



the
Gordon

CENTRE OF
EXCELLENCE IN
**DISABILITY
INCLUSION**

Our Vision



MAKING TAFE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

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LEADING THE WAY

The Gordon's Centre of Excellence in Disability Inclusion exemplifies our commitment to addressing systemic barriers faced by Victorians with disability in education and employment. Supported by a \$36 million investment from the Victorian Government, this initiative is more than just a building—it is a vision for the future of vocational education for all Victorian TAFEs.

It's about paving a new future and creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment that meets the diverse needs of our students and supports their success.

While the Centre itself will officially open in 2027, the groundwork laid in 2024 demonstrates significant progress toward its vision. Our approach is grounded in co-creation, ensuring people with lived experience guide the decisions we make.



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LEADING THE WAY (CONTINUED)



Throughout 2024, 12 vision workshops engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders—including students, families, disability advocates, government representatives and TAFE staff—ensuring a co-created, actionable vision with practical strategies for long-term impact. As one participant noted, The Gordon can be a “trailblazer”, setting new standards for accessibility and inclusion.

The Centre will transform The Gordon and serve as a hub for the TAFE network across Victoria, fostering collaboration, innovation and shared knowledge.

With a strong emphasis on inclusivity, The Centre will address barriers to education, advocate for universally accessible learning environments, and empower students with the skills and opportunities needed to achieve meaningful employment outcomes.



The opportunity for this to be trailblazing around general accessibility and inclusion, and deepening that understanding.

– Workshop participant



OUR CO-CREATION STRATEGY

Our co-creation approach is an inclusive, collaborative process where a diverse range of people with relevant lived experience, skills and interests come together to provide advice and make decisions on projects, policies and initiatives.

Co-creation has two parts:

1. Co-design which seeks to identify solutions to program/services known problems

2. Co-production which generates the innovative delivery of programs/services/resources based on identified solutions

OUR CO-CREATION STRATEGY (CONTINUED)



While approaches vary from project to project depending on the size, scope and governance of the project, a meaningful co-creation process will center the voices of diverse users and run throughout the life of a project – from the planning stage through to implementation and review.

We recognise that meaningful inclusion can only emerge through a genuine partnership with the students with lived experience, the disability community, industry and stakeholders. Every initiative, program and decision reflects the direct input and leadership of people with disability.



This is education, you've come here, you've thrived, you've made connections, you're confident, you have new friends, you have a better connection to your community.

– Workshop participant



OUR CO-CREATION STRATEGY (CONTINUED)

Phase 1: The Vision
October 2024 to February 2025

Co-Creation Key Aims:

- Creating CoE’s Vision
- Establishing the change to be made
- Identifying resources to realise



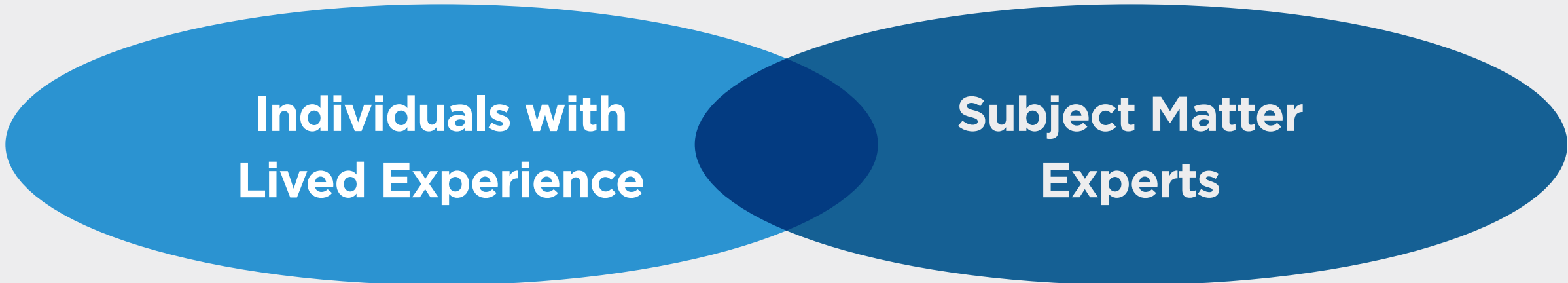
Phase 2: The Model
March 2025 to September 2025

Co-Creation Key Aims:

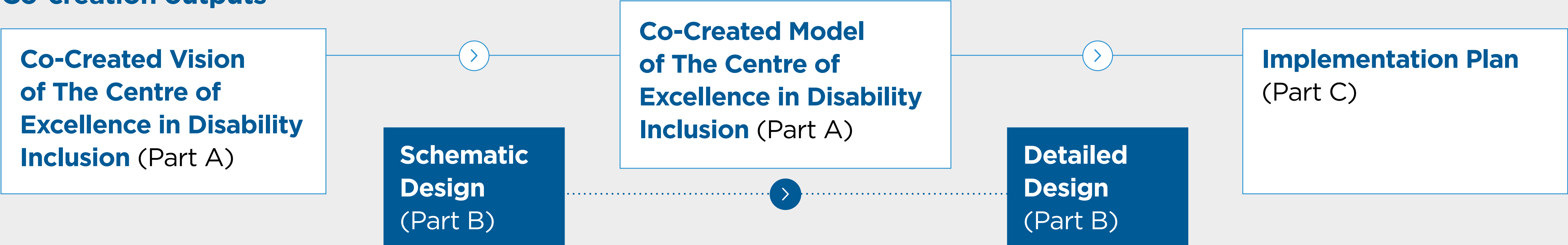
- Establish how the CoE will work and what will it provide
- Define and design the core domains of CoE
- Detail what’s needed to deliver this model

Co-creation process

Series of inclusive collaborative activities based on a process of Discover, Reflect, Refine, Resolve to co-create deliverable outputs.

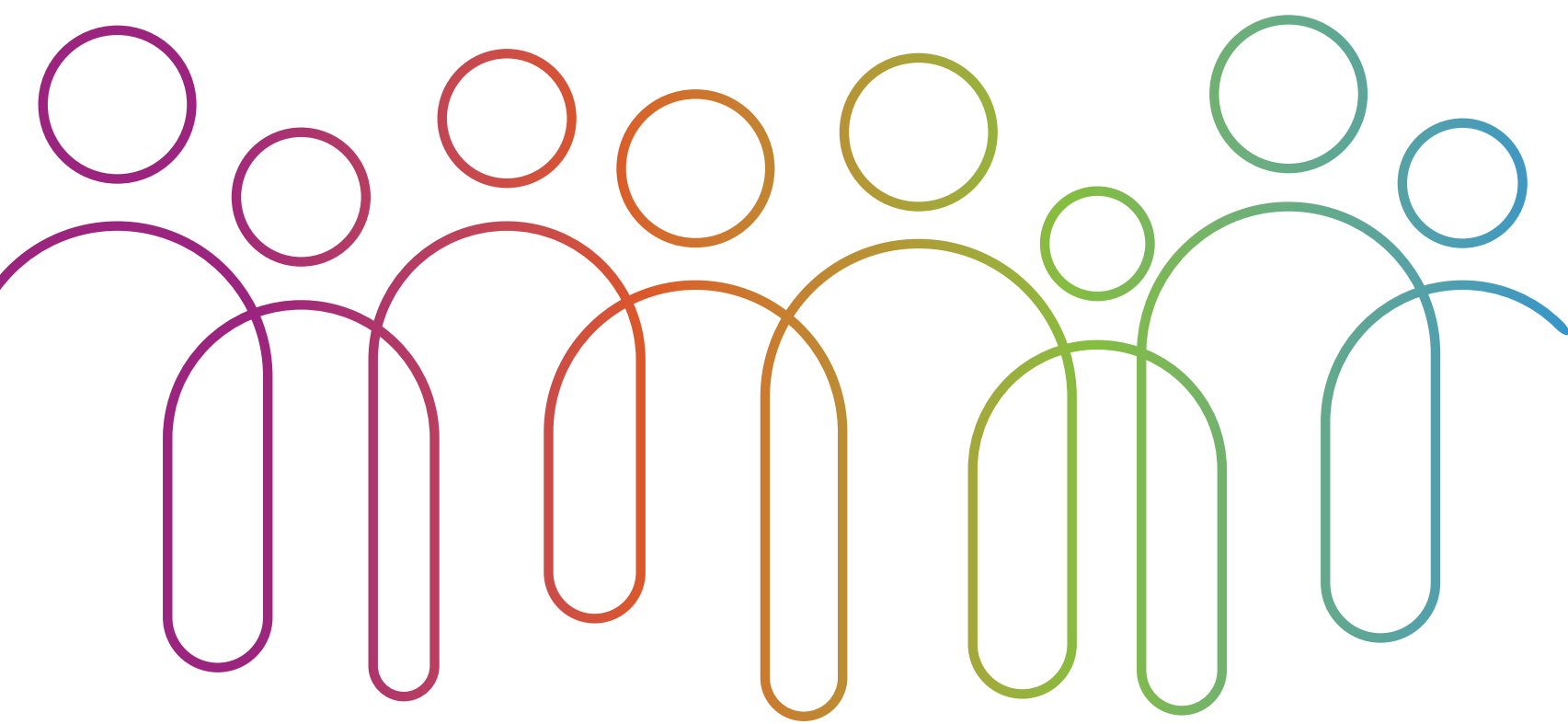


Co-creation outputs



OUR CO-CREATION TEAM

In 2024, The Gordon sent an expression of interest to our existing and past student cohort, looking for individuals interested in participating in the co-creation process.



Key criteria for the team included:

- 15 years and older
- Have lived experience of disability and TAFE
- Disability - physical disability, mental illness, chronic illness or people who are neurodivergent
- TAFE experience (past, current or future students).

Our Co-Creation Team has been established with 9 local representatives including:

- Diverse learners with disability at The Gordon (current and future)
- Diverse recent graduates of The Gordon with disability
- Future students and family members/kin of future students with disability
- Various adults from different roles like parents, TAFE network in Victoria, teachers, access advisors, and disability advocates.

OUR CO-CREATION TEAM (CONTINUED)



Using their lived experience expertise, this team will guide and drive the co-creation process of the Centre of Excellence in Disability Inclusion for Vision, Operating Model Development and Infrastructure Development.



No successful programs or employers are encouraged to hire disadvantaged people of any type, including people with disability. So there has to be some huge advocacy piece there working with employers which create a better perception of people moving through a TAFE system into something.

– Workshop participant



CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

In this project, our co-creation approach will bring together the community including learners and recent graduates with disability, disability leaders and other key industry, government and region stakeholder groups together in workshops to generate:

- Vision for Centre of Excellence in Disability Inclusion
- a fit-for-purpose operating model to achieve The Centre's Vision
- an implementation plan for The Centre
- a detailed infrastructure design to modernise The Gordon's City Campus and learning environment using universal design principles to support The Centre's vision and model (this is managed by Capital Delivery Team) and aligned with Geelong's UNESCO designation as a City of Design.

In 2024, there were three rounds of Vision workshops held online and in person, with 12 workshops in total. A total of 65 people were co-creation participants, many of who were involved in all three workshop rounds.

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CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS (CONTINUED)



Participant summary:

- The Gordon staff (20)
- Community: disability service providers, disability employment service organisations, allied health, business, tourism, advocacy and legal (13)
- State (DJSIR, VSA, OTCD) and local government (6)
- People with disability and family members (13)
- Victorian TAFE Network staff in disability and access roles (13).

From these robust collaborative discussions, a vision, commitment and goals for The Centre has emerged.

“

How do we open up that conversation and connect with like-minded people or with people with genuine goals and interests for people with disability and making that an outcome as well for The Gordon and the Centre for Excellence in Disability and Inclusion but also for employers or higher education.

– Workshop participant

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CO-CREATION OUTCOMES



Between October to December 2024, three rounds of workshops with the co-creation team and diverse stakeholders were undertaken to co-create the vision.

Round 1

**Discovery phase -
setting the vision**



Round 2

**Reflection and refinement
of the vision components,
including high-level goals**



Round 3

**Finalisation the vision
on a page**

CO-CREATION OUTCOMES (CONTINUED)



Key themes identified during the vision workshops were:

- Culture
- Pathways
- Holistic student support
- Student success
- Collaboration
- Capability
- Centre of Excellence Success



Continuing to involve people with disabilities throughout the journey, not just in the co-design phase and then opting to employ able-bodied people in all of the roles that exist around The Centre of Excellence in Diversity Inclusion and taking time to recruit people and make sure that the right people in the jobs to make sure this happens and that the right level of commitment is there to sustain this work over a long time.

– Workshop participant



OUR VISION

We are a Network Centre of Excellence that unites students, the TAFE network, place-based communities, industry partners, and government bodies to lead inclusive education through innovation, policy advancement, knowledge sharing and capability building, **ensuring TAFE is accessible and enriching for all.**

MAKING TAFE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL



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How do you capture the people who have fallen through the cracks somewhere and re-engage them back into the school system as well or the further education system.

– Workshop participant

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OUR COMMITMENT



Our Centre of Excellence in Disability Inclusion is committed to five key commitments:

✔ **Diversity**

Recognising and understanding the diverse experiences of disability and multiple intersectionalities.

✔ **Culture**

Cultivating an inclusive safe culture by listening, respecting and being led by diverse students and staff with disability (current and future) to improve access, supports and experiences at TAFE.

✔ **Innovation**

Having a mindset of curiosity, flexibility, openness and willingness to explore and pilot innovations and solutions to improve inclusion.

✔ **Collaboration**

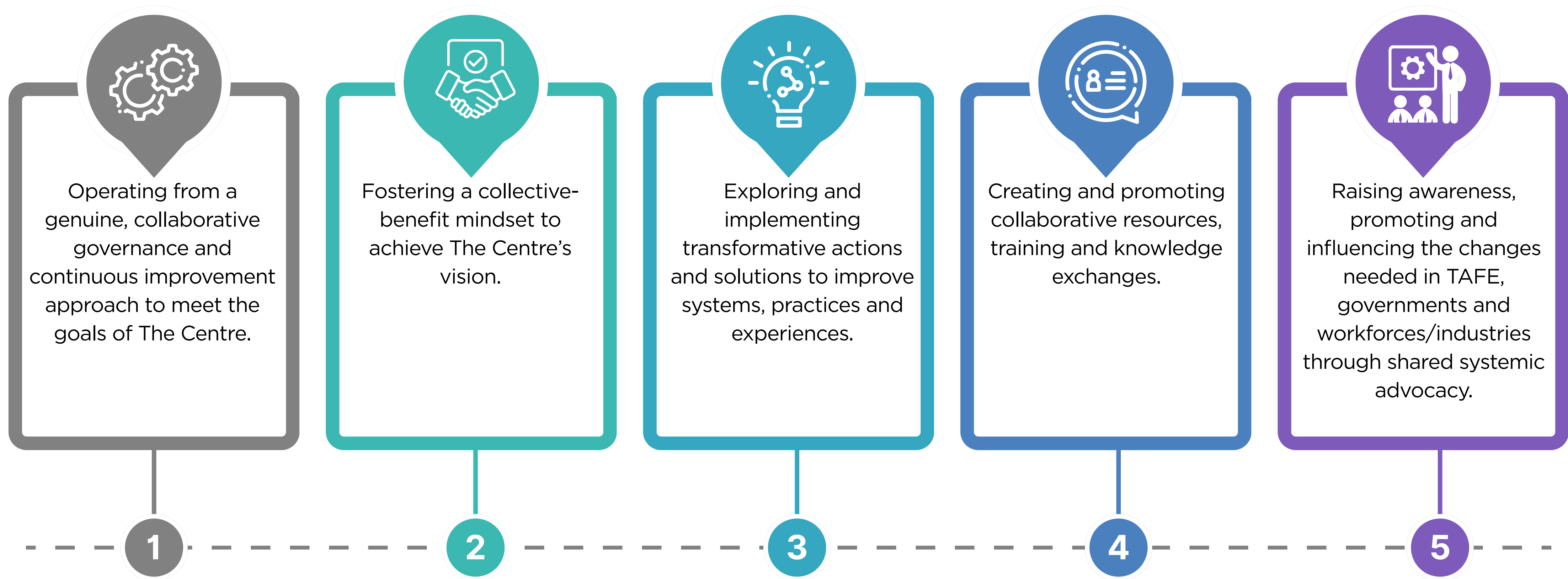
Actively sharing knowledges, resources and practices across the TAFE network and stakeholders framed by ongoing learning, reflection, and improvements.

✔ **Development**

Developing competence and confidence in inclusion, equity, diversity and intersectionality, across the workforce, TAFE network, industries, communities and stakeholders.

OUR KEY PILLARS








Informed and underpinned by diverse-lived expertise, practice and place-based knowledge.



OUR GOALS

TAFE has a culture of inclusion where every student and staff person has a voice, belongs and thrives.	Inclusive TAFEs and networks operate from a learning, sharing, respecting, reflection and continuous improvement model.	Enhancing attitudes, capability and confidence through education and training formed by lived experiences and their intersectional identities.	Support all individuals in having easier, fairer and dignified access to transition to TAFE through each process step, incorporating physical and digital accessibility.	Through a holistic and individualised approach, all students have access to what they need to succeed in their education and training.	Integrate pathways beyond TAFE into the curriculum and services.	Redefining student success beyond completion to include a range of indicators of accomplishment.
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CHANGE REQUIRED

 Reduce disability discrimination in TAFE Systems.	 Removing silos that lead to poor practices and processes.	 Changing attitudes about disability and diversity.	 Removing the multitude of barriers to accessing and commencing TAFE.	 Overhauling how support is offered, how systems work and how training is delivered.	 Addressing the large gaps in employment and further education rates of people with disability.	 Shifting ableist and limited measures of success.
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VOICES FOR CHANGE



The newly established co-creation team, comprised of current and past students, has been instrumental in shaping the Centre's direction. By embedding student voices at the core of its development, The Centre is already influencing inclusive campus design and shaping meaningful student experiences.

Workshops have highlighted the importance of fostering connection and belonging within TAFE. As one participant shared, creating a sense of community within TAFE builds connections that enrich the learning experience. These efforts empower students with disability to thrive, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and confidence to succeed in education and beyond.

With ongoing investment and collaboration, the Centre of Excellence in Disability and Inclusion is poised to redefine what it means to deliver truly accessible and inclusive education, positioning The Gordon and TAFEs as leaders in empowering all learners to succeed.

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“

It's about the culture, making sure that whether you're in finance or whether you're in teaching, that your culture about everybody has the right to know what their support needs look like and that they're going to be achieved. Or they're going to consider at least what's possible.

– Workshop participant

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