tiered funding and support models, and the system capability initiatives, are embedded in early implementation • data monitoring that shows how each school is progressing in each element of DI so that regions and areas can make strategic decisions at the local level • a single and organised pathway for schools to access DI expertise in their region, so that they receive timely support to help them implement all elements of DI 	Accept	1.1	<p>Introduce new processes requiring regional implementation plans that include annual area-based priorities.</p> <p>Plans should include effective implementation practices identified state-wide and consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embedding Disability Inclusion (DI) across regional and area workforces • using data monitoring to inform implementation and strategic decision making • school engagement processes, including the pathway for schools to access DI expertise in their region. 	December 2023
			1.2	Develop and submit annual regional implementation plans during the staged rollout of DI, for consideration by the Disability Inclusion Implementation Working Group (DIIWG).	April 2024
2	<p>Proactively work with regions and areas to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify barriers to implementation at the local level • adopt better practices to address those barriers, such as close regional coordination or improved data monitoring • ensure that DI rollout remains timely, so that schools make consistent progress in taking up all elements of DI. 	Accept	2.1	Proactively work with regions and areas to maintain oversight of the progress of DI rollout through data collection and monitoring of implementation.	Current and ongoing during the rollout
			2.2	Undertake a review of DIIWG and Project Control Board Terms of Reference, including membership, to ensure appropriate regional and area representation to oversee and inform the rollout of DI.	October 2023
			2.3	Introduce new monitoring processes requiring regional governance bodies to develop quarterly dashboard reports to provide updates on implementation barriers and practices to address barriers.	December 2023
			2.4	Submit bi-annual dashboard reports to the PCB.	April 2024

Appendix B:

Abbreviations and glossary

Abbreviations We use the following abbreviations in this report:

Abbreviations

AIT	area implementation team
the department	Department of Education
DLH	Diverse Learners Hub
DI	Disability Inclusion
DIIWG	Disability Inclusion Implementation Working Group
IED	Inclusive Education Division
IEPCB	Inclusive Education Project Control Board
IOC	Inclusion Outreach Coaching
NCCD	Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability
PSD	Program for Students with Disabilities
RIT	regional implementation team
VAGO	Victorian Auditor-General's Office

Glossary This glossary includes an explanation of the types of engagements we perform:

Term

Reasonable assurance	We achieve reasonable assurance by obtaining and verifying direct evidence from a variety of internal and external sources about an agency's performance. This enables us to express an opinion or draw a conclusion against an audit objective with a high level of assurance. We call these audit engagements. See our assurance services fact sheet for more information.
Limited assurance	We obtain less assurance when we rely primarily on an agency's representations and other evidence generated by that agency. However, we aim to have enough confidence in our conclusion for it to be meaningful. We call these types of engagements assurance reviews and typically express our opinions in negative terms. For example, that nothing has come to our attention to indicate there is a problem. See our assurance services fact sheet for more information.

Appendix C:

Audit scope and method

Scope of this audit

Who we examined

We examined the Department of Education.

Our audit objective

To determine whether the department's DI program is set up to provide reasonable adjustments that allow students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.

What we examined

This audit examined the department's implementation model for DI and its Year 1 rollout in 3 areas in 3 regions. These are:

- the Barwon area in the South Western Victoria Region
- the Bayside Peninsula area in the South Eastern Victoria Region
- the Loddon Campaspe area in the North Western Victoria Region.

Conducting this audit

Assessing performance

To form our conclusion against our objective we used the following lines of inquiry and associated evaluation criteria:

Line of inquiry		Criteria	
1.	The department's DI implementation model supports schools to identify, assess and implement reasonable adjustments for students with disability.	1.1	The department and its regional and AIT work so that schools understand and apply the DI system capability initiatives.
		1.2	The department and its regional and AIT support schools to apply the tiered DI model as intended.
2.	The department monitors implementation and addresses issues in a timely and effective manner and leads to continuous improvement.	2.1	The department identifies and addresses barriers to effectively implement DI in regions and schools.
		2.2	The department's monitoring and evaluation progress towards outcomes is timely, effective and leads to continuous improvement.

Our methods

As part of the audit we:

- created a case study framework to understand implementation in 3 regions
- conducted interviews with:
 - 11 schools
 - RITs
 - regional and area leadership teams
- assessed evidence provided by the department, including:
 - meeting packs from its central governance and advisory groups, and regional and AIT
 - policy and guidance on all aspects of DI
 - internal data on the funding and support model
- created a framework to assess the department's evaluation approach.

We did not examine DI outcomes for students with disability as part of this audit.

Case studies

We examined DI rollout in the 3 areas the department selected for Year 1 rollout. This means that we had full coverage of the regions and areas implementing the funding and support model in 2021.

For each of these areas, we looked at how they implemented DI in the context of the department's Learning Places model. We considered evidence of their planning, implementation and monitoring at the local level.

We also examined how these regions implemented the system capability initiatives. These initiatives were available statewide but we focused on those areas implementing both the initiatives and the funding and support model at the same time. We looked at evidence about how regions and areas worked with IOC and DLH staff to implement the initiatives, and how these staff engaged with schools.

Our findings from each case study helped us understand the effectiveness of the department's implementation approach and its role as a system manager.

Compliance

We conducted our audit in accordance with the *Audit Act 1994* and ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements* to obtain reasonable assurance to provide a basis for our conclusion.

We complied with the independence and other relevant ethical requirements related to assurance engagements.

We also provided a copy of the report to the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Cost and time

The full cost of the audit and preparation of this report was \$515,000.

The duration of the audit was 9 months from initiation to tabling.

Auditor-General's reports tabled during 2022–23

Report title	Tabled
<i>Results of 2021 Audits: Technical and Further Education Institutes</i> (2022–23: 1)	July 2022
<i>Results of 2021 Audits: Universities</i> (2022–23: 2)	July 2022
<i>Follow-up of Protecting Victoria's Coastal Assets</i> (2022–23: 3)	August 2022
<i>The Effectiveness of Victoria Police's Staff Allocation</i> (2022–23: 4)	September 2022
<i>Quality of Major Transport Infrastructure Project Business Cases</i> (2022–23: 5)	September 2022
<i>Major Projects Performance Reporting 2022</i> (2022–23: 6)	September 2022
<i>Quality of Child Protection Data</i> (2022–23: 7)	September 2022
<i>Follow-up of Maintaining the Mental Health of Child Protection Practitioners</i> (2022–23: 8)	September 2022
<i>Regulating Victoria's Native Forests</i> (2022–23: 9)	October 2022
<i>Victoria's Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Data</i> (2022–23: 10)	October 2022
<i>Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria: 2021–22</i> (2022–23: 11)	October 2022
<i>Regulating Private Pool and Spa Safety</i> (2022–23: 12)	February 2023
<i>Results of 2021–22 Audits: Local Government</i> (2022–23: 13)	February 2023
<i>Maintaining Railway Assets Across Metropolitan Melbourne</i> (2022–23: 14)	March 2023
<i>Fair Presentation of Service Delivery Performance 2022</i> (2022–23: 15)	March 2023
<i>Understanding Victoria's Contaminated Land</i> (2022–23: 16)	March 2023
<i>Supporting Sexual and Reproductive Health</i> (2022–23: 17)	May 2023
<i>Regulating Food Safety</i> (2022–23: 18)	June 2023
<i>Collecting State-based Tax Revenue</i> (2022–23: 19)	June 2023
<i>Supporting Students with Disability</i> (2022–23: 20)	June 2023

All reports are available for download in PDF and HTML format on our website at <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au>

Our role and contact details

The Auditor-General's role

For information about the Auditor-General's role and VAGO's work, please see our online fact sheet [About VAGO](#).

Our assurance services

Our online fact sheet [Our assurance services](#) details the nature and levels of assurance that we provide to Parliament and public sector agencies through our work program.

Contact details

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