

COVID-19 information page from People with Disabilities Australia.

People with disability face unique challenges during this epidemic. People with Disabilities Australia is updating their website regularly to collate information and resources as well as updates on their work advocating for the needs and rights of people with disability at all levels throughout the crisis. <https://pwd.org.au/covid-19-hub/>

The **Victorian Government** is providing emergency relief packages to people who are self-isolating and do not have support networks that can provide food and essential supplies. People can access the packages by contacting the Victoria Coronavirus Hotline: 1800 675 398 or visit: dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus.

Carer Gateway Goes Live

The new Integrated Carer Support System (ICSS), called the Carer Gateway, goes live this week. Carers can call **1800 422 737** to access a wide range of help – from counselling and peer support groups to respite care, home help and equipment. For more information visit the Carer Gateway website [here](#).

Priority home delivery shopping

NDIS is supporting participants by arranging with supermarkets to prioritise access to home delivery services. This means, as an NDIS participant, from this week, you can purchase grocery items online to be delivered to your home and receive priority delivery service. For further information go to: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/coronavirus/priority-home-delivery-services>.

Access to community hour shopping for people with disability, carers, friends and neighbours

Community Hour is now open to carers, friends and neighbours of vulnerable customers 7am-8am every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Carers, friends and neighbours simply need to present the eligible customer's government-issued Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Companion Card, Seniors Card, Disability Card, Health Care Card or proof of age when entering the store. This information is current as of today, please check out your supermarket's website for any further updates.

Looking after your mental health during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increase in financial stress, anxiety and social isolation and pressure on relationships. As a result, there is more than ever the need for increased mental health support. In response Beyond Blue has put together some tips to help you manage your mental health in the current context. This includes simple tips from the mental health experts at Beyond Blue to help you cope with any anxiety, distress or concern related to the coronavirus. Click on link for further information on Beyond Blue website. [View Beyond Blue Mental Health tips...](#) Disability Services Consulting has also put together some resources that might be helpful to manage stress and anxiety during this time - <https://teamdsc.com.au/resources/stress-anxiety-management-covid-19>

Home entertainment ideas

Virtual gallery and museum tours: While we can't visit galleries, many galleries are now coming to us through virtual tours. There are several galleries and museums with online exhibitions, including the following: <https://museums victoria.com.au/melbournemuseum/at-home/> <https://artsandculture.withgoogle.com/naturalhistorymuseum/> <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/guggenheimbilbaolive>

Visit the zoo: Zoos Victoria is currently live-streaming from some of the most popular enclosures at Melbourne Zoo and Werribee Open Range Zoo. See what the snow leopards, penguins, giraffes and lions are up to. <https://www.zoo.org.au/animal-house/>

Online gigs and concerts: Bands, artists and orchestras are taking live shows online so audiences don't have to miss out. The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (MSO), for example, is live-streaming shows over the coming weeks. <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheMSOrchestra>

Postponed Consultation and Programs

The **Accessible Parking Permit (APP) Scheme** and **APP Online Service** given the current situation with the Coronavirus had been planning to commence a three-month pilot in May this year, however that has now been postponed. Given the current workload of medical professionals and the social isolation measures in place in Victoria it is not an appropriate time to be launching this new service.

VicRoads will be monitoring the Coronavirus situation closely to determine when it will be appropriate and safe to launch the pilot. They are committed to launching the new APP Scheme and Online Service and are hopeful this will still be accomplished this year.

Consultation on the new **National Disability Strategy** for beyond 2020 were due to take place in the coming weeks has been postponed. The Steering Group will reassess the opportunity to implement the next phase of consultation in June 2020. A decision will be made then to determine if some or all of the consultations can proceed at that time.

Consultation of the **State Disability Plan** has been postponed. The State Government are looking at other options for engaging with the community, and are still expecting online feedback and submission. <http://www.statedisabilityplan.vic.gov.au/victorian-state-disability-plan-2021-2024-consultation>