

# The Phoenix Project

2021-2022



DISABILITY SPORT  
& RECREATION

(DSR staff celebrating the end of  
the year)

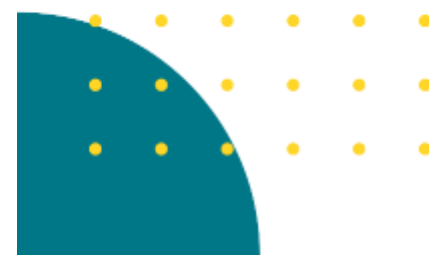
# Acknowledgement of country

Disability Sport & Recreation acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which it resides, the Wurrundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nations. We pay our respect to their elders, past and present, and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

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# Message from the CEO



The Phoenix Project was a wonderful opportunity for Disability Sport & Recreation (DSR) as an organisation to progress towards its vision of greater choice, access and participation in sport and recreation for people with disability.

Importantly, as the name of the project suggested, the project represented somewhat of a re-birth for the organisation as it sought to develop a stronger voice of people with a disability in all of its activities while improving the accessibility of its communications so that all people with disability can feel included.

A new disability advisory community, communication protocols, training products, volunteer frameworks and a clearer pathway to participation are all significant legacies from the project that will provide ongoing impact towards our overall objectives at the conclusion of the project.

**Richard Amon**

**Chief Executive Officer at Disability Sport & Recreation**



(Richard Amon at the Disability Sport and Recreation Awards 2021.)

# Project Objective



The Phoenix Project was funded by a Working For Victoria (WFV) grant from the Victorian Government. The purpose of the project was to help revitalise the disability sport and recreation sector in a 'COVID-normal' world, ensuring people with disability are not left behind and feel confident and safe when they return to sport and active recreation.

## **How we intended to do this:**

**Celebrate:** Create greater awareness of DSR work and our programs through storytelling and disability accessible content

**Educate:** Develop improved resources and methods to enhance knowledge in the sector for employees and volunteers to deliver programs to people with disability

**Collaborate:** Working with partners to form a new Disability sport and recreation alliance as a unified representation of the sector. Building capacity and providing support where possible. Consult and connect with the sector and community





(DSR Staff at the 2021 Disability Sport and Recreation Festival)



(Max Reilly and Cara Thomson at The DSR Kids Summer Camp 2022)

# Outcomes



The Phoenix Project gave DSR the capacity to build on areas such as training, volunteering, communications, programs, inclusion and accessibility. Here are some of the main outcomes of the project:

## Training and volunteering

- Review and elevate the overarching DSR volunteering processes
- Build and grow the capacity of sector staff and volunteers through the development of training products

## Programs

- Grow participation in sport and recreation throughout the sector
- Identify and attract support from new stakeholders and grow DSR partnerships

## Communications

- Ensure consistent content accessibility standards are implemented, promoted and encouraged throughout the sector



## Inclusion and Accessibility

- Formation of Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) comprising of nine people with diverse range of disability, intersections and experiences.
- Creating the foundation for- a Victorian Disability Sport & Recreation Alliance (VDSRA).



(Aki Ngo at the Disability Sport and Recreation Awards.)

(Andrew Walton at the Disability Sport and Recreation Festival 2021)





# Meet the team....

The Phoenix Project was a team of seven, working to help revitalise the disability sport and recreation sector in a ‘COVID-normal’ world. The project aimed to help people with disability felt confident and safe when they returned to sport and active recreation. It also worked to build the organisational capacity of DSR and the sector as a whole to be more inclusive, representative, intersectional and accessible.



Akii Ngo (they/them)  
Project Manager



Max Reilly (he/him)  
Sport and Recreation  
Participation Officer



Jill Young (she/her)  
Training and Volunteers  
Officer



Andrew Walton (he/him)  
Project Coordinator



Cara Thomson (she/her)  
Programs Trainee



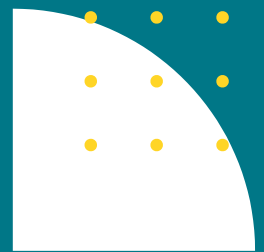
Scot Nicholson (he/him)  
DSR Alliance Officer



Arty Owens (they/them)  
Communications Officer



# Phoenix Project Numbers



**58**

Events and activations. 31 across inclusion week.

**302**

hours of face-to-face planning on programs.

**142**

External staff collaborated with.

**93**

Organisations collaborated with.

**10**

Pending Alliance members

**9**

Disability Advisory Committee members



# Adapting Throughout COVID

As the Project commenced, DSR had to navigate restrictions during COVID-19 lockdown period. Our goals remained the same, however, the team adapted to the needs of the climate. When it wasn't safe to return to sport and recreation, we put things into motion for when restrictions would ease. To build momentum we concentrated on the following pillars: Stakeholder and Partnerships, Commitment to Co-Design, Communications and Accessibility, and Training and Capacity

The project adjusted to the barriers and thrived within the limitations. Out of 188 identified tasks, the team completed 169 in addition to numerous unmeasured efforts into broadly growing and improving DSR.



(DSR staff and placement students at Melbourne University in order left to right: Andrew Walton, Arty Owens, Akii Ngo, Ayden Shaw, Elissa Jess, Kristian Pop Aleksander, Cara Thomson and Max Reilly)

# Disability Advisory Committee

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC), championed by Akii Ngo, is part of DSR's ongoing commitment to have diverse representation from our disability community. This is to make sure DSR's work is **by** people with disability **for** people with disability.



(Members of the DAC are in order left to right: Ash Hem François Jacobs, James Parr, Kate Jennings, Kadek Artayana, Marijo Požega, Melissa Hale, Stevie Russel-Farnham and Zac Chu.)

The DAC includes nine members with diverse range of disability, intersections and experiences. Its role was to provide consultation and feedback on DSR projects, programs, and initiatives. Their expertise and lived experience of disability are invaluable to DSR. The input from the committee will guide the work DSR does, so it stays relevant, accessible, innovative, collaborative and sustainable.

# Programs and Participation

Programs were key to providing the community opportunities to reengage with physical activities. The Phoenix Project produced, in collaboration with other organisations, around 58 events and activations. They also played a key role in the annual Disability Sport and Recreation Festival, Wheelchair Rugby, DSR Kids camp and the Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Awards.

Max Reilly and Cara Thomson worked closely with Ayden Shaw (Manager - Programs and Events) to deliver programs that would encourage the community to engage with disability sport and recreation. Some were focused on giving people with disability the opportunity to try new activities in a safe and fun environment. Others were educational, providing valuable insights on how to be inclusive of people with disability and provide greater access to sport and recreation.



(Max Reilly and Cara Thomson at a come and try day)

## Case Study: Melbourne University

With the University of Melbourne, the Phoenix Project delivered an Activation Day to over 120 post-graduate physiotherapy and sport science students, providing first-hand experiential activities which included wheelchair basketball, blind/low vision cricket and neurodiverse stimulation activities. Participants gained knowledge of the diversity within disability, the importance of accessibility, the disability and sport sector and concepts such as the Social Model of Disability.

From the data captured in the Experiential Learning Evaluation (which a response rate of 40%), the participants' baseline' score of overall understanding increased by 42% from 5.2/10 to 7.4/10 on average



(Two Melbourne University students trying blind and low vision cricket)

## Case Study: Solve Come and Try Day

In partnership with Solve Disability Solutions, DSR delivered three action-packed “Come and Try” days in Geelong, Mornington Peninsula and Ballarat.

Daily, up to 40 people with disability took part in all-inclusive sports. 11 vendors took part, including wheelchair rugby, archery, surfing and more. At the time of their arrival, some people intended to try just one sport and then leave. However, many attendees found themselves embracing the day and the opportunity, staying for the full three hours.

(Max Reilly assisting a child trying out wheelchair sport at Solve Come and Try Day)



# Training

The majority of this work was exploratory, seeking opportunities where DSR could focus its energy in accordance with trends in both disability and the health sector to develop and offer capacity building training opportunities. This research resulted in a series of recommendations for the board and Executive Team to consider, aligning with the initial project brief.

## **Other outcomes included:**

- DSR staff undertaking a Proud To Play training & interaction and a Wear It Purple activation
- Comprehensive audit of DSR website & platforms (including improvement and implementation of greater disability accessible content and inclusive language)
- Accessibility content standards for all DSR platforms
- Lead sector briefing with Vicsport on Phoenix Project Outcomes
- Greater organisational commitment to co-design through continued employment of most members of the Phoenix Project post-WFV funding, and the ongoing contribution of the DAC.
- Development of an online communications accessibility workshop.

The 'Disability 101' workshop was developed, piloted and then refined to better reflect the information required by sporting clubs. DSR's policies were updated to be more representative & accessible



(The opening slide for the Disability 101 Workshop)

Training was created, conducted and adapted to include an awareness of intersectionality. This was done in collaboration with Proud to Play, Box Hill TAFE and Hume City Council. DSR now also has the foundations to provide digital accessibility training to the disability sport and recreation sectors to improve their connection and communication to the disability community.

You can look forward to these new and revitalised training opportunities being delivered more widely to the sector when DSR moves into its new offices mid-2022 which features dedicated training environments.



# Volunteering

Through the Phoenix Protect, DSR has restructured its recruitment and retention process for volunteers. The changes were made to facilitate a more streamlined process, encourage greater representation and ensure the confidence of volunteers.

After a series of meetings with Volunteering Victoria, DSR decided to adopt the WeVolunteer platform to ensure that information provided by volunteers is secure. The Volunteer Victoria Volunteering Management Toolkit and Volunteering Australia's National Standards for Volunteer Involvement provided the basis for what policies and internal documents were required for DSR. Subsequently, Jill Young wrote or updated the following to reflect legislative requirements and organisational needs.



(Jill Young at the 2021 Disability Sport and Recreation Festival)

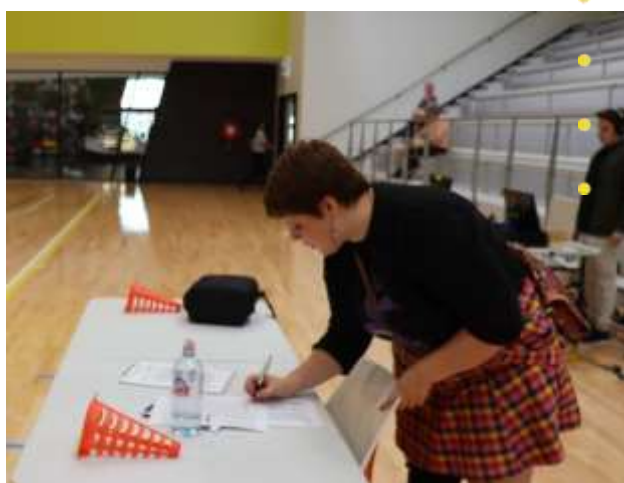
# Communications



The Phoenix Project brought in a focus on storytelling and celebrating our disability sport and recreation community. This included interviews of Paralympians, partners and volunteers written by Arty Owens. The project also included building strategy, stronger community ties and boosting the representation and reputation of DSR. All communications work was informed by the Social Model of Disability and brought in an organization-wide new standard of accessibility to DSR's various communication channels.

## Accessible Communication Training

The Phoenix Project was able to implement change in the way that DSR conducts its communications and marketing. Training developed by Arty Owens and Akii Ngo became the sounding board for DSR to introduce a new standard of digital accessibility.



(Arty Owens at the Wheelchair Rugby National League Melbourne Invitational 2022.)

## Website

In order to meet these new accessibility standards, the DSR website was reviewed and revamped. Recommendations and briefs were then sent to the website developers. DSR now has an accessibility widget on the website and DSR is committed to creating better accessibility.



(A PowerPoint Slide of the internal accessibility training)



# What's Next

The impact of the Phoenix Project on the sport and recreation community is ongoing. Through their involvement in initiatives, programs, relationship building, resources and policy changes. There is no pause button! For example, the Disability Advisory Committee will ensure that DSR is informed and inclusive of People with disability.

There is more to come! Here is what you can look forward to:

## **The Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Alliance**

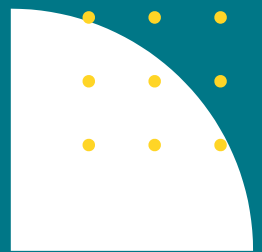
The Victorian Disability Sport and Recreation Alliance (VDSRA) is being developed to be a group of organisations dedicated to creating a more connected and unified disability sport and recreation sector in Victoria.

This project follows the example of the Australian Sporting Alliance for People with Disability. In that together, we can create a more meaningful impact within the disability community.

## **Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion**

The Phoenix Project gave DSR the space to drive forward their practice of inclusion and accessibility. They developed the tools for DSR to continue to evolve supporting its overall vision.

# Community Feedback



**“DSR is in an amazing position to be better in representing the community”**

– Working for Victoria

**"DAC a brilliant move"**

– Working for Victoria

**"I learned that we shouldn't fix the disability, rather we should create an environment to accommodate for the disability."**

- Student at Melbourne University

**“DSR have gone above and beyond”**

– Working for Victoria

**“This has provided me the insight of how different life is for those with disabilities. This includes the accessibility of venues, and how different daily activities are in comparison to someone who has no disability.”**

- Student at Melbourne University



# Acknowledgements

We'd like to extend our gratitude to all those involved in this project and recognise that collaboration is vital in supporting the sport and recreation community to provide greater choice, access and participation.

[AAA Play](#)

[Solve Disability Solutions](#)

[Proud 2 Play](#)

[Adaptive Climbing Victoria](#)

[Access Ability Australia](#)

[Cobblebank stadium](#)

[Tenpin Bowling Australia](#)

[YMCA Victoria](#)

[AFL Victoria](#)

[St. Kilda Football Club](#)

[Hawthorn Football Club](#)

[Western Bulldogs Football Club](#)

[Auskick](#)

[Collingwood Football Club](#)

[Tennis Victoria](#)

[Basketball Victoria](#)

[Cricket Victoria](#)

[Table Tennis Victoria](#)

[Achilles Melbourne](#)

[Dejay Medical](#)

[Badminton Victoria](#)

[Disabled Wintersport Australia](#)

[Golf Australia](#)

[The University of Melbourne](#)

[Freedom Wheels](#)

[Dance and Roll](#)

[Sailability](#)

[Pickleball Australia](#)

[Sport4All](#)

[Sport and Recreation Victoria](#)

[Sport North East](#)

[Victoria Together](#)

[VicHealth](#)

[VicSport](#)

[Yarra Ranges City Council](#)

[Benchvote](#)

[The Brand Bar](#)

[Aqualink Box Hill](#)

[Belgravia Leisure](#)

[Crown Melbourne](#)

[Boccia](#)

[Australia Fencing Victoria](#)

[Royal Children's Hospital](#)

[Swinburne University](#)

[Tintern Grammar](#)

[Sports Central](#)

[My Sport Live](#)

[Disability Sports Australia](#)

# Acknowledgements

[Deaf Sports Recreation Victoria](#)

[Everyday Independence](#)

[Fitskills](#)

[Leisure Networks](#)

[Loop+](#)

[Neuromoves](#)

[Geelong Adaptive Sports](#)

[Special Olympics Australia](#)

[Sport Inclusion Australia](#)

[City of Ballarat](#)

[City of Boroondara](#)

[City of Casey](#)

[City of Greater Dandenong](#)

[City of Greater Geelong](#)

[City of Kingston](#)

[City of Melbourne](#)

[City of Melton](#)

[City of Monash](#)

[City of Stonnington](#)

[City of Whittlesea](#)

[City of Yarra](#)

[Regional Sport Victoria](#)

[Active Schools - ACHPER](#)

[Victoria](#)

[Centenary Park Golf Course](#)

[Hobson Bay City Council](#)

[Hume City Council](#)

[Mildura Rural City Council](#)

[GippSport](#)

[Para Sport South West](#)

[AcademySouth West Sport](#)

[Moreland City Council](#)

[Infoxchange](#)

[Paralympics Australia](#)

[Progressive PR](#)

[PwC](#)

[Rugby Victoria](#)

[Keilor Little Athletics Centre](#)

[North Melbourne Community  
Centre](#)

[Polytan - Sport Group](#)

[Holding](#)

[Football Victoria](#)

[Footscray Hockey Club](#)

[Melbourne Rugby Union](#)

[FootballClub](#)

[Blind Sports and Recreation  
Victoria](#)