

**Australia's
Disability
Strategy**
2021-2031

Creating
an inclusive
community
together

Implementation Report

3 December 2021 – 30 June 2023



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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Government Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional country throughout Australia on which we gather, live, work and stand. We acknowledge all traditional custodians, their Elders past, present and emerging, and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and rivers.

Language in this Report

We acknowledge that people use different words to talk about disability and that each person will have a way of talking about disability and about themselves that they like best. Some people like to use 'disabled person' (identity-first language), while some like to use 'person with disability' (person-first language), and some are fine with using either.

We use person-first language to talk about disability. This means we usually use the term 'person with disability' in this Report.

The language used in this Report is not intended to diminish an individual's identity as a person with disability. We recognise that the appropriate use of language varies between individuals and disability communities. We acknowledge the importance of having conversations with individuals about their preferred language.

Report Contributors

This Report would not have been possible without the support and input from Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association, Disability Representative Organisations and Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council. We want to thank them, and acknowledge their significant input to this Report.

We also acknowledge people with disability who took part in Australia's Disability Strategy Forums and engagement activities. We want to thank them, and acknowledge their meaningful contributions to this Report.

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Ministerial Statements

Australian Government

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (ADS) reflects our shared, national commitment to an inclusive society that ensures the more than one in six Australians with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

Now in our second year of implementation, all governments continue to be guided by the fundamental principles of respect, non-discrimination, inclusion and equality in progressing towards this vision.

This has included the implementation of Targeted Action Plans spanning the areas of employment, community attitudes, early childhood interventions and supports, safety, and emergency management.

We have an ongoing commitment to the involvement of people with disability and organisations in matters that affect them. This includes through establishing ADS Advisory Council, holding the first ADS National and State Public Forums, and engaging with people with disability across a number of individual and public consultation processes. This is vital in ensuring that our policies accurately reflect the experiences and expertise of people with lived experience of disability, including families, carers, and advocates.

I am pleased to report that following consultation with the disability community, we have now published a good practice guide to support governments, businesses, and the community in engaging with people with disability, with guides on ADS's Guiding Principles and evaluation under development.

We acknowledge the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, which was provided to the Governor-General on 28 September 2023. All governments are carefully considering the Final Report, and the Commonwealth is committed to ensuring our response will strengthen ADS.

As we look towards the future, we must ensure that every Australian with disability is able to enjoy a life in which they are safe, and free from violence and abuse; and that the experiences of people with disability, coupled with better data, shape reform and collective action. By working together in this way, we can create a better future where all people with disability can fully participate on an equal basis.

The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP
Minister for Social Services

New South Wales

The NSW Government is committed to furthering the inclusion of people with disability to ensure that they have access to the services, supports, and opportunities that are available to all our citizens.

As the Minister for Disability Inclusion, I am pleased to see the variety of actions underway in NSW across both state and local government via their Disability Inclusion Action Plans, and the *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan*.

The most recently tabled *NSW Public Authorities' Disability Inclusion Action Plans – Report on progress 2021–2022* to NSW Parliament contains over 300 pages of actions highlighting the activity being undertaken at the coalface of mainstream service delivery.

As an incoming government, we have committed to listening to the disability community to ensure that their priorities are being addressed and that we are working collaboratively with the Commonwealth to maintain an effective and sustainable National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This close collaboration across all jurisdictions will further the work plan of the Disability Reform Ministerial Council and progress critical initiatives such as the National Disability Data Asset, the National Autism Strategy, and the Improving Care Pathways project which will see fewer people with disability having their hospital discharge unnecessarily delayed.

NSW continues its commitment to the safety and wellbeing of people with disability through the work of our Ageing and Disability Commissioner and the Disability Advocacy Futures Program.

As a state, we are continuing to invest billions of dollars in accessible transport infrastructure, specialist supports in our schools, and targeted health and mental health services. We have stopped the decline in people with disability employed in the public service and will focus on the employment of people with disability as a priority moving forward.

As seen from the diversity of initiatives reported here, it is not always the 'big project' that makes a difference. Disability inclusion is about changing the attitudes of decision-makers and ensuring that they consider the needs of people with disability.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability will drive the next phase of effort across jurisdictions. NSW will continue to lead the way in making disability inclusion part of the business-as-usual across government and the community.

The Hon Kate Washington MP
Minister for Families and Communities
Minister for Disability Inclusion

Victoria

As the Minister for Disability, I am working with my ministerial colleagues to deliver the actions in *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022–2026*, Victoria's implementation plan for achieving outcomes under ADS.

The actions in the plan seek to improve outcomes for Victorians with disability across all life domains, including community participation, health, mental health and wellbeing, housing, fairness and safety, education and employment.

The plan also seeks to transform the way government works with people with disability through 6 systemic reforms. Co-design with people with disability is one of these and is central to Victoria's disability inclusion agenda.

Inclusive Victoria has been informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, and I want to acknowledge the trusted advice and role of the Victorian Disability Advisory Council in developing and implementing the plan.

To deliver the plan, the Victorian Government has made significant investment to improve the accessibility and inclusion of our education, transport and health services, as well as our public spaces and housing. We have also implemented legislative reforms to strengthen the rights, protections and safeguards for people with disability in Victoria.

We have a lot to be proud of in our efforts to advance disability inclusion in Victoria, but there is much more work to be done to break down the barriers that limit people with disability from fully participating in all aspects of the community. I am committed to realising the vision of a truly inclusive Victoria where everyone can participate in the community.

The Hon Lizzie Blandthorn MP
Minister for Disability
Minister for Children

Queensland

Building resilient disability-inclusive communities is a job for everyone. As Queensland's Minister for Seniors and Disability Services, I recognise private and public sectors along with communities must work together to create inclusive and accessible communities where people with disability can reach their full potential.

ADS is implemented in Queensland through Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a better Queensland. The Plan recognises that all Queenslanders have goals and aspirations for their personal, social, economic, and professional lives, and need the right supports to achieve those things.

Key progress made in Queensland to implement ADS includes:

- Delivering or facilitating almost 35,000 hours of advocacy to support 2,131 Queenslanders with disability through the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program.
- Funding 10 providers to deliver disability-specific peak body services to almost 22,000 Queenslanders through the Queensland Disability Peak and Representative Body Program.
- Providing one-on-one assistance to 1,600 Queenslanders to access the NDIS through the Queensland Assessment and Referral Team.
- Hosting ADS – Queensland Jurisdictional Forum on 19 June 2023, which provided a unique opportunity to bring together people with disability, families and carers, advocacy organisations, disability and community service organisations, industry, business, and governments to discuss how to work together to achieve an inclusive Queensland.

Queensland is also working towards hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This will accelerate Queensland achieving its vision, as it will harness the resources of all Queenslanders with a common goal to improve access to education, employment, appropriate housing, and a society without stigma or barriers.

The Hon Craig Crawford

Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services

Western Australia

All Western Australians, from all walks of life, have a responsibility to create an inclusive and accessible community. The whole community benefits when everyone is included; inclusion helps make us resilient, happier, and economically and socially stronger.

Through commitments in *A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020–2030*, we continue to drive improved outcomes for all people with disability, shaped through the ongoing actions of public and private sector agencies.

Achievements include:

- Construction of 12 accessible social houses to support people with spinal cord injury to live independently in the community and ensure the best quality of life.
- NDIS Worker Screening Check implemented to ensure people with disability receive services in safe environments. As at 30 June 2023, WA had received 79,644 applications for a NDIS Check.
- Access to training for eligible people with disability in 32 qualifications under the Participation Equity Program. Courses range from Certificate I–IV level in Business, Logistics, Community Services, Education, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Retail.

Delivering services and supports for all Western Australians requires an appreciation of the unique regional and remote considerations of this state, to ensure equal access to quality support and opportunities for all people with disability wherever they choose to live.

Empowering people to participate fully cultivates a positive community that ensures fairness and equitable outcomes for all. I remain optimistic that we can make a tangible difference to the lives of the approximately 411,500 people with disability in Western Australia and achieve a future in which everyone belongs.

**The Hon Don Punch (BPsych BSocwk MBA MLA)
Minister for Disability Services**

South Australia

South Australia is proud to continue to deliver positive outcomes in the lives of people with disability.

There are over 330,000 South Australians with disability, with those individuals along with their carers and families being at the centre of our state's ambitious policies and reform.

Notably, recent initiatives delivered by South Australia include:

- The establishment of the Office for Autism and an Assistant Minister for Autism to provide whole-of-government support and initiatives to improve life outcomes for Autistic people. The Office for Autism will also work with businesses and Not-for-Profits to improve recruitment and employment opportunities for Autistic individuals. South Australia is committed to developing a State Autism Strategy to ensure South Australia is solidified as an 'Autism Friendly State'.
- A review of the state *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)*, which identified the need for inclusion of express terminology to reflect that people with disability, regardless of age, have a right to be safe, and to feel safe, through the provision of appropriate safeguards, information, services, and support.
- The development of an inclusive 12-member Ministerial Disability Advisory Council, with diverse representation to provide a strong voice for people with disability.

South Australia is continuing community consultation on the state's disability strategy beyond 2023, to ensure state government agencies and local councils achieve key actions to support ADS and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Hon Nat Cook MP
Minister for Human Services

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is committed to working with people with disability, the people who support and advocate for them, and the wider community to deliver better outcomes for people with disability. Our vision is to build an inclusive, cohesive, and open society in which people with disability have the same rights as other citizens and equal opportunity to participate in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the community.

Our work towards building a more inclusive Tasmania has taken a significant step forward with the release of the draft Disability Inclusion Bill 2023. The new disability legislation will drive inclusion for all Tasmanians with disability through a commitment to planning and consultation and by taking action on national and international commitments.

We thank the people with disability, their carers, and advocates who provided valuable feedback during the initial consultation last year. We are engaging with them again for further input into the draft Disability Inclusion Bill they have helped shape.

The Hon Jo Palmer MLC
Minister for Disability Services

Australian Capital Territory

Yuma. In the ACT, we take a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to support people with disability.

Our continued focus is on the inclusion and wellbeing of people with disability and ensuring they are central to all of our work. Our priority over the past 12 months has been the development of a comprehensive 10-year ACT Disability Strategy, as well as a Disability Health Strategy, Disability Justice Strategy, and Inclusive Education Strategy.

In the extensive consultation process for the development of the ACT Disability Strategy, we heard from over 1,000 individuals and organisations through 33 public events and online consultations. This approach was co-designed and led by the ACT Disability Reference Group, ensuring the voices of people with disability were at the forefront of all activities.

These sessions enabled us to hear important views from people across the community. We must listen to what needs to change and act so more Canberrans can live with pride, support and dignity. The best outcomes are achieved when we listen to co-design with people with disability.

The ACT Disability Strategy will be fundamental in the ACT enacting our commitment to ADS.

Inclusivity is at the heart of our approach. People with disability know what needs to change, and we must listen and act so more Canberrans and Australians can live with pride, support and dignity.

Emma Davidson MLA
Minister for Disability

Northern Territory

In December 2021, I was delighted to support our Chief Minister in the development of, and commitment to, ADS.

In August 2022, I had the pleasure of launching the *Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022–2032* and associated 3-year *Action Plan 2022–2025*, which closely aligns with ADS and associated Targeted Action Plans.

Both documents lay the foundations for implementing each strategy, allowing us to capture and report on the first steps in our journey to becoming a more inclusive Territory.

Our work complements and reinforces commitments, legislation, and policies to holistically contribute to improved outcomes for people with disability. The Northern Territory Government is working towards a more inclusive Territory, and this Implementation Report showcases the work that is well underway.

Our Territory is unique. We have a vast landscape, with a high proportion of people living in regional and remote towns and communities, and we are one of Australia's most culturally diverse places. While this presents challenges, it also presents opportunities for some truly exceptional and transformative initiatives.

We continue to strive for an inclusive Territory where people with disability are valued, respected and can contribute to the community, no matter where we live.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the many milestones and successes already achieved.

The Hon Ngaree Ah Kit MLA
Minister for Disabilities

Local Government

On behalf of Australia's 537 councils, the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is so proud to be a signatory to ADS, embracing a shared vision to improve the lives of people with disability across all levels of government.

Council facilities and services touch the lives of every Australian. Councils are in the unique position to be able to listen directly to the voices of people with disability and create local solutions and are well aware that creating inclusive and resilient communities benefits everyone.

As the number of councils with local disability plans continues to grow, local governments are better able to hear and support the needs of people with disability in our planning processes. As an Australian lucky enough to have a sister with a disability, I know just how much small changes can have a big impact on people with disability. However, ALGA continues to advocate for funding to improve the capacity of our councils to have access to resources to design and implement more inclusive services and facilities, including access to premises, accessible parking and footpaths, all abilities playgrounds and recreational facilities, and improved employment opportunities.

Under the first National Disability Strategy, ALGA produced a Disability Planning Guide for Local Government to help councils address barriers and obstacles to inclusion. While the Guide continues to assist councils to develop Disability Access and Inclusion Plans in partnership with their communities, we see an opportunity to update the Guide under ADS to incorporate new developments and initiatives under ADS.

The COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a series of natural disasters which impacted 90% of our councils across the country, highlighted the need for the extraordinary work councils do with our communities and the support we provide to people who may need additional assistance. However there is more to be done in the face of increasing and more intense disasters, to protect all in our communities, no matter their diverse ability levels, and to achieve ADS's vision to make Australia a more inclusive and accepting society.

Linda Scott
President Australian Local Government Association

Executive Summary

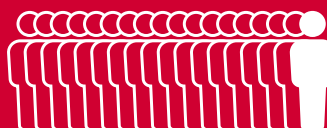
People with disability are an important part of and significant contributors to the Australian community. They have told us through consultations that it is important to have a national strategy to guide and support consistency for policy, programs, and legislation for disability.

The importance of Australia's Disability Strategy

More than one in 6 people have disability – 4.4 million (or 17.7%) Australians with disability¹



One in 18 people had a profound or severe disability – about 1.4 million²



More than 3 in 4 people with disability reported a physical disorder as their main condition³



Nearly one in 4 people with disability reported a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition⁴



One in 8 people with disability received support from the NDIS (13.8% or 610,502) – June 2023⁵



One in 4 First Nations people have disability⁶



Australia's Disability Strategy is for everyone



The vision of Australia's Disability Strategy is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community

1 ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018

2 ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018

3 ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018

4 ABS Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018

5 NDIS Quarterly Report June 2023

6 AIHW Disability support for Indigenous Australians, 2021

ADS sets out priorities for governments at all levels to drive change to uphold the rights, inclusion and participation of people with disability in all areas of Australian life.

ADS was informed by a number of key reviews and developed following significant consultation with people with disability and the disability sector. At its heart is a commitment to ongoing engagement and involvement of people with disability in the implementation of activities and actions to improve their lives. A reflection of this commitment is the Engagement Plan released with ADS, which sets out not only an intent for continued engagement with people with disability, but identifies key activities to meet this commitment.

This is the first Implementation Report to be delivered under ADS. It provides a national overview of the work at all levels of government delivering improved outcomes for people with disability, against the 7 Outcome Areas and implementation commitments.

This reporting period has seen significant progress in setting up the structures that support the accountability and transparency of ADS. We have established the Advisory Council and expanded its membership to include representatives from state and territory disability advisory councils, enhancing its ability to provide advice to governments. Public reporting against ADS Outcomes Framework measures has commenced, with the results from ADS Survey on Community Attitudes reported for the first time in late 2023.

This is in addition to the important work being undertaken by jurisdictions introducing or undertaking consultations to develop their own new disability and inclusion plans. ADS has provided a platform to support reinvigorated activity and alignment across jurisdictions. This work is being actively supported by disability advisory group structures and consultation and co-design processes across the nation, ensuring the experience and voice of disability continues to be embedded across all work.

We have committed to being transparent and accountable on where we have been driving action and those areas where there is more work to do.

In addition to the reporting being undertaken within jurisdictions, ADS commits all governments to a comprehensive reporting structure. In addition to this two-yearly Report, annual Targeted Action Plans Reports, annual Outcome Framework Reports, and quarterly updates on the Outcomes Framework web pages are produced. State and territory governments, and many local governments, also report against their own disability plans.

We acknowledge and welcome the openness and passion with which people with disability and the disability sector have actively engaged in the implementation of ADS.

We are pleased to have met our commitments to hold annual public forums or consultations, by delivering the first ADS National Forum in November 2022 and the first ADS State Forum in Queensland in June 2023. These provided important insights into areas we need to improve.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission), established in April 2019, shaped the development of ADS, including through an increased focus on the safety of people with disability. The breadth and depth of the work undertaken and recommendations in its Final Report, provided to the Governor-General in September 2023, provides an important signpost for the way forward in improving the lives of people with disability in Australia. We have committed to review ADS in light of the Final Report and this work is now commencing.

We acknowledge the advice from Disability Representative Organisations, who provide systemic advocacy and representation of people with disability, that government responses to the Disability Royal Commission findings need to include clear commitments. They also stress the importance of people with disability being involved in the development and implementation of all ADS activities.

The disability community has, understandably, high expectations of progress to be made in implementing ADS. Good progress has been made in this initial reporting period, with a number of key commitments delivered. The next reporting period, which will include the review of ADS, will see an even higher focus on working with people with disability to improve, and deliver on, tangible actions across all levels of government that will advance outcomes for all people with disability. This will include new Targeted Action Plans; ongoing consultation and engagement with people with disability; and improving evidence and data to improve transparency and support better decision making.

State and Territory Governments

ADS recognises that all levels of government are responsible for supporting people with disability to reach their full potential, as equal members of the community.

ADS was developed by Australian, state, territory and local governments and agreed upon by all first ministers and the Australian Local Government Association President. We are all working to implement ADS.

State and territory governments play a significant part in implementing ADS. State and territory governments have their own disability plans or are developing plans. State and territory governments have developed their plans in response to each jurisdiction's particular circumstances and priorities. Actions are locally based and aim to work in parallel with activities under ADS. These plans are the primary mechanisms state and territory governments use to drive the delivery of their commitments under ADS.

This Report showcases key work being undertaken across Australia to improve outcomes for people with disability. The activities and initiatives are examples of only some of the important work underway. Further information on work being undertaken in each jurisdiction to support ADS can be accessed through the website links provided in each section below.

New South Wales

In NSW, activity to support the implementation of ADS is primarily driven by the *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan* and the Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) of NSW agencies and local councils.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) provides the legislative basis for disability inclusion in NSW. It was reviewed in 2022 to realign it with the progress of implementing the NDIS and other policy changes. The Act reiterates the key principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, outlines the principles underpinning disability inclusion in NSW and calls out specific groups for additional targeted action.

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Plan* focuses on 4 key areas:

1. Positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Supporting access to meaningful employment
3. Creating liveable communities
4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

All NSW lead agencies and 128 local councils develop plans to address these priorities in consultation with their disability communities and report on their DIAPs in their annual report.

As the legislated reporting timelines in NSW do not align with those of ADS, reporting on the most recent financial year will be limited as this detailed information is yet to be received at the time of compiling this Report. The *NSW Public Authorities' Disability Inclusion Action Plans – Report on progress 2021–2022* to Parliament is available.

The report includes the hundreds of inclusion actions being undertaken by NSW government.

In relation to disability oversight and governance, the Minister for Disability Inclusion is supported by the NSW Disability Board and receives advice from the [Disability Council NSW](#).

The NSW Disability Directors Forum and the NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum are important mechanisms through which NSW disability policy is formulated and operationalised.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice supports the Minister for Disability Inclusion at the Disability Reform Ministerial Council and represents the NSW position on multiple advisory committees and working groups.

While specialist disability services are no longer directly funded or delivered by the NSW Government and are primarily provided through the NDIS, delivering inclusive and accessible mainstream services to people with disability remains a core commitment of the NSW Government.

Further information on activities being implemented by NSW is available on the NSW Government [Communities and Justice](#) website.

Victoria

The final report on *Absolutely Everyone: state disability plan*, the previous Victorian state disability plan, was tabled in the Victorian Parliament in 2022. Key achievements delivered through *Absolutely Everyone* include:

- Investing nearly \$1.6 billion to support students with disability through a Disability Inclusion package and \$20 million in school building improvements.
- Advocating to strengthen the National Construction Code to include accessibility standards.
- Mandating the Livable Housing Silver Standard as the minimum for new social housing constructed through the Victorian Government's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.
- Applying universal design principles to transport projects.
- Upgrading major stadiums and creating sensory rooms at Marvel Stadium, Kardinia Park Stadium and Melbourne Park.
- Building 25 new Changing Places facilities.
- Improving the accessibility of Victorian parks through accessible information, equipment and programs.
- Launching the first phase of the 'Change your Reactions' Autism public awareness campaign.
- Additional investment in disability advocacy to uphold rights and safety.
- Investment in the Disability Family Violence Crisis Response initiative.

Released in March 2022, *Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022–2026*, builds on *Absolutely Everyone's* achievements and responds to new and emerging issues highlighted during extensive community engagement.

Inclusive Victoria was developed with people with disability, Disabled People's Organisations, self-advocacy groups, peak bodies, advocacy agencies and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council.

Consultation identified the need for more targeted efforts in 6 key areas, representing a set of inclusive practices. These are:

1. co-design with people with disability
2. Aboriginal self-determination
3. intersectional approaches
4. accessible communications and universal design
5. disability confident and inclusive workplaces
6. effective data and outcomes reporting.

All Victorian Government departments have committed to embedding these 6 reforms in their policies, programs and services to ensure better outcomes for people with disability.

The [Victorian Disability Advisory Council](#) plays a significant role in overseeing the implementation of Inclusive Victoria. Following appointment of the current Disability Advisory Council in August 2022, 10 meetings of Council have been held (up to July 2023), informing a range of policy and legislative reforms. The Chair and members have met with a broad range of stakeholders and participated in activities to promote and advance disability inclusion. This includes the development of member videos and a video on disability pride to raise the profile and reach of Disability Advisory Council.

Formal reporting on progress against Inclusive Victoria will be undertaken through 2 public reports. A midway report, to be delivered in 2024, will outline progress over the first half of the plan and include new and refreshed actions where required. A second and final report, to be released in 2026, will detail progress made in the second half of the plan.

Further information on activities being implemented by Victoria is available on the Victorian Government [State Disability Plan](#) website.

Queensland

In Queensland, nearly one in 5 people – or more than 935,000 people – identify as having a disability. About 191,000 people in Queensland are the primary carer for a person with disability. Recent projections show Queensland's NDIS participants will almost double to 223,000 in the next 10 years.

Through ADS, *Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27 – Together, a better Queensland* (Queensland's Disability Plan) and Queensland Government agency-specific disability service plans, Queensland is working to foster inclusive communities where all Queenslanders have their rights protected and are enabled to thrive, ensuring Queenslanders with disability can access safe and high-quality services that meet their needs and put in place contemporary safeguards to prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To implement this vision, each Queensland Government departmental chief executive has a statutory obligation under the *Disability Services Act 2006* (Qld) to develop a disability service plan at least once every 3 years that aligns with and supports the objectives of Queensland's Disability Plan. The implementation of ADS, Queensland's Disability Plan and departmental disability services plans is supported by the governance and expertise of the Queensland Disability Advisory Council and Disability Reform and Implementation Interdepartmental Committee.

The Queensland Government's programs and legislative and policy frameworks, including the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032*; Queensland's Disability Plan; the Year of Accessible Tourism and ADS State Forum, are timely examples of how Queensland is providing access to a range of services that advance and reflect the needs and voices of Queenslanders with disability, their careers, families and networks.

Queensland is also leading 55 targeted actions as part of ADS Targeted Action Plans. Since the commencement of ADS, Queensland has completed 23 of these actions. Key achievements include:

- Strengthening career education support and transitions to life after school through implementation of the *Every student with disability succeeding plan 2021–2025* and the Department of Education's new education strategy, *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student*.
- The reappointment of a new Queensland Disability Advisory Council with 14 members, 10 of whom have disability, from across Queensland.
- Conducting First Nations NDIS Business Development seminars to advance market opportunities for First Nations providers to deliver culturally appropriate services to First Nations peoples with disability.

Further information on activities being implemented by Queensland is available on the Queensland Government Disability Plan website.

Western Australia

In December 2021, the Western Australian Government Department of Communities' Office of Disability officially came into effect, delivering on the Western Australian Government's commitment to deliver better outcomes for people with disability. It provides sector stewardship, advice on State and Commonwealth systems, and drives work and innovation to advance the inclusion and participation of people with disability in Western Australia.

The establishment of the Office of Disability ensures that disability continues to be at the forefront of the State Government's focus, and there is a strong voice advocating for people with disability across Government, the disability sector and the broader community. These functions align with ADS and the commitment to the continued systemic reform of disability policy across Australia.

The Office of Disability has a critical role in ensuring the State's significant contribution to the NDIS of over \$1 billion per annum is maximised and that people with disability, their families and carers have opportunities to increase their economic and social participation.

Laying a solid foundation for the NDIS in Western Australia will, over the long-term, deliver maximum benefit for people with disability, their families and carers and provide maximum return on the State Government's investment, complemented by the initiatives undertaken through the WA State Disability Strategy 2020–2030.

The Disability Services Commission is governed by a 9-member board (the Board) comprising of members with disability, lived experience of disability, or an advocate or carer for people with disability.

The Board contributes to and monitors the implementation of the WA State Disability Strategy to ensure it meets its objectives and promotes the vision to deliver inclusive communities in which people with disability live well and participate and contribute, exercising their rights as equal citizens in the community.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability (MACD) reports directly to the Minister for Disability Services regarding issues affecting the lives of Western Australians with disability, their families and carers. Priority areas are identified annually, with plans developed on how to address them. The MACD also addresses other issues that arise regularly and require action.

The Western Australian Disability Advisory Council (the Council) was established and first met in 2022 to harness the unique expertise and spheres of influence of the Disability Services Commission's Board and the MACD. The Council advises the Minister for Disability Services on developing and implementing policies, services, programs and activities that affect people with disability.

Further information on activities being implemented by Western Australia is available on the Western Australian Government Department of Communities website.

South Australia

South Australia has accomplished key achievements in improving the outcomes for people with disability under ADS's 7 Outcome Areas during December 2021 to June 2023.

Notably, South Australia has implemented a number of priority areas and actions of its state-wide *Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan* (the SA Disability Plan) to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of government facilities, services and supports. The SA Disability Plan takes into consideration the areas of policy action under ADS.

With the state disability strategy coming to an end in 2023, extensive stakeholder consultation has commenced for the next strategy, including establishment of various advisory groups and committees to provide advice to the Minister for Human Services, and the South Australian Government, on key issues. These include:

- **Minster's Advisory Councils.** The South Australian Government Department of Human Services (SA DHS) has established the South Australian Disability Minister's Advisory Council, Youth Minister's Advisory Council, and LGBTIQ+ Minister's Advisory Council. Members were appointed in late 2022 to provide direct advice to the South Australian Minister for Human Services, including on intersections between these groups. The Councils consist of 12–13 members each, and meet quarterly.
- **South Australian Communities of Practice.** SA DHS established the Communities of Practice group in 2021. The group consists of representatives from 99 State authorities, legislated to deliver on their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) and support a collaborative approach to developing, progressing, and reporting on DAIPs, which supports ADS outcomes.
- **South Australian Disability Engagement Group.** SA DHS established the Disability Engagement Group (DEG) in 2021. The DEG provides advice to the South Australian Government to promote access and inclusion, specifically in relation to the SA Disability Plan. South Australian agencies may engage the DEG for co-design and consultation on policy and program initiatives that relate to access and inclusion for people with disability.
- **South Australian Disability Reform Interdepartmental Committee.** The South Australian Disability Reform Interdepartmental Committee, consisting of senior members from South Australian Government departments, was established to support disability reform across government. This includes work to inform discussions with the Australian Government and other jurisdictions regarding design and performance of the NDIS and SA's contribution to ADS.

Further information on activities being implemented by South Australia is available on the South Australian Government [Inclusive SA](#) website.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Premier's Disability Advisory Council assists the Tasmanian Government and broader community to enable the full participation of people with disability in all aspects of community life. The Advisory Council's roles include:

- Providing strategic advice to the Tasmanian Government on directions, policies and solutions to issues related to social inclusion and participation of people with disability.
- Ensuring the perspectives of people with disability are reflected in the advice provided to the Tasmanian Government.
- Provide community consultation and input to major policy initiatives referred to it by Tasmanian Government.

The Minister's Disability Consultative Group provides an opportunity for the Disability Services Minister to consult with, and be advised by, a broad range of stakeholders to support and foster an inclusive and accessible Tasmania. This group provides an important consultative mechanism for people with lived experience of disability.

Consultations include:

- Development and delivery of disability services related policy and programs in Tasmania.
- Matters being considered by the Disability Reform Ministerial Council, as appropriate.
- Outcomes of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*.

Advocacy services are designed to enable people with disability to increase the control they have over their lives through representation of their interests and views in the community. The Tasmanian Government recurrently funds 3 advocacy organisations as part of their commitment to the National Disability Advocacy Program:

- Your Say Advocacy Tasmania is funded for combined individual and self-advocacy for people with disability and systemic advocacy that advances the collective rights and interests of people with disability.
- The Association for Children with Disability (Tas) Inc. is funded for combined individual and self-advocacy and information provision for children and young people with disability, their families, carers and related professionals, and systemic advocacy that advances the collective rights and interests of people with disability.
- Speak Out Advocacy Tasmania is funded for combined individual and self-advocacy for people with disability, systemic advocacy that advances the collective rights and interests of people with disability and the Speak Out Self Advocacy Conference focusing on education about rights and advocacy for people with intellectual disability.

In the third quarter of 2022–23, the Tasmanian Government worked with the 3 funded advocacy services to identify priorities for 2023–24. This included a focus on case studies demonstrating the issues arising, outcomes being achieved for people with disability through advocacy, demographic information about the people requesting advocacy through the funded organisations and what this can tell us about need in the sector.

Further information on activities being implemented by Tasmania is available on the Tasmanian Government [Department of Premier and Cabinet](#) website.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Government is currently developing the ACT Disability Strategy. The Strategy will consolidate the ACT's commitment to ADS and create actions and outcomes in the local community. The ACT Disability Strategy will align initiatives under a holistic framework, including the Disability Health Strategy, Disability Justice Strategy and the Inclusive Education Strategy. Further information about the ACT Disability Strategy is available on the ACT Government [Community Services](#) website.

The [Disability Reference Group](#) is an advisory group whose work is underpinned by ADS. Members draw on their own experience to ensure the ACT Government is aware of the issues which affect people with disability in the ACT.

Other advisory committees in the ACT include the [Disability Justice Reference Group](#), the [Disability Education Reference Group](#), the Corrective Services Disability Expert Reference Group, the ACT Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee, the Transport and City Services Accessibility Reference Group and the Canberra Hospital Expansion Consumer Reference Group.

Further information on activities being implemented by the ACT is available on the ACT Government [Community Services](#) website.

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Government Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (TFHC) is responsible for coordinating and reporting on the progress of the targeted actions of ADS.

Through regular quarterly meetings with representatives from all involved Northern Territory Government agencies, TFHC is able to progress the implementation of activities and programs across ADS.

The *Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022–2032*, and the associated *Northern Territory Disability Strategy Action Plan 2022–2025*, are closely aligned with ADS.

The Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) is a Ministerial-endorsed committee that meets tri-annually to advise government on disability focused issues and priorities. Currently the DAC is tasked with the oversight and monitoring of the implementation of the Northern Territory Disability Strategy and provides feedback and advice on identified issues or roadblocks experienced by responsible Northern Territory Government agencies who may be experiencing difficulty implementing their assigned action.

During 2022–23, the Northern Territory hosted the NDIS Independent Panel Review as they visited remote and regional Territory communities. During this visit, the Panel was exposed to the unique experience of local service providers and people living in those communities with disability. Through the Panel visit and associated deep dive activities in 2 remote communities of Maningrida and Yuendumu, there has been proactive input to develop strategies and actions to improve access and utilisation of NDIS supports in these and other remote communities for people with disability.

In 2023, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) is commencing work to facilitate the next version of the EmployAbility Strategy. The document gives agencies tools, information and resources to increase attraction and retention rates for people with disability across the Northern Territory Public Service and promotes accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. Disability action plans for Northern Territory Government agencies are available on the OCPE website.

The Northern Territory Government continues its commitment to ensure people with disability have equitable access to services and opportunities to participate in the community, no matter where they live.

Further information on activities being implemented by Northern Territory is available on the Northern Territory Government Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities website.

Local Government

Australia's 537 councils play a vital role in their communities. Councils are the closest level of government to their community and deliver around 150 services. Every Australian is touched by local government and everyone makes use of a council service, program or facility every day. Because councillors and councils staff live locally and work in communities, they are able to identify community needs and find solutions. They understand that providing universal access to community services and facilities supports social connection, wellbeing and full participation, including social and recreational pursuits for all residents and visitors. Each of the 537 councils in Australia shares a common goal – to achieve the best possible outcomes for its community.

All councils develop strategic plans with their communities to guide future development and support their local communities; and do so in collaboration with their respective state and territory governments.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) is pleased to see an increase in the numbers of Disability Inclusion and Access Plans being developed across Australia, and the impact this will have in considering the needs of people with disability as part of usual business for councils. Some councils are developing their third, fourth or even fifth Disability Inclusion and Access Plan and have established and mature disability advisory bodies and consultation arrangements. Even where state and territory governments have not mandated the development of Disability Inclusion and Access Plans, many councils will develop comprehensive disability plans to reflect community needs and expectations.

Whether it be through provision of recreational facilities, infrastructure and property services, community services or improving their own business and recruitment processes, the greater recognition and inclusion of people with disability will contribute to improved outcomes not only for people with disability but for the wider community.

Some highlights from local governments from the reporting period include:

- Darwin City Council, NT, supports the [DiversAbility Collective](#), a network of disability and social services organisations working collaboratively to build a Darwin that is inclusive of all people. Each year this group coordinates the Carnival of Fun recognising International Day of People with Disability.
- Byron Bay Shire Council, NSW, approved 20% of dwellings in multi-dwelling or medium density housing developments as adaptable housing.
- City of Sydney, NSW, has produced an accessible guide to decision-making to ensure that people with disability are informed and can actively take part in Council decision-making processes.
- Cumberland City Council, NSW, hosted an art exhibition, 'Out Of Order', curated by an artist with disability and featuring artists with disability.

- Shire of Dardanup, WA, Festive Auslan Choir Project was created and implemented by the Shire's Place and Community Events Team to build community participation, connection, accessibility and inclusivity. The project saw 24 community members attend an 8-week Auslan course, where they learned the signing of basic words, fingerspelling, and 6 Christmas songs.
- The Municipal Association of Victoria's disability employment program, piloting work experience programs for people with disability in 10 councils in a diversity of settings (metropolitan, regional, rural).
- The City of Playford, SA, has developed an online learning platform that teaches people with intellectual disability how to use money safely, budget and save. Everyday money skills was developed by people with intellectual disability via a co-design development process to assist with things such as savvy shopping, avoiding scams, checking change, and dealing with banks.
- Brisbane City Council, Queensland, released A City for Everyone: Draft Inclusive Brisbane Plan 2019–2029 for public consultation in November 2018 and received over 1,200 responses from residents to develop an inclusive plan for the city. Since 2012 Council has invested over \$230 million in implementing disability access and inclusion plans.
- In June 2023, Kingborough Council, Tasmania, endorsed the Diversity and Inclusion Statement prepared by the Disability Inclusion and Access Advisory Committee to raise awareness of neurodiversity amongst staff and the broader community, and to encourage inclusivity and reduce discrimination. The Kingborough Council is committed to providing workplace accommodations, providing senior staff with specific training on identifying and working positively with employees who are neurodiverse, and putting greater emphasis on diversity during recruitment and induction processes.

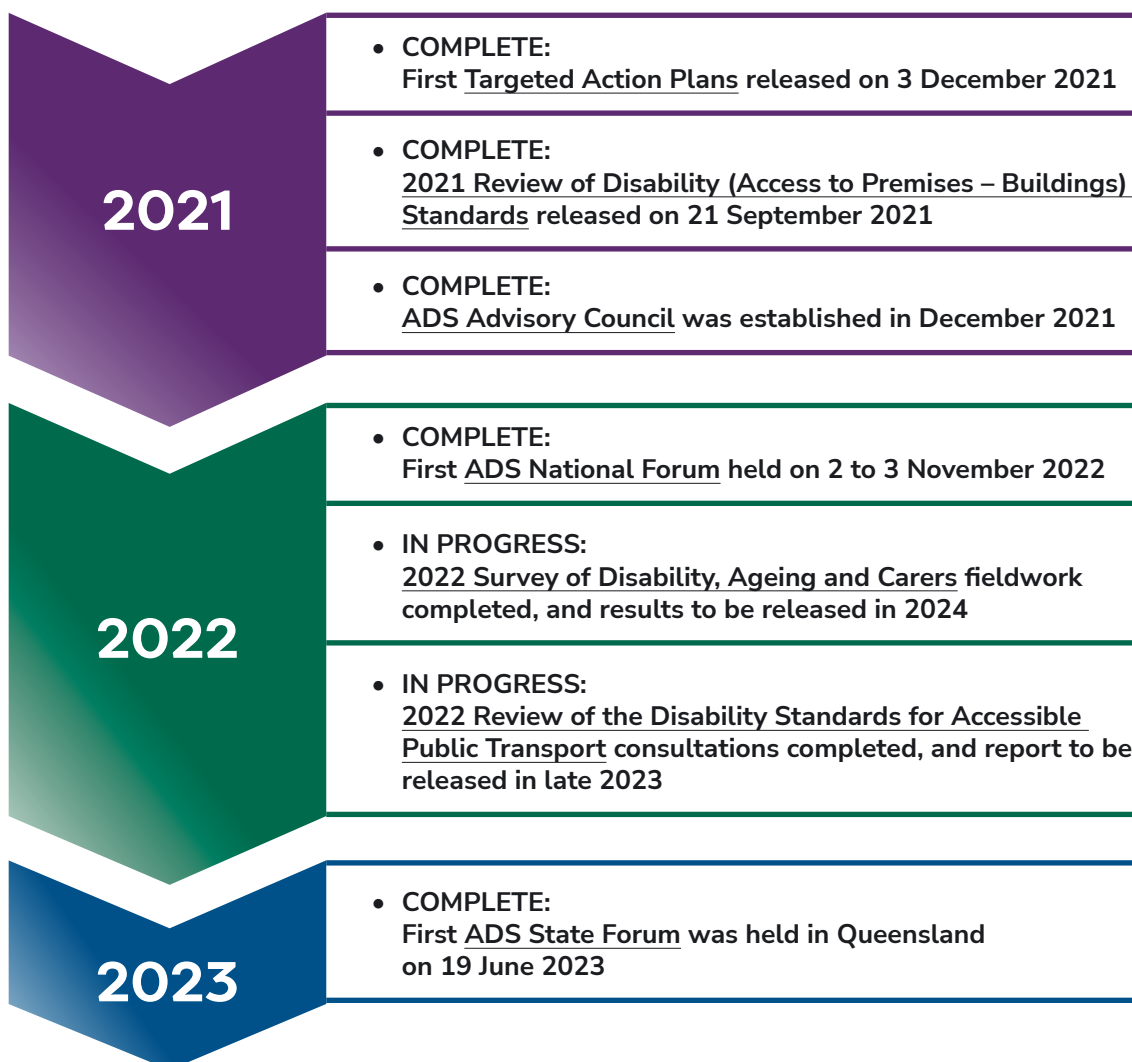
Australia's Disability Strategy Roadmap

ADS Roadmap gives an overview of the key work being done under ADS and shows when these activities will happen.

During the life of ADS, the Roadmap will be updated regularly to include where deliverables are in progress and when they have been completed. During the reporting period, several Roadmap milestones were due for delivery. All milestones scheduled for 3 December 2021 to 30 June 2023 have been completed, or are in progress and on their way to delivery.

The image below provides an overview of Roadmap milestones during the reporting period.

ADS: The Journey So Far



Australia's Disability Strategy Outcome Areas

The 7 Outcome Areas in ADS collectively represent the areas people with disability told us are important to them and needed to be improved to achieve an inclusive Australian society.

The Outcome Areas set out priorities for governments at all levels to work with the community, business, and people with disability to deliver the needed changes. This includes providing employment opportunities, high-quality inclusive education, improving community attitudes, and making homes and communities safe, inclusive and accessible.

The following sections of this Report provide a sample of achievements and progress by the Australian Government and state and territory governments, from 3 December 2021 to 30 June 2023.

ADS Advisory Council has told us that future targeted actions need to be developed in consultation with the disability community. For initiatives to be successful, people with disability need to be involved in initiatives design, development, and implementation. Disability Representative Organisations have echoed this sentiment.



Outcome Area:

Employment and Financial Security

Outcome: People with disability have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives

Policy Priorities

1. Increase employment of people with disability.
2. Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.
3. Strengthen financial independence of people with disability.

The unemployment rate for people with disability is over double that of working-age people without disability. The employment rate for working-age people with disability has remained relatively unchanged for decades.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), key themes among people with disability were the need to remove barriers at the employer level and improving the transition from education to employment for young people with disability. At the [Queensland ADS State Forum](#) (June 2023), participants echoed the same ideas around employment. Disability Representative Organisations have told us there is much more to do given the slow progress related to employment.

ADS recognises that employment and financial security are central to improving outcomes for people with disability. This includes providing jobs and career opportunities and having adequate income for people with disability to meet their needs. In practical terms, this Outcome Area encourages actions that overcome the barriers to employment experienced by people with disability.

[Employ My Ability](#), the Disability Employment Strategy, supports progress in this Outcome Area. This strategy is a guiding framework for governments, employers and the broader community towards a workforce that values diverse talent and where people with disability can reach their full potential. Employ My Ability has been informed by stakeholder feedback, including people with disability, their families and carers, advocacy organisations, peak bodies, employers and service providers. Employ My Ability is an [Associated Plan](#) of ADS.

The Disability Employment Services (DES) program continues to support people with disability to find and keep a job, including trialling new ways to connect participants with jobs, and the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program continues to see increasing rates of participants achieving an education or employment outcome.

On 1 to 2 September 2022, the Australian Government held the Jobs and Skills summit in Canberra, at which the Australian Government announced funding for 2 disability employment pilots. Through the first pilot, up to \$3.3 million will be provided to partner with the Business Council of Australia to develop a Disability Employment Initiative pilot aimed at increasing employment and improving career pathways of people with disability. The second pilot provided \$3.3 million to establish a Visitor Economy Disability Pilot to help people with disability secure sustained jobs in tourism.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve employment and financial security for people with disability.

Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy

The Australian Government released the *Australian Public Service (APS) Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25* in December 2020. As a key employer in the community and public sector, the Government has committed to a 7% employment target of people with disability in the APS by 2025.

The Strategy was developed in consultation with Australian Government agencies, disability peak bodies, people with disability and the former Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Dr Ben Gauntlett. Consultations with people with disability highlighted the interest in public sector careers and the barriers people with disability perceive to entry and to career progression.

The Strategy aims to increase the employment of people with disability across the APS. A strong positive swing in representational rates is not likely to occur without intervention, for example a shift in how recruitment is undertaken. Agencies are taking action: for example, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has introduced inclusive recruitment requirements, such as requiring recruitment panel members to complete training on accessibility and inclusion recruitment practices, having most recruitment panels include a person with lived experience of disability and requiring questions about disability attitudes to be included in recruitment assessments of applicants. NDIA's *Disability Inclusion Plan 2022–2025* aims to establish NDIA as an employer of choice through industry leading inclusion and diversity practices co-designed with NDIA staff. Looking forward, NDIA is exploring opportunities to establish a mentoring program and to develop a strategy focused on neurodivergent applicants and staff.

Many Australian Government agencies have established inclusion and disability strategies or plans, internal disability advisory groups and peer networks for their employees with disability. Collectively, these activities will lift employment outcomes for people with disability in the APS and support an improved focus on disability through agencies' work.

In 2022, the Australian Public Service Commission launched guidance to support agencies to create an inclusive culture and improve recruitment experiences of people with disability. The Australian Government has undertaken an analysis of existing levels of accessibility across the APS, as part of the Dignified Access Review. The Final Report of the Review will highlight the barriers to accessibility in APS office accommodation and make recommendations to support agencies create inclusive and accessible environments.

There are a number of targeted employment pathways that are open to people with disability, including trainee, apprentice and school leaver programs, work experience, internships and the APS Graduate Program. One example is the Aurora Neurodiversity Program at Services Australia.

Case Study: Aurora Neurodiversity Program

The Aurora Neurodiversity Program (Aurora) provides people with Autism an alternative pathway into the APS through affirmative measures – disability job opportunities in Services Australia.

The recruitment process is inclusive, and does not involve formal applications, interviews, or psychometric testing. Hiring managers provide workplace-based activities and evaluate how people approach and complete tasks, individually and as a group.

Before commencement, participants have an individualised success plan identifying required support and workplace adjustments. Managers and teams receive Autism Awareness training. Successful participants and managers are provided enabling support for 18 months.

After piloting Aurora in 2019–20, the second Aurora program commenced in January 2022. Program 2 saw the engagement of 27 participants into specialist roles, including data analysts, intelligence officers, solutions designers, and project officers. Program 3, from January 2023, sought to fill up to 70 positions. Up to 30 June 2023, 18 participants commenced employment, with another 11 progressing through the on-boarding process. Program 3 will run until the end of 2023.

Case Study: Adult Mental Health Pilot

The IPS is an internationally-recognised supported employment model that helps people with mental illness find and keep a job of their choice. Since the launch of ADS, the Australian Government has implemented the Adult Mental Health (AMH) Pilot to test the viability of the IPS model for adults with mental illness. The AMH Pilot is being delivered in 2 Head to Health Centres, in Perth and Darwin.

A 20-year-old client met their IPS worker in December 2022. The client was quite shy, but keen to start. The client had experienced obstacles to employment, including housing instability, low education due to bullying, limited social supports and a history of drug use.

The client had a goal of getting a job in retail, at a shopping centre easy for them to get transport to. This would support them with their other goals, like travel. At their appointments, the client and IPS worker worked together on the client's resume and recognising their skills. The client took on board their IPS worker's suggestions on things they could do. The IPS worker supported the client in building their confidence around approaching potential employers and empowering them in finding work.

The client and the IPS worker worked together on how to get ready for interviews. At an interview at a retail shop at their preferred shopping centre, the client impressed the employer and was later advised they were successful.

This job is just the start for the client. They now have a goal to study Cyber Security while working. There may be challenges ahead, but as IPS support is ongoing, the IPS worker will be here to support the client if needed.

Employment Recruitment, New South Wales

NSW Government is committed to increasing the numbers of people with disability employed in the NSW public sector and to supporting initiatives that increase employment for people with disability across the community.

In the reporting period, several public authorities reported undertaking a diverse range of initiatives specifically to increase the percentage of people with disability in their workforce. Some ran targeted intake programs for people with disability, such as the Department of Regional NSW which worked with its office concierge employment company to offer employment opportunities to people with learning disabilities.

Other examples include:

- The NSW Department of Communities and Justice offered 20 placements to interns with disability through the Australian Network on Disability's Stepping Into Internship program and provided managers with training in Disability Confident Recruiting.
- Transport for NSW ran a Tailored Talent program for neurodiverse and Autistic people, and other public authorities offered traineeships, work experience, trainee internships, and volunteer work opportunities for people with disability.
- The Department of Regional NSW implemented its Disability Recruitment Strategy for 2022–2023 in July 2022. In the 6 months from July to December 2022, the disability employee base rose from 1.6% to 2.4%.
- City of Sydney Council established entry-level internships, appointing 2 people with disability into professional roles.

Reconnect Program, Victoria

Reconnect is a place-based model that supports people experiencing complex barriers to education, training and employment. The program applies a participant-centred approach that involves co-designing a Work and Learning Plan, as well as a Wrap-around Support Plan that aligns with the vocational aspirations of the participants and the supports required to achieve positive outcomes. There are 34 Reconnect providers comprising TAFEs, Learn Locals and Community Service Organisations.

Reconnect has a current funding commitment of \$47 million and service delivery concludes in December 2024. This equates to \$11.75 million per annum over 4 years. Since December 2021, the Reconnect program has supported 1,022 participants with disability. The Reconnect program is intended to improve a person's chance of breaking the cycle of disadvantage by creating equity, improving access and increasing choice in pathways through education and employment.

Case Study: Training Priority Projects and Skilling, South Australia

The South Australian Department for Education, through Training Priority Projects and Skilling South Australia initiatives, has supported over 25 people with disability in their learning journeys to employment. An example was a project led by Purple Orange and EQUALS International that worked with aged care providers to design a group traineeship program for people with disability.

The project aimed to assist 5 aged care providers to build their confidence in employing people with disability and to demonstrate the use of traineeships for people with disability as a viable recruitment strategy in addressing workforce shortages and high staff turnover in the aged care sector.

Nine trainees were enrolled in a Certificate III Individual Support and employed through 2 demonstration projects that connected with a range of support partners for the students, including DES support.

“Before this job I worked in supported employment. I had great friends there, but it was the same thing every day, I worked there for 6 years. I was a team leader, I worked really hard, but I lost interest, I was teased by the employees and the pay was terrible. I earned \$6 an hour, it started at \$2.20 an hour, I lost my self-respect and my dignity.

“This job as a trainee has shown me that I am better than that. I now have more self-respect, because of what I do and what I am paid.

“Our clients have lost their independence. We give them back some of that independence and I just really love that. Giving back to the community has given me so much confidence, I feel really empowered. Before, I wasn't that good at thinking on my feet, now I don't need to be asked, I know what needs to be done and I do it, and if I've finished my tasks, I help the other team.

“Now I am happy, I wouldn't give up this job for anything. In the future, I will be doing what I am doing into 2023 and beyond.”

– Project Participant

Employment in the State Service, Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government State Service Management Office (SSMO) completed a review of the State Services People with Disability Employment Register. In December 2022, SSMO launched their new Disability Employment Portal.

The [Portal](#) is for people with disability looking for jobs in the Tasmanian State Service and government agencies employing people with disability. It includes information on how to get job ready, find work, how to apply, tips on resume writing and the interview process, as well as details on workplace support and adjustments. Importantly, the Portal has been developed in close consultation with key stakeholders, including Disability Employment Service providers, Human Resources employees working in diversity and inclusion and recruitment positions, and Tasmanian State Service employees with lived experiences of disability.

Testing of the Portal has been undertaken by these stakeholders, along with members of the Tasmania Premier's Disability Advisory Council, to ensure the site is accessible, user-friendly, informative and responsive. In addition, SSMO has undertaken a review of the whole-of-government [Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#) in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group.

The refreshed Diversity and Inclusion Framework will be released later in 2023, complementing and supporting other Tasmanian Government policies, including Tasmania's Disability Framework for Action.

Social Enterprise Jobs Fund, Queensland

The Queensland Government has committed \$8 million for the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund to support social enterprises to scale-up activities and create training and employment opportunities. This funding was announced in the 2020–21 State Budget. Under the Fund, \$4.6 million in funding has been allocated to business development and growth grants for eligible social enterprises.

A component of the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund, the Social Enterprise Growth Grants program provides grants of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for eligible social enterprises to scale-up or adapt their business operations, to extend their reach and mission, and to increase sustainability or employment outcomes.

Under the Social Enterprise Growth Grants program, \$574,000 has been committed to fund 29 projects delivered by organisations that specifically employ or support the employment of people with disability.

As part of the 2022–23 first funding round of Social Enterprise Growth Grants, Nundah Community Enterprises Cooperative Ltd was awarded \$25,000 for upgrades to equipment, enabling the social enterprise to service café and gardening contracts at the Supreme and Magistrates Court complex in the Brisbane CBD. Nundah Community Enterprises Cooperative focuses on creating meaningful work for people with cognitive disability who have been long-term unemployed through place-based employment-generating businesses in hospitality and horticulture.



Outcome Area:

Inclusive Homes and Communities

**Outcome: People with disability live
in inclusive, accessible and well-designed
homes and communities**

Policy Priorities

1. Increase the availability of affordable housing.
2. Housing is accessible and people with disability have a choice and control about where they live, who they live with, and who comes into their home.
3. People with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life.
4. The built and natural environment is accessible.
5. Transport systems are accessible for the whole community.
6. Information and communication systems are accessible, reliable and responsive.

ADS Advisory Council notes that people with disability continue to report significant barriers and discrimination in relation to public transport. For example, people with disability experience barriers regarding airline travel, including airport, airline and aircraft infrastructure, checking in processes, online booking systems and information.

During development of ADS, consultation with people with disability revealed housing affordability and accessibility to be significant issues. People with disability consistently said that physical access to places, spaces and infrastructure—including accessible housing, public facilities and other systems like transport and communication systems—continued to be a barrier to living in some communities. Without accessible housing and communities, it becomes much harder to take part in community life.

ADS recognises the importance of housing, infrastructure and inclusive communities in supporting people with disability take part in their communities. In practical terms, this Outcome Area encourages actions that support the participation of people with disability in their communities through accessible housing, transport and communication systems and the built environment. Activities like having Changing Places facilities in every Local Government Area will increase social inclusion for everyone.

ADS Advisory Council has raised concerns regarding housing for people with disability. The Advisory Council has advised the disability community is experiencing significant issues with housing, particularly with regard to affordability and accessibility.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), people with disability recognised the addition of 'silver' accessibility requirements to the National Construction Code as movement in the right direction, but also highlighted the need to incentivise making existing homes more accessible and change attitudes towards universal design. Disability Representative Organisations also view the accessibility requirements as progress. However, they have also told us that affordable housing is particularly acute for people on low incomes, including people with disability, and more effort is needed to ensure housing is affordable.

The introduction of minimum standards of accessibility heralds a shift towards housing universal design. While the Australian Building Codes Board liveable housing standard is voluntary, the enhanced National Construction Code mandatory accessibility requirements took effect from 1 September 2023. These requirements and standards will improve accessibility to meet the needs of all people at various stages of their lives, including people with disability and older people.

Australia's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, recognises the diversity of Australian stories in every art form. Looking forward, the Australian Government has committed \$5 million to fund implementation activities for an Arts and Disability Associated Plan to support people with disability to access and participate fully in the cultural and creative life of Australia.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to promote inclusive homes and communities for people with disability.

VIRTUS Oceania Asia Games 2022

The Australian Government invested \$1.95 million to support the delivery of the 2022 VIRTUS Oceania Asia Games (VIRTUS) in Brisbane. The VIRTUS Games enabled 1,000 athletes with intellectual disability, from across the Asia-Oceania and neighbouring Pacific region, to compete in 12 high-performance sports on the global stage.

Hosting the VIRTUS Games supported increased representation of Australian athletes with intellectual disability in high-performance sport and served as an opportunity to raise awareness of the economic, social, health and community wellbeing benefits of inclusive sport.

The VIRTUS Games also provided employment opportunities for people with intellectual disability in the planning and delivery of the event. In parallel to the VIRTUS Games, an inclusive sport forum was staged as a platform to engage, collaborate and exchange ideas on how sport can drive inclusion and belonging.

Changing Places

Changing Places are specialised accessible toilet and changing facilities, making them suitable for people who are unable to use standard accessible toilets and people with high support needs. Each Changing Place includes features designed for people with disability with high support needs and include an extra circulation space, a ceiling hoist system, adjustable adult-sized changing table and automatic doors. These facilities enhance community accessibility and promote social inclusion for everyone.

The Australian Government's Changing Places Initiative aims to accelerate the construction of accessible facilities across Australia, with an investment of \$32.2 million over 4 years available to support the establishment of new Changing Places in Local Government Areas currently without one.

In the 2022–23 financial year, the Australian Government provided funding towards 7 Changing Places facilities, in partnership with the governments of the ACT, South Australia and Victoria.

The Australian Government is continuing to engage with state and territory governments through to 2025–26, to identify opportunities to partner around additional Changing Places facilities.

Victoria

In 2021–22, the Victorian Government allocated \$2.5 million to fund 18 Changing Places facilities. In 2022–23, this was bolstered by a further \$5.4 million for 32 Changing Places facilities, including in popular tourism locations, such as Falls Creek and Lakes Entrance. Victoria has led the way nationally, with 116 Changing Places facilities.

New South Wales

During the reporting period, many local councils funded and built new accessible toilets. The Forbes Shire Council and Wollongong City Council installed Changing Places facilities, with existing facilities maintained and often upgraded.

Western Australia

In early 2021, the Western Australian State Government committed \$2 million over 2 years to further expand the network of Changing Places across Western Australia. Funding has been provided to construct 12 facilities including in regional and remote locations, such as East Kimberley Wyndham, South-West, and Peel. There are now 47 registered Changing Places across Western Australia, with 35 in metropolitan Perth and 12 in regional centres.

South Australia

The South Australian Government has committed to match the Australian Government's contribution under the Changing Places Initiative (up to \$300,000 per year over 4 years), which will fund two-thirds of the cost to build Changing Places facilities in South Australian Local Government Areas without an existing facility. Under the initiative, the South Australian Government will also support the identification of facility locations and facilitate funding arrangements.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT currently has 3 Changing Places, located at the National Museum of Australia, Australian Parliament House and the Canberra Centre. In 2023, the ACT's outdoor annual art and cultural festival Enlighten ensured a dedicated Changing Place accessible bathroom, including adult change facilities and a hoist, was available on-site.

Premises Standards

The statutory *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010* (the Premises Standards) help ensure people with disability have equal access to public buildings. The Premises Standards also help building developers, certifiers and managers ensure buildings comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth). The Premises Standards are reviewed every 5 years.

As part of the 2021 Review, the Australian Government consulted over 500 people, including people with disability, other stakeholders in the disability sector, building professionals, employers and people at all levels of government.

The 2021 Review found people with disability were finding it easier to access public buildings built after the Premises Standards were introduced in 2010, indicating that the Premises Standards is achieving its objectives. However, people with disability also identified emerging issues and areas for improvement, and building professionals said they needed better guidance to help them comply with the Premises Standards.

The review of the Premises Standards is a specified deliverable in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about the 2021 Review of the Premises Standards is available on the Australian Government [Department of Industry, Science and Resources](#) website.

Accessible Transport Systems

The *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Transport Standards) are made under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth). The Transport Standards outline requirements public transport operators and providers must meet to make their services accessible for people with disability. However, barriers to travel across a journey remain, meaning one in six people aged 15 years and over with disability have difficulty using public transport.

A review of the Transport Standards is underway to assess whether the Standards are effectively removing discrimination against people with disability using public transport services and to understand what changes are required to address barriers to travel.

Extensive public consultations were held in 2023. The consultations were designed to put the lived experience of the disability community at the forefront of discussions.

People could have their say in a broad range of ways, including by making a written submission, by email or phone, completing a short survey, or by participating in a small focus group or webinar. Consultation sessions were delivered or co-facilitated by people with disability, and captions and Auslan were used to increase accessibility further.

More than 900 people participated in online and in-person consultation activities and over 100 people and organisations provided written submissions. Feedback provided during the public consultation period will be used to create the review report. The review report and Government response will be released in late 2023.

The review of the Transport Standards is a specified deliverable in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about the 2022 Review of the Transport Standards is available on the Australian Government [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#) website.

Case Study: Creative Australia's Arts and Disability Initiative Funding 2022

Creative Australia's (formerly known as the Australia Council for the Arts) [Arts and Disability Initiative](#) is designed to advance the careers of artists or arts workers with disability or who are D/deaf. It provides \$30,000 for up to 2 years to undertake significant projects that advance skills, practice or networks.

The initiative is part of Creative Australia's broader investment in response to research confirming the need to create pathways and address barriers to access and inclusion in the arts. This research is available on [Creative Australia's website](#).

In December 2022, Creative Australia announced the first 10 recipients of the Arts and Disability Initiative.

Writer and essayist Amanda Tink, one of the recipients, said:

"This initiative recognises the many ways in which disabled people are disadvantaged in the arts in Australia and is a practical contribution to redressing this problem.

"This project is my opportunity to learn from other blind or autistic writers, and to develop a writing style that draws on my first language.

"The Arts and Disability Initiative will enable me to do this while adequately paying all of us. The significance of this cannot be overstated since disabled people are often expected to write, and develop their craft, unpaid."

Inclusive Community Venues, Western Australia

Community organisations play a key role in creating inclusive environments for people with Autism and intellectual disability. Mainstream venues are increasingly looking to disability organisations to partner with, to build their capacity and improve inclusion of people with disability in their events.

For example, the [Fremantle Dockers](#), in collaboration with Autism Association of Western Australia, created a sensory room at Optus Stadium for the 2022 AFL season. The space was created with input and feedback from people with Autism and their families to create a safe and comfortable environment for people with sensory needs, so everyone has the opportunity to attend the footy. Over the 5 home games in 2022 there were 107 visitors to the room. A key future focus will be to consolidate and create sustainability of the sensory rooms, and to upskill the venue staff, so they remain successful over time with less direct support.

In January 2023, Western Australian Museum, in collaboration with Autism Association of Western Australia, held an exhibit displayed that showcased the success of the [Arts for Autism](#) Program. This community exhibition showcased one of the many ways in which with the right support and opportunity, communities can successfully understand, embrace, celebrate and include all people with Autism. As a part of the program, works were submitted by teenagers and adults with Autism, and selected winners were exhibited at a special event at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Additionally, 2 Quiet Tuesday sessions were held for children with Autism to attend the Art Gallery, outside of regular opening hours.

Building Stimulus Program, Victoria

Victoria is committed to providing high-quality, safe and secure housing based on the principles of choice and control for people requiring Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).

The Victorian Government allocated \$30 million to a building stimulus program to improve and upgrade 450 SDA homes across Victoria. Twenty-three per cent of properties with works undertaken were in regional Victoria.

Works were undertaken over a 2-year period using local businesses and contractors. This included careful planning to minimise disruption and to enable continuity of support in homes.

This program improved the quality and amenity of SDA homes, benefitting around 1,800 SDA residents. Examples of capital works undertaken include upgraded accessible bathrooms, new kitchens and flooring.

Resident engagement and property condition informed the works undertaken and ensured improvements met the needs of residents. SDA residents and their families have provided positive feedback on the improvements to their SDA homes.

The program has helped reduce the need for responsive maintenance and any subsequent interruptions to residents' homes.

WE'RE EQUAL, South Australia

In 2022, Equal Opportunity SA introduced WE'RE EQUAL. The initiative helps businesses and organisations show they have made a commitment to zero tolerance for discrimination, bullying and harassment. This means they ensure their customers, staff, suppliers and contractors are treated equally, respectfully and with dignity, regardless of age, ability, gender diversity, sexuality, relationship and reproductive status, race, religion and culture. To join WE'RE EQUAL, businesses and organisations must register with Equal Opportunity SA. Members sign a Statement of Commitment and undertake to prominently display the WE'RE EQUAL signage at entrances to their premises. They are also asked to communicate their commitment to their customers, workers, contractors and suppliers. Registration and membership of WE'RE EQUAL is free and resources for communicating the commitment are available from Equal Opportunity SA.

More than 80 businesses and organisations have joined WE'RE EQUAL from the financial sector, hospitality and high profile venues, government departments, legal firms, retail outlets, unions, social support enterprises, aged care and health. 2023–24 will see more organisations and venues become WE'RE EQUAL partners, ensuring the positive message of an inclusive society will reach a broad audience.



Outcome Area:

Safety, Rights and Justice

Outcome: The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law

Policy Priorities

1. People with disability are safe and feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Policies, processes and programs provide better responses to people with disability who have experienced trauma.
3. Policies, processes and programs for people with disability promote gender equality and prevent violence against groups at heightened risk, including women and their children.
4. The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected.
5. People with disability have equal access to justice.
6. The criminal justice system responds effectively to the complex needs and vulnerabilities of people with disability.

All Australians have the right to feel safe in their home, at work and in their communities. For far too long, people with disability have experienced higher rates of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect than people without disability.

Raising awareness about rights, advocating with people with disability in the criminal justice system and reducing violence and abuse of people with disability are some of the essential activities to help achieve the key priorities under this Outcome Area.

We are committed to preventing people with disability from experiencing harm through well-designed and integrated service systems, improved supports for those at risk of harm and appropriate pathways for action if things go wrong. This Outcome Area is supported by the [Safety Targeted Action Plan](#) activities.

We recognise effective access to justice for people with disability is crucial to ensuring the rights of people with disability are respected. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission works with NDIS participants and providers to improve the quality and safety of NDIS services and supports. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's work includes a focus on upholding the rights of people and quality supports as a protective factor against risk of harm. New initiatives, such as the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline pilot, will promote, protect and defend the human rights of all people with disability.

“People with disability are over-represented in places of detention and experience higher rates of ill-treatment in these environments.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

ADS Advisory Council is pleased to see legislative reform that supports improving outcomes for people with disability. For example, the Advisory Council notes the South Australian Government reforms related to criminalising coercive control and the impact this will have on people with disability. However, the Advisory Council recognises there is still much more to be done in the area of justice and law reform.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), the session on Safety, Rights and Justice included a focus on the high rates of violence towards women with disability. Women and girls with disability, including women and girls with psychosocial disabilities, face an increased vulnerability to violence, abuse, discrimination, and negative stereotyping at all ages. We are committed to enhancing access to equitable justice outcomes through the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* and developing legislative reforms to strengthen protections and criminal justice outcomes for vulnerable witnesses and victim-survivors.

Participants at ADS National Forum also voiced their concerns about the over-representation of people with disability in the criminal justice system, further over-representation of First Nations people with disability, lack of supports for people with disability in prison and the 'criminalisation of disability'.

States and territories are working towards more effective responses in the criminal justice system to people with disability. For example, the ACT Government is working through the First Action Plan under its Disability Justice Strategy, while Victoria is providing specialist disability supports and services to people in Victorian prisons, with the view to facilitate positive behaviour change and support appropriate transition back to the community. Western Australia is addressing a long-standing social justice issue affecting people with disability, by introducing reforms to end indefinite detention and improve procedural fairness for persons with mental impairment.

Disability Representative Organisations have told us more effort is needed in this Outcome Area. When considering people affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, for example First Nations people with disability, Disability Representative Organisations have told us the justice system remains ineffective in addressing their complex needs and vulnerabilities.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve safety, rights and justice for people with disability.

Australian Electoral Commission

The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) works to make electoral participation accessible and to continually enhance its services for people with disability.

The AEC implemented new accessible service offerings at the 2022 federal election. The services were informed by focus group research with members of the disability community and were used again at by-elections in 2023. The new service offerings include:

- Text-to-speech pens and portable hearing loops, available in a polling place in every electorate.
- A virtual Auslan interpreter service, available in every polling place.
- An updated AEC website, providing more detailed information about the accessibility of each polling place.
- Accessible signage about what assistive technologies and accessible services were available at a particular polling place.

The AEC continues to build its evidence base on accessible electoral participation, including through co-design and in collaboration with its Disability Advisory Committee. This information will be used to enhance accessible service offerings (within the legislative framework of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*), including expanded rollouts and supports where greater need is indicated.

National Centre for Disability Advocacy

The Australian Government has established a \$2 million National Centre for Disability Advocacy (NCDA) from 2022–23 to 2024–25. The NCDA will support providers under the National Disability Advocacy Program to improve access to, and the quality of, advocacy services. The NCDA will provide workforce development activities, build an evidence basis to understand and inform responses to unmet demand and service gaps, and work to raise systemic issues in the advocacy sector with government.

The Australian Government has also established a \$5.6 million 3-year phone-based advocacy pilot, the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline. The Helpline is an individual advocacy service providing people with disability access to support over the phone across Australia.

Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act, Western Australia

The *Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2022 (WA)* (CLMI Act) addresses a long-standing social justice issue affecting people with intellectual disability, cognitive impairment and Autism, by introducing reforms to end indefinite detention and improve procedural fairness for persons with mental impairment.

The CLMI Act was passed in Western Australian Parliament in March 2023 and assented in April 2023. Planning for the proclamation of the CLMI Act is underway.

The CLMI Act will play a significant role in protecting the human rights of, and ensuring positive outcomes for, persons with mental impairment in the justice system, including those with disability.

The CLMI Act has the following key features:

- Testing the evidence against the accused.
- Making community supervision orders available for both persons acquitted on account of mental impairment and individuals found unfit to stand trial.
- Ensuring limiting terms are set so custody orders are no longer than the term of imprisonment imposed, had the person with mental impairment been found guilty.
- Providing for the rights to appear, appeal and seek review of decisions of the courts and the new Mental Impairment Review Tribunal (the Tribunal).
- Ensuring determinations about the release of persons with mental impairment from custody, and any conditions imposed, are made by the Tribunal.

Disability Justice Strategy, Australian Capital Territory

The ACT *Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029* aims to achieve equity and inclusion for people with disability in the justice system. The First Action Plan under the Disability Justice Strategy describes the first 4 years of work (2019–2023) and the commitments made by stakeholders to ensure the ACT provides equal access to justice for people with disability.

The First Action Plan has established solid foundations towards the goal to improve access to justice for people with disability in the ACT. Significant progress has been achieved across the 5 focus areas, including:

- Nine dedicated Disability Liaison Officers actively working across the justice sector.
- Increased collaboration between justice agencies via the Community of Practice to assist people with disability to navigate the justice system.
- Increased awareness of disability and reasonable adjustments within justice agencies as a result of education and guidance.
- Critical resources and client-facing documents translated into Easy English and other accessible formats.
- The development and implementation of Disability Action and Inclusion Plans across participating justice agencies.

The ACT Government is developing the Disability Justice Strategy Second Action Plan. Key existing actions, such as the Community of Practice and translation of critical information and resources into accessible formats will continue. Accordingly, the Second Action Plan will focus on actions to build on the successes to date, to respond to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and to address any concerns identified by stakeholders. The Second Action Plan is intended to have a more person-focused approach to improve the experiences of people with disability within the justice system.

Further information about the Disability Justice Strategy is available on the ACT Government [Community Services](#) website.

“Many people with disability require support with decision-making to ensure their rights are adequately upheld. This means we need to establish a national framework for supported decision-making in line with recommendations made by the Australian Law Reform Commission and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

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Strengthening Domestic and Family Violence Supports for People with Disability, New South Wales

The Strengthening Domestic and Family Violence Supports for People with Disability is a 2-part project that aims to build the capacity of the disability sector to respond to domestic and family violence (DFV), foster collaboration between the disability and DFV sectors, and address gaps in knowledge and capacity. This project focuses on the development and delivery of training resources to:

- Help disability support workers recognise and address the issues of clients who have experienced or are experiencing DFV.
- Support the DFV sector to foster better understanding and address the obstacles people with disability face when accessing DFV services.

Resources to support people with disability experiencing DFV are available on the NSW Government [Communities and Justice](#) website.

Prison Disability Support Initiative, Victoria

A range of specialist disability supports and services are available to people in Victorian prisons. This includes specialist accommodation, a gender-responsive service at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and linkages to the NDIS.

The Prison Disability Support Initiative (PDSI) is key component of Corrections Victoria's disability service response. The PDSI uses a strengths-based approach to assist people with a suspected or confirmed cognitive impairment and evidence of associated functional deficits that require support. The aim of the PDSI is to facilitate positive behaviour change and support appropriate transition back to the community.

The PDSI delivers a range of services responsive to the individual's non-physical disability needs. This includes support to access disability-specific and transitional services, specialist clinical assessment for a formal diagnosis or clarity about an individual's complex presentation, case specific or general consultation, therapeutic intervention and delivery of cognitive impairment training to the correctional workforce.

The PDSI also collaborates with stakeholders to support people with disability to achieve goals, such as employment, accessing the NDIS and supported disability accommodation.

PDSI is consistent with ADS by responding effectively to the complex needs and vulnerabilities of people with cognitive disability within the justice system.

Review of the Disability Services Act 2011, Tasmania

The Tasmania Government undertook consultations from October to December 2021 as part of the review of the *Disability Services Act 2011* (Tasmania). The purpose of the review was to create legislation that provides a contemporary vision for a safe and inclusive Tasmania for people with disability.

Before starting, people with lived experience of disability were asked about the best ways to consult with the disability community. The manner and method of the consultations were informed by this advice. Activities were undertaken to promote participation by people with disability in the consultation activities.

The Minister's Disability Consultative Group, comprised of people with lived experience of disability, is a key stakeholder for the review of the Act and has been consulted with throughout the process. The group provided input during development of the Review Discussion Paper, were involved in the design of the consultation and took part in a targeted conversation about the role of a Disability Commissioner. The Premier's Disability Advisory Council was also briefed about the Review and invited to participate in consultation activities.

People with disability had several opportunities to take part in the engagement activities for the Review. This included booths at Disability Expos (attracted 153 people), an online forum with members of the Minister's Disability Consultative Group and Premier's Disability Advisory Council, in-person sessions through Speak Out and Association of Children with Disability Tasmania, 7 online sessions that attracted 58 attendees, and one-on-one consultations via phone, Zoom and in-person.

After considering the feedback, it was decided to create an entirely new Disability Inclusion Act that will advance the human rights of Tasmanians with disability and strengthen the Tasmanian Government's commitment to an equitable, inclusive and accessible State. Further consultation on the proposed legislation closed on 18 September 2023.



Outcome Area:

Personal and Community Support

Outcome: People with disability have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities

Policy Priorities

1. People with disability are able to access supports that meet their needs.
2. The NDIS provides eligible people with permanent and significant disability with access to reasonable and necessary disability supports.
3. The role of informal support is acknowledged and supported.
4. People with disability are supported to access assistive technology.

“I would like people with disability to be able to excel in Australia including in mainstream community and services, and the Strategy to help them do this.”

– ADS Advisory Council Member

The ability to access appropriate personal and community supports has a profound impact on a person's independence, quality of life and community participation across activities including education, work, recreation, and social and cultural life. The provision of these supports recognises the inherent dignity of all people with disability and their right to full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The introduction of the NDIS provided a major and positive shift in the provision of individualised supports and funding for eligible people with disability. While the improvements provided by the NDIS cannot be understated for many participants, it has also become the major focal point of any discussion on personal and community support.

During the development of ADS, people with disability recognised the improvements the NDIS has provided participants, but that other measures needed to build on and complement the NDIS for all people with disability.

As the roll out of the NDIS has formalised across jurisdictions, people with disability have voiced concerns about the importance of ensuring appropriate supports are able to be accessed by all people with disability, regardless of their location or participation in the NDIS. This includes through the provision of mainstream services in a way that is universally available and accessible to all people in the community, whether through physical and digital access, affordability of services or distance to services.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), people with disability said a focus needed to be maintained on the provision of personal and community supports as a broader ecosystem of supports and not restricted to just considering these supports for participants of the NDIS.

Effective supports play a fundamental role in supporting people's ability to participate in their life and their community. Often this includes support through informal supports. The role of informal support is a significant but often invisible aspect of assistance provided, with around one in nine Australians identifying as being in a caring role.

Disability Representative Organisations have told us there needs to be leadership and coordination between the 3 levels of government to ensure government investment in disability supports outside the NDIS, including Information, Linkages and Capacity Building, and inclusive mainstream services systems for all people with disability. Disability Representative Organisations have also expressed concerns regarding people with disability that are 65 or older being ineligible for the NDIS.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve personal and community support for people with disability.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

The NDIS continued to make a positive difference to NDIS participants, their families and carers.

Participant outcome data published in the NDIA's [Quarterly Reports](#) clearly demonstrates the positive impacts delivered by the NDIS. For participants who have been in the NDIS for at least 2 years, social and economic participation has increased since they first entered. Specifically, comparing responses at the most recent plan reassessment (between 2 and 6 years after entry) with responses at NDIS entry, data in the June 2023 Quarterly Report shows:

- Participation in community and social activities increased from 35% to 42% for all NDIS participants aged 15 years and older.
- The percentage of parents and carers in a paid job for participants who have been in the NDIS for at least 2 years increased from 46% to 51% for parents/carers of participants aged 0 to 14 years.
- Positive perceptions of whether the NDIS has helped with choice and control increased from 67% to 77% for participants aged 15 years and older.
- Participation in work (percentage in a paid job) has increased from 11% to 22% for participants aged 15 to 24.

Further data and insights about the operation of the NDIS are available in NDIA's [Quarterly Reports](#) on their website.

Guardianship and Supported Decision Making, Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Government is committed to moving towards a Supported Decision Making environment in both legislation and practice.

In February 2023, the ACT Government amended the [Guardianship and Management of Property Act 1991](#) (ACT). This amendment resulted in 2 changes to the law. First, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) is required to consider whether a person could access supports to make, communicate and participate in decisions. If the person could access these supports, this would be a factor for ACAT to not appoint a guardian or manager. Second, where guardians or managers are appointed, they are required to, as far as practicable, support the person to understand the decision to be made, participate in decision-making and communicate their wishes.

Investing in Prevention and Early Intervention, New South Wales

The importance of early checks is more acute for First Nations children. Only 34.3% of First Nations children are assessed as developmentally on track in all 5 domains of the Australian Early Development Census, compared to 56.2% of non-Indigenous children.

The NSW Government has invested \$376.5 million over 4 years in child development and family support as part of the Brighter Beginnings initiative. Brighter Beginnings is a whole-of-government initiative focused on improving outcomes for NSW children and their families in the first 2,000 days, from conception to school age, and will support the early recognition of disability and support appropriate intervention.

Community Connections Program, South Australia

In July 2021, the South Australian Government Department of Human Services initiated the Community Connections program. The program supports vulnerable people, who are not eligible for NDIS or My Aged Care, to be more involved in their community and to connect to support networks and services. The program can support participants short-term (up to 12 weeks) and is delivered through a state-wide network of funded non-government organisation partners.

In the 2022–2023 financial year, the program supported over 800 participants with disability to connect to services and community activities, representing half of all participants supported that year.

In addition to people with functional limitations, the program prioritises access for First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people who are financially disadvantaged, unpaid carers, LGBTIQ+ people, and people living in places where persistent and/or relative location-based disadvantage exists.



Outcome Area:

Education and Learning

Outcome: People with disability achieve their full potential through education and learning

Policy Priorities

1. Children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care.
2. Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability.
3. Improve pathways and accessibility to further education and training for people with disability.
4. People with disability have increased opportunities to participate in accessible and inclusive lifelong learning.

Education is a critical factor that impacts many areas in a person's life. It supports our employment and financial goals, friendships, health outcomes and recreational interests. Learning does not stop at the schoolyard gate: lifelong learning gives us even more opportunities for deeper engagement with our communities, personal fulfilment and to adapt to the changing world around us.

During development of ADS, access to education, including schools, was raised by consultation workshop participants more times than any other area when it came to having independence and wellbeing. People with disability told us a focus on inclusive schooling is critical for children and young people. People with disability said all schools need to have resources set aside to ensure adequate accessibility and support for students with disability and training for teachers and educators.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), participants discussed the need for teachers and schools to be better supported, such as through professional learning opportunities or building disability confidence across the sector. Disability Representative Organisations have stressed the importance of having accessible and inclusive education, including vocational training and tertiary education.

A key focus in ADS during the early years is early childhood. The Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan focuses on children from infancy to school age with disability or developmental concerns, their families and carers. This Targeted Action Plan sets out key actions to strengthen early identification, information, supports and pathways, as well as collaboration between programs and services, all of which contribute to the development and wellbeing of children to help them thrive across and between life stages. Further information about Targeted Action Plans is available under [Targeted Action Plans](#) in this Report.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve education and learning for people with disability.

“Education plays a vital role, and having teachers who specialise in supporting students with hearing loss, along with appropriate classroom improvements, is essential.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

Schooling Resources to Support Students with Disability

In 2022, resources were released to help students with disability and their families understand and exercise their rights under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The practical and easy-to-use resources were designed by young people with disability and their families, with help from Children and Young People with Disability Australia. The resources are available on the Australian Government [Department of Education](#) website, with versions available in Auslan, Easy Read and 8 community languages.

Stakeholders have advised the resources are helpful in advocating for reasonable adjustments to support inclusion in schools.

In 2023, resources were released to help school educators better understand their legal and professional obligations to students with disability. The resources are available on the [Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability](#) portal.

In addition, [new resources](#) were developed to provide teachers and school leaders with practical examples of supporting the inclusion of students with disability. The resources were developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in consultation with disability and education organisations.

Youth Voice Crew, Northern Territory

In 2023, the Northern Territory Government Department of Education established the Northern Territory Youth Voice Peak Group – the 'NT Youth Voice Crew' – to ensure student voice and advocacy guides the way the department delivers education programs and services to all young Territorians.

“One thing adults need to understand is that we also have really good ideas as young people, and we are seeing the world with a different perspective. The world is changing and moving forward – as a generation of new youth we are moving forward with it – getting a new perspective is very important – listen to it”

– Participant, co-design workshops, 2022

Sixteen diverse students in Years 9–12 from government and non-government schools have been selected to represent the youth voice in the Territory and provide quarterly advice on priority policy pieces for the department. Members are representative of all regions across the Territory, including homelands communities, the distance education system, and specialist education settings for students with disability.

The Crew have provided expert advice on Secondary provision; the Statement of Commitment – Supporting diversity of sexuality, gender identity and gender expression in education; and supporting student wellbeing and inclusion.

The Crew has co-designed its focus, which includes advice on improving experiences for students, lobbying for wellbeing in schools and developing a 'consultation toolkit'. Crewmembers are currently working on their own personal leadership skills, with representatives on the National Student Voice and National School Reform Agreement Ministerial Reference Group.

This action also appears in ADS Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan.

Healthy Food for All Abilities: a food literacy and nutrition education program for people with disability, Western Australia

The Western Australian Government Department of Communities funded Foodbank to deliver the first Healthy Food for All Abilities program in May 2022, and to date 700 people with disability have attended the 4-week program. In October 2022, the program commenced delivery regionally to areas including Geraldton, Bunbury, Kalgoorlie and Toodyay. Programs have also been delivered in partnership with Bega Gambirringu Health Services, Toodyay Community Resources Centre and Midway in Mandurah.

This interactive food literacy and nutrition education program is designed to empower people with disability with skills to enable them to choose and prepare healthy food. After attending the Healthy Food for All Abilities program, participants receive a resource pack with the 16 recipes (4 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 4 dinners) that have been cooked in the program. The recipe cards have all been printed with pictures and easy-to-follow instructions in a user-friendly format. Attendees receive a menu plan template and money saving tips resource to take home.

“There needs to be a shift away from diagnoses and a focus on inclusion, upskilling of the community and early childhood settings to support children and their families.”

– ADS Advisory Council Member

Diverse Learners Hub, Victoria

The Diverse Learners Hub (Hub) is a key initiative of the Victorian Government's \$1.6 billion Disability Inclusion reforms and the flagship initiative of the Victorian Government's Autism Education Strategy.

The Hub was established by the Victorian Government Department of Education in 2021 to help schools meet the needs and aspirations of diverse learners. This includes students with characteristics associated with Autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyscalculia.

There are 4 to 5 diverse learners in every mainstream classroom. Students do not require a formal diagnosis to benefit from the Hub's resources.

The Hub is available to all schools in Victoria. The Hub provides evidence-based practice advice, information and resources to meet the learning and wellbeing needs of diverse learners. It provides online resources, as well as a regional coaching workforce that works with government school leaders to help them build their school's capability to support diverse learners.

The Hub is a major part of the Victorian Government's Autism Education Strategy. This strategy was designed in consultation with stakeholder advisory groups, including representatives from disability organisations, such as Amaze, I CAN Network, Yellow Ladybugs, SPELD Victoria and the Association for Children with a Disability.

An independent evaluation of the Hub is being carried out over 3 years to monitor the Hub's progress and to assess its effectiveness. Early observations on the impact on schools have been positive, with increased awareness among school leaders on how to support diverse learners.

Education Disability Strategy, New South Wales

Education plays an important role in the lives of all children and young people, including children and young people with disability. It contributes to their future potential and prepares them for rewarding lives. A key priority of the NSW Government is to deliver the highest quality education no matter where a child or young person lives or their circumstances.

The NSW Government Department of Education's Disability Strategy is building a more inclusive education system. Education's Disability Strategy, supported by an outcomes framework, will build workforce capability to support students with disability through a professional learning framework, increase options for professional learning and resources and scholarships in inclusion. Ongoing consultations will include students with disability, their families and carers, schools, along with specific academics, advocates and government agencies.

The NSW Government Department of Education have created a one-stop online resource with information for families and carers to have better and easier experiences when they engage with the system and access advice. The Inclusive Practice Hub was released in November 2021, and the Inclusive Education Policy for Students with Disability and practice resources were published in Term 1 2022.



Outcome Area:

Health and Wellbeing

Outcome: People with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives

Policy Priorities

1. All health service providers have the capabilities to meet the needs of people with disability.
2. Prevention and early intervention health services are timely, comprehensive, appropriate and effective to support better overall health and wellbeing.
3. Mental health supports and services are appropriate, effective and accessible for people with disability.
4. Disaster preparedness, risk management plans and public emergency responses are inclusive of people with disability, and support their physical and mental health, and wellbeing.

“The new National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability is one priority under the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability which should significantly improve health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

Experiencing good health is a fundamental requirement for a good life. When people with disability experience barriers to good health, for example by systemic delays or inequitable health services, there are corresponding challenges to taking part in school, work and community life. People with disability continue to experience preventable health conditions and comorbidities at higher rates than people without disability. This impact is further exacerbated for some groups that experience intersectionality, for example First Nations people with disability, women and girls with disability, or LGBTIQ+ people with disability.

During the development of ADS, a concern among people with disability was the lack of disability awareness and training among health professionals. Some people with disability told us they are reluctant to access health services as they don't feel like their needs or concerns will be understood. During the consultations, people with disability consistently said health professionals needed a better understanding of disability in order to make services more effective, accessible and inclusive. Actions that support sectoral capacity building and attitudinal change will lead to more inclusive health services.

At ADS National Forum (November 2022), people with disability discussed the negative attitudes towards people with disability that can limit access to healthcare, diagnosis and decision-making about their own treatment.

People with disability often face numerous inequities to accessing health care and other necessary services, and the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and, in many ways, deepened these inequities. A positive step forward to improving healthcare is the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability.

The disability community, including ADS Advisory Council, have also expressed concerns about COVID-19 supports for people with disability, and that better communication products specific for people with disability and coordination between levels of government is required. Discussions at the Queensland ADS State Forum (June 2023) also reflected on the increased risk to people with disability during natural disasters.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disability.

National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability

The Australian Government progressed key actions funded under the [National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability](#), including:

- The Primary Care Enhancement Program for people with intellectual disability completed its third year of its pilot, with the final evaluation year on the horizon.
- Improving Annual Health Assessments for people with intellectual disability. During the reporting period, the Australian Government updated and published the evidence-based [Comprehensive Health Assessment Program](#) tool in May 2023, allowing consumers to freely access and use the tool.
- Intellectual Disability Health Curriculum Development Project. The Australian Government continued to progress development of intellectual disability health capabilities, tools and resources to improve pre-registration education for health professionals.
- A scoping and co-design process on possible models for a National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health was undertaken in 2021–22. A consortium of 9 organisations, led by the University of New South Wales, has been selected to establish and operate the National Centre. The National Centre will be a genuinely inclusive entity.

Further information on the National Roadmap is available in the [Associated Plans](#) section of this Report, and the Australian Government [Department of Health and Aged Care](#) website.

Investing in Our Mob: National Workforce and Training Program

The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) provided funding to the First Peoples Disability Network to develop and support the early implementation of the Community Controlled Disability Sector Strengthening Plan (Disability SSP). The Disability SSP will serve as a key link between ADS and Closing the Gap (CTG). The NIAA has also funded the First Peoples Disability Network to develop and implement the National Disability Footprint, as a key action under the Disability SSP.

The First Peoples Disability Network has established a National Training and Engagement team as part of the National Disability Footprint to support sectoral capacity-building and attitudinal change by identifying the capabilities required in the community-controlled disability sector. The team have developed and delivered the new 'Investing in our Mob: National Workforce and Training Program', which will be delivered to community-controlled organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and community services. This training will lead to First Nations people with disability receiving more inclusive, accessible and appropriate supports and care.

Further information about CTG is available in the [Roles and Responsibilities](#) section of this Report.

Emergency Planning, Northern Territory

Responding to the needs of vulnerable individuals in an emergency is a shared responsibility across the community, service providers and government sectors.

The Northern Territory Emergency Plan outlines the response processes for a number of hazards (emergencies) led by relevant government agencies as 'Hazard Management Authority'. For example, the Northern Territory Emergency Service is responsible for the response to flood and cyclone events, whereas Northern Territory Health will lead a pandemic or environmental health crisis response. Community preparedness briefing sessions are available through the Northern Territory Emergency Service.

During a 2023 flood event at a remote community, emergency planning strategies allowed for early identification of people with disability. This provided adequate time to prepare for the required evacuation, care and accommodation of impacted residents.

Across the Northern Territory, communicating emergency messages to the broader community includes the use of interpreters for live media, video, radio and printed communications: this may include the coordination of Auslan interpreters for televised public messaging and translated materials.

The Public Information Group, led by Northern Territory Government Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet, is currently updating the cache of messages in language to align with the new Australian Warning System. This will include a new suite of Auslan videos outlining emergency alerts across most natural hazards. Once available, these videos will be deployed through the SecureNT website and social media pages as required.

“The disability community has been one of the groups most impacted by recent disasters, particularly from poor disaster planning, response and reconstruction.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

Disability Health Strategy, Australian Capital Territory

The development of the 10-year ACT Disability Health Strategy and its 2-year First Action Plan is currently underway. It is supported by a significant evidence base, including feedback from the Health and Wellbeing consultations undertaken by the ACT Government Community Services Directorate for the ACT Disability Strategy, along with national and local legislation, policy, and research.

Development of the Disability Health Strategy and its First Action Plan is being guided by the ACT Disability Health Strategy Steering Committee, comprised of people with disability, carers of people with disability, service providers, advocacy groups, and ACT Government representatives.

In March 2023, the ACT Government hosted a roundtable to receive feedback on a Draft Disability Health Strategy. The roundtable involved 33 participants, including people with disability, carers of people with disability, service providers, advocacy groups and representatives from ACT Government Directorates. A Listening Report for this roundtable is on the ACT Government [Health](#) website.

The draft Disability Health Strategy was released for public consultation for 6 weeks from 14 June 2023 to 25 July 2023. Further information about the Disability Health Strategy project is available on the ACT Government [Your Say](#) website.

The Disability Health Strategy aims to ensure people with disability have equitable and appropriate access to healthcare in the ACT. It is part of the ACT Government's vision for an inclusive society that gives everyone the chance to participate in community life, and leaves no-one behind. The Disability Health Strategy is the overarching plan to improve health outcomes for people with disability in the ACT. The Disability Health Strategy will inform and guide the development of the First Action Plan and subsequent action plans over the 10 years.

People with Disability Emergency Preparedness Project, Tasmania

People with disability can be at increased risk during disasters. People with disability often have specific needs in the face of emergency events, which need to be considered alongside their other care needs and personal circumstances. The lessons learnt from recent major bushfire and flood disasters drive the need for emergency planning for people at increased risk in emergencies due to disability.

The People with Disability Emergency Preparedness Project will support people with disability, and their support networks, prepare for severe storm, floods and bushfires. Being prepared is one of the best ways to reduce the impacts of these events. The Project will assist people with disability to have a plan to cover their individual needs, including support providers who can continue to support them during/after disasters.

The primary focus of the Project is to support people with disability to plan for emergencies, in ways that recognise their personal circumstances using the Person-centred Emergency Planning approach, developed in NSW. The Project has resourcing from the Australian Government's Disaster Ready Fund and is supported by the Tasmanian State Emergency Service and Tasmania Fire Service.

The Project proposal was developed following a forum in February 2023 which included representatives from emergency services and the disability sector, and people with lived experience of disability. The Project steering committee and supporting advisory group include people with disability and are currently overseeing the Project's establishment.

Health Workforce Capability, Queensland

The Queensland Government *Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2022–2024* was developed in response to ADS, in consultation with people with disability, government and non-government stakeholders, including Queenslanders with Disability Network. Under the *Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2022–2024*, 7 health priority areas are supported by 34 individual actions, including a focus on inclusion, access, improved capability and service delivery, and disaster preparedness.

Improving capability of the health workforce and service providers is aimed at ensuring health providers have the capabilities to meet the needs of people with disability, predominantly through training, education and resources. To implement this policy priority in practice, a series of disability webinars were held for Queensland Department of Health staff in 2023, focused on key topics, including inclusive design, least restrictive practices, and successful reasonable adjustment initiatives. Participants' feedback included:

“It was a fantastic webinar, and so important to highlight designing for the edge users and consequences of exclusion as well as how we all consider people with a disability.”

“This has significantly impacted how I would think about these topics should I encounter them in my BAU workflow. We can always improve our workflow practices so that they are safe patient-focused clinical practices and improve their healthcare experience to achieve a better healthcare outcome.”

“The topics identified to discuss have created more awareness of how services... may require small changes or a more systemic change can be of immense benefit to the consumer.”



Outcome Area:

Community Attitudes

Outcome: Community attitudes support equality, inclusion and participation in society for people with disability

Policy Priorities

1. Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability.
2. Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability.
3. Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles.
4. Improving community attitudes to positively impact on Policy Priorities under the Strategy.

“Lack of awareness, understanding, or fear in the general community makes it difficult for individuals with hearing loss to access social events and communicate effectively.”

– Disability Representative Organisation

Poor accessibility and low disability awareness are barriers to people with disability participating as equal and valued members of their communities. Disability Representative Organisations have told us that poor accessibility and low disability awareness restrict opportunities for people with disability in finding and keeping a job, and accessing fundamental services like education, health care and legal services.

During development of ADS, people with disability told us that while some community attitudes had been improving over several years, a lack of understanding of disability and social acceptance of disability remain significant issues. More than one in six Australians have disability, yet community attitudes towards people with disability or an individual's disability continue to be one of the most fundamental barriers to a person's full inclusion and participation in Australian society.

Disability Representative Organisations have told us more effort is needed, so community attitudes support equality, inclusion and participation of people with disability, rather than acting as a roadblock to people with disability.

Without ongoing improvements in community attitudes, changes in treatment, respect, choice, and independence will not be achieved.

Governments continue to have a key role in leading and driving change in participation and inclusion through their role in the design and implementation of public policies and programs. Continuing to support inclusion and accessibility as a core element of all program design and roll out will support it to become embedded as a business as usual concept.

At [ADS National Forum](#) (November 2022), community attitudes was a recurring theme. Discussions included how stigma, ableism, negative attitudes and low expectations act as barriers in the lives of people with disability across multiple aspects of life.

Forum participants identified increasing representation of people with disability in media and leadership as key to shifting community attitudes and encouraging inclusion. In April 2023, Screen Australia released [Seeing Ourselves 2](#), a comprehensive research report examining on-screen representation in Australian TV drama from 2016 to 2021. The report revealed that on-screen disability representation remains critically low.

The following examples showcase practical actions that are working to improve community attitudes about people with disability.

Update to the Campaign Guidelines to include People with Disability

In December 2022, the Australian Government updated its [Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns](#) to include people with disability. Principle 2 of the Guidelines was updated to include people with disability as an audience to consider when developing and implementing campaigns. Australian Government entities must now:

- Pay special attention to communicating with people with disability.
- Use imagery in campaigns that appropriately reflects people with disability.

All Australian Government campaigns must demonstrate their compliance with the Principles before receiving approval to launch. A guide for campaign managers was developed to help them appropriately represent and communicate with people with disability and therefore comply with Principle 2.

Building Employer Confidence and Inclusion in Disability

An Information, Linkages and Capacity Building grant round was conducted to build the ability of employers to hire, support and retain employees with disability and to create inclusive workplaces by breaking down attitudinal barriers. This grant round has funded 29 activities covering a broad range of disability types across all states and territories since November 2022. Funded activities include: developing resources to support the development of employer capacity and capability; targeted organisational capacity building; and working with businesses to create personalised roles for people with disability. A full list of funded activities is available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.



Case Study: Disability Leadership Program

The Australian Government is investing \$2 million to support funding the Australian Institute of Company Directors to deliver a 2-year pilot for leaders with disability to improve their leadership and senior executive skills and prepare them for board membership and other senior leadership roles.

Increasing the inclusion of people with disability in leadership positions enables their perspectives to be included and supports positive perceptions of the value people with disability bring to decision-making roles more broadly in the community.

Two hundred full fee scholarships were proposed for leaders with disability over 18 years of age from across Australia, in particular women, First Nations people, and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Across 2 rounds, 208 recipients have been awarded scholarships, including 70 scholarships to women leaders with disability.

The 100 scholars from the first round commenced their courses in November 2022. Ninety-five scholars had completed by the end of June 2023. Under round 2, 108 scholarships were awarded in May 2023 and recipients commenced their courses in July 2023.

“When you live with a disability, people make assumptions about your ability to contribute.”

– Lillian Leigh MAICD, Lawyer and Health Consumer Consultant,
Scholarship Recipient 2022

The Lives We Lead, Western Australia

The Lives We Lead is a social media campaign of curated stories to influence, educate and challenge stereotypes within the broader community about the contributions of people with disability.

Utilising the broad reach of social media, audiences are invited to engage with stories written by people with disability about their personal stories of work, home life and experiences.

The social media campaign was delivered across a range of platforms, and the photos, videos and stories were uploaded to the partnering organisation's websites. The stories were shared with media outlets, local governments, community groups and associations to amplify the voices of people with disability.

The Lives We Lead continues to elevate social expectations of people with disability and educate the public about the diverse abilities and talents of people with disability. The campaign provides a platform for people with disability to embrace their unique experience and develop a sense of pride and self-confidence, encouraging a focus on individual aspirations while challenging societal stereotypes.

A partnership between key advocacy organisations and co-designed by a group of people with disability, The Lives We Lead campaign has been expanded to include The Lives We Lead Homelife and The Lives We Lead Worklife, showcasing how people with disability choose to live and work in the community. The campaign continues to amplify the voices of people with disability, leading to a more accurate and diverse portrayal of disability in society.

See Me for Me, South Australia

Launched in 2022, the See Me for Me campaign helped shift the narrative on what it means to have a disability, by challenging community perceptions and understanding of disability. With a surprising and memorable misdirection as the key campaign driver, the campaign aimed to remind people to see everyone for the unique, multi-faceted people they are, rather than their disability.

The development of the campaign included consultation with disability advocacy organisation JFA Purple Orange and South Australians with disability, to ensure the campaign clearly reflected what it means to have a disability. The campaign was highly successful, winning several industry awards and was well received by the community.

ADS State Forum, Queensland

The Queensland Government worked with Queenslanders with Disability Network and the Australian Government to host the first [ADS State Forum](#) on 19 June 2023. This was a Queensland-specific Forum to support better understanding of ADS and [Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a better Queensland](#) (Queensland's Disability Plan). As a signatory of ADS, Queensland was proud to be the first state or territory to convene a Forum, demonstrating Queensland's commitment to advancing the outcomes of ADS and together, making an inclusive Queensland.

ADS State Forum provided an opportunity for people to come together and look at how all Queenslanders can contribute to and shift attitudes about valuing the contribution of people with disability, and achieve outcomes through ADS and Queensland's Disability Plan. It also modelled the work already underway to champion inclusion in Queensland and the gifts, skills, capacities and leadership of people with disability.

ADS State Forum was run for and with people with disability, and engaged a broad range of sectors, with a particular focus on employment for people with disability. People with lived experience of disability were included in all aspects of the Forum, including in delivering the Forum via panels and facilitating table discussions.

This ADS State Forum is a specified deliverable in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about the Queensland ADS State Forum is available under [Engaging People with Disability](#) in this Report.



Implementing Australia's Disability Strategy

ADS includes Guiding Principles for policy development and program design, and Targeted Action Plans to drive change in specific areas, to assist governments to put policy into action.

We are delivering better public reporting on ADS's implementation and measurement of outcomes for people with disability to support accountability and transparency on whether ADS is having an effect, particularly in key areas of peoples' lives – such as employment, housing, health and education.

We have committed to regularly report on activity and measure progress to be transparent about how outcomes are changing for people with disability.

***Disability Representative Organisations
have told us that they, and people with lived
experience of disability, need to be involved
to ensure the ongoing success of ADS.***

Roles and Responsibilities

“Evidence over the last decade suggests that people with disability need coordinated, effective and cohesive governance to drive inclusion across all levels of government and the community”

– Disability Representative Organisation

ADS recognises that all levels of government have a role to play in reaching the goals of ADS. We have an obligation to make sure our services and systems are accessible for all members of the community. Depending on the service or system, this may involve embedding accessibility or inclusion provisions, such as reasonable adjustments, re-design using universal design principles, or implementing a specialised service stream.

ADS outlines which level of government is responsible for the services and supports people with disability rely on, with many services and systems relying on governments working together.

By working across government, we are bringing a focus on people with disability, and ADS, to areas outside of their disability-specific agencies.

Further information about the roles and responsibilities for each level of government is available on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

Closing the Gap

Under the Australian Government's Closing the Gap (CTG) Implementation Plan, the Australian Government recognises disability as a cross-cutting outcome area across all 4 Priority Reforms and 17 socio-economic targets. This commitment seeks to drive change across all portfolios to operationalise the cross-cutting outcome and to ensure all agencies have the capability to act. It also seeks to ensure all investments under each CTG socio-economic target are inclusive, accessible and equitable for First Nations people with disability.

Through the endorsement of ADS and CTG, the Australian Government has committed to ensuring policies, programs and services are designed to reflect the lived experience, unique needs, and inherent strengths and capacities of First Nations people with disability, their families and broader communities.

The Australian Government has funded the First Peoples Disability Network to develop and support the early implementation of the Community Controlled Disability Sector Strengthening Plan (Disability SSP). The First Peoples Disability Network is the national peak for First Nations people with disability.

The Disability SSP will serve as a key link between ADS and CTG. It provides a framework aligning the key priorities of ADS and CTG, while ensuring all implementation efforts are centred in human rights and strength-based approaches. The Disability SSP also aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including its principles, processes, and outcomes.

The Disability SSP identifies 31 high level actions and outcome areas, including Workforce, Capital Infrastructure, Service Delivery, Consistent Funding Models, Governance and Peak Body. Responsibilities for each action are divided at the Commonwealth, state and territory and community-controlled sector level, with many responsibilities shared between parties.

The Australian Government continues to work closely with the First Peoples Disability Network to co-design and deliver on the actions requiring Australian Government attention under the Disability SSP. Initial actions funded by the Australian Government include:

- First Peoples Disability Network to develop and deliver a Cultural Model of Inclusion and accompanying Organisational Assessment Tool to improve levels of accessibility and inclusion for First Nations peoples across disability services.
- \$11.714 million over 2021–2022 to 2024–2025 for the National Disability Footprint. The Australian Government has funded the First Peoples Disability Network to develop and implement the National Disability Footprint, as a key action under the Disability SSP. The National Disability Footprint will strengthen the representation of First Nations people with disability across all policy areas, strengthening the community-controlled sector, data collection, research agendas and knowledge infrastructure. The National Disability Footprint commenced in 2022, and has been specifically developed to align with Investment Priority Reform 2 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Improving Care Pathways

In 2022–23, work was undertaken to support the National Cabinet priority of reducing hospital discharge delays for those who were medically able to leave.

In July 2022, Commonwealth and state and territory disability ministers agreed to an approach, to be taken in partnership with health and other government ministers, to support the safe and timely hospital discharge of people eligible for the NDIS. The approach includes assessment and plan review timelines, recognising that participants may need an interim plan with reasonable and necessary accommodation and additional support if needed in the short to medium term.

State and territory governments are taking action on the ground, driving forward improvements in hospital discharges. For example, NSW Health and other NSW agencies worked collaboratively with the NDIS through its Health Liaison Officers to identify and address issues that were causing discharge delays for people with disability in the NSW public health system. Work continues to identify barriers to discharge and resolve issues in the best interest of the person with disability.

Information on the NDIA's commitment to supporting the safe and timely discharge of NDIS participants from hospital is available on the Australian Government [NDIS](#) website.

Disability and Social Services Regulation Amendment Act 2023, Victoria

The *Disability and Social Services Regulation Amendment Act 2023* (Vic) became law on 23 May 2023. The Act will strengthen rights, protections, and safeguards for people with disability in Victoria.

The Act includes amendments to:

- The *Disability Act 2006* (Vic) to strengthen and address gaps in safeguarding provisions.
- The *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic) to ensure residential rights protections for people living in Specialist Disability Accommodation.
- The *Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018* (Vic) to support efficient disability worker screening by streamlining requirements for criminal history checks.
- The *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (Vic) to ensure Victoria's new social services regulation scheme operates as intended when it begins on 1 July 2024.

From 2020 to 2022, as part of the review of the Disability Act, consultation with people with disability, government, community and sector stakeholders informed the development of the Act. The Act's consultation activities also included Disability Representative Organisations, self-advocacy groups, peak bodies, advocacy agencies, the Victorian Disability Advisory Council, and the Disability Act Review Advisory Group.

Review of the Disability Inclusion Act, South Australia

In 2022, the South Australian Government conducted an independent review of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA). The review found that the Act appears to be working well but would benefit from some amendments to enhance legislation, Inclusive SA (the state disability plan), and Disability Access and Inclusion Plans more broadly.

Fifty recommendations were made which were broadly accepted. Legislative amendments, where possible, have been enacted through the [Disability Inclusion \(Review Recommendations\) Amendment Bill 2023](#). Policy and operational improvements are being considered through the review of the South Australian Disability Inclusion Plan.

Disability Commissioner, Tasmania

Tasmanians with disability have expressed a need for a Disability Commissioner. The Tasmanian Government established this crucial role alongside the review of the *Disability Services Act 2011* (Tasmania).

The Tasmanian Government undertook extensive consultation about what the roles and responsibilities of the Disability Commissioner will be. Once established, the Tasmanian Disability Commissioner will work to ensure people with disability, and their families, receive the inclusive and accessible supports and services they need, including those supported through mainstream services.

The Tasmanian Government committed \$1.2 million over 4 years in 2021–22 to establish the Office of the Disability Commissioner and a further \$400,000 in 2022–23 for the first Tasmanian Disability Services Commissioner.

In January 2023, Mary Mallet was appointed as the Interim Disability Commissioner to establish the Office, including further work to scope the Commissioner's role and functions, the resources required, and the relationship to other statutory offices.

Guiding Principles

To achieve the vision of ADS, governments are committed to the development and implementation of policies, programs, services and systems which reflect the human rights principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Governments have agreed to use the Guiding Principles set out in ADS when developing policies, programs, services and systems. The Guiding Principles reflect the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The development and inclusion of the Guiding Principles received strong support during consultations for ADS.

The Guiding Principles have been developed to be used by all levels of government and non-government organisations to guide development and design of policies, programs, services and systems.

The Guide to the Guiding Principles

A commitment under ADS, a Guide to the Guiding Principles is being developed in consultation with people with disability to assist governments, business and the non-government sector apply the Guiding Principles in their work. Consultation for the Guide has included working with Disability Representative Organisations, ADS Advisory Council, state and territory governments, and a public consultation process.

Consultation on Guide to the Guiding Principles

The Australian Government facilitated public consultation to help design ADS Guide to the Guiding Principles and Guide to Involving People with Disability in Evaluation.

The Guide to the Guiding Principles will support and assist governments and organisations apply the Guiding Principles in their work. The Guide will provide additional detail to help policy makers better understand and use the Guiding Principles.

The Guide will help governments, business and the community consider whether their new policy, program, system, or service upholds the rights of people with disability in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The consultations sought input from people with disability and the broader community on how the Guide to the Guiding Principles can best help governments, business and the community make sure its work is appropriate and accessible for people with disability.

Further information about the consultation for the Guide is in the [Engaging People with Disability](#) section in this Report.

Implementing the Guiding Principles, Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Government has demonstrated a commitment to all the Guiding Principles of ADS, and in particular principles 1, 3 and 7, through the work done to centre the voice of people with disability in government advice and policy development.

The ACT Government has a number of committees on specific subject matter that include people with lived experience of disability, such as:

- Disability Reference Group
- Disability Justice Reference Group
- Transport and City Services Accessibility Reference Group
- Canberra Hospital Expansion Consumer Reference Group
- Corrective Services Disability Expert Reference Group
- Disability Education Reference Group.

People with disability have been central to the ongoing development of strategies such as the ACT Disability Strategy, Disability Health Strategy and Inclusive Education Strategy. Listening reports can be accessed through ACT Government websites:

- [ACT Disability Strategy](#)
- [Disability Health Strategy](#)
- [Inclusive Education Strategy](#).

The voice of people with disability has been and will continue to be central to the evaluation of policies and programs. An independent evaluation of the ACT Government Disability Justice Strategy First Action Plan has been conducted and is expected to be made available once finalised. This evaluation gathered information from a range of sources, including interviews with a number of people with disability, including people with lived experience of detention.

Systemic Reforms, Victoria

The Guiding Principles of ADS are reflected in the priority areas of Inclusive Victoria, and Inclusive Victoria's 6 systemic reforms:

1. Co-design with people with disability
2. Aboriginal self-determination
3. Intersectional approaches
4. Accessible communications and universal design
5. Disability confident and inclusive workplaces
6. Effective data and outcomes reporting.

All Victorian Government departments have committed to the 6 systemic reforms and are progressing with implementing their actions under Inclusive Victoria. Victorian Government departments will report on how they are implementing the systemic reforms as part of their state disability plan reporting requirements.

The Victorian Disability Advisory Council also has a role in building momentum and understanding of the systemic reforms. Principally, the Victorian Disability Advisory Council is focused on co-design with people with disability.

The Victorian Government will continue to work with other representative bodies and advisory groups to implement Inclusive Victoria.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plans, South Australia

In South Australia, ADS's Guiding Principles have been indirectly embedded in state government agency Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). The DAIPs are used to inform and develop policy and programs, and underpin services delivered, to ensure people with disability are included.

For example, Guiding Principle 3 relates to inclusion and participation by people with disability in all aspects of community life. This principle has informed the development of inclusive and accessible services across South Australia. In April 2022, the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity launched the Disability Access Reporting Tool. The tool is designed to support people with disability to report difficulties accessing public venues and businesses. The tool helps notify businesses if an access issue is identified, reminding them of their obligations under anti-discrimination law, and the information they need to make any necessary changes.

Further, in 2022 Equal Opportunity SA introduced WE'RE EQUAL. The initiative helps businesses and organisations show they have made a commitment to zero tolerance for discrimination, bullying, and harassment. Further information about WE'RE EQUAL is in the [Inclusive Homes and Communities Outcome Area](#) in this Report.

Engaging People with Disability

People with disability and their representative organisations have told governments their views and voices need to be heard if ADS is to be successful in driving positive change. ADS's Guiding Principles commit governments to ensuring people with disability and their representatives are engaged and considered in the development of all policies, programs and infrastructure.

We are committed to people with disability taking a central and active role in the implementation of ADS. We are strengthening our efforts to ensure the needs of people with disability are considered. We are meeting our ADS commitment to yearly forums. States and territories are also undertaking engagement activities as part of their jurisdictional disability plans.

The Australian Government has developed the [Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability](#). This guide will help government and non-government organisations to improve their engagement activities to better support the participation and inclusion of people with disability.

Throughout the life of ADS, we will continue to review the effectiveness of engagement activities and explore new engagement forums.



ADS Engagement Plan and Forums

To support continued engagement of people with disability, ADS is being implemented through a cycle of engagement and consultation, including all levels of government and people with disability, their families and carers. ADS Engagement Plan will ensure the expressed views, lived experience and ongoing advice from people with disability is reflected in the development of policies and programs that affect the lives of people with disability.

ADS Engagement Plan sets out how people with disability will be engaged in the delivery of ADS:

- ADS Advisory Council was established to advise Australian Governments and disability ministers on the implementation of ADS. It is responsible for reviewing and advising on progress of ADS features that aim to drive actions and improvements for people with disability. The Advisory Council represents a cross-section of the community. More detailed information on the work of the Advisory Council is available under Governance in this Report.
- Regular public forums through the delivery of at least one public forum or consultation every year from 2022 to 2031, will ensure people with disability will have ongoing opportunities to play an active role in shaping the implementation of ADS.

The 2 Forums delivered so far have been a success and have raised the bar of what is expected from public forums, and provided many valuable lessons. The Forums aim to be as inclusive as possible and include a broad range of views. Nearly every speaker at the Forums has been a person with disability. Attendees have been primarily people with disability, their families and carers and Disability Representative Organisations.

ADS National Forum

The first ADS National Forum was held on 2–3 November 2022. The National Forum set the standard for ensuring the event was available for everyone to interact with online and ask questions, to reach a wider audience. Further information about the National Forum is available in the Case Study on the First ADS National Forum in this Report.

ADS State Forum, Queensland

The Queensland Government worked with Queenslanders with Disability Network to host the first ADS State Forum. The [Queensland ADS State Forum](#) was held on 19 June 2023. The Queensland ADS State Forum was a key milestone in inviting the Queensland community, government, business, and private sector to engage and commit to the priorities of ADS and the [Queensland's Disability Plan](#) and to continuously uphold equality, inclusion, and participation in society for people with disability.

The Queensland ADS State Forum was attended in-person by 261 people, with between 100–150 people at any one time engaged with the livestream. The Forum provided a unique opportunity to bring together people with disability, their families and carers, advocacy organisations, disability and community service organisations, industry, business and all levels of government to discuss how they can work together to achieve an inclusive Queensland.

The conversations, panel presentations, discussions and events at the Queensland ADS State Forum enabled the sharing of issues, concerns and achievements about how to implement ADS and Queensland's Disability Plan, what is working well, and what are the challenges in advancing outcomes for people with disability in Queensland and across Australia. The findings and learnings from the discussions and networking will inform the implementation of Queensland's Disability Plan through Queensland Government disability service plans, and Queensland Government policy, service design and delivery over the life of ADS.

The Forums have been and will continue to strive to be an exemplar across government in organising accessible events, both in-person and online.

ADS National and State Forums are specified deliverables in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about ADS Forums and consultations is available on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

Case Study: First ADS National Forum

The first ADS National Forum was held on 2–3 November 2022 at the National Museum in Canberra.

The Forum provided an opportunity for people with disability, key stakeholders and representatives to have their say about how ADS will continue to shape policy across important areas like housing, education, employment, health and wellbeing.

The Australian Government engaged with people with disability on the theme, structure, accessibility and potential speakers for the event. This included input from ADS Advisory Council members, Disability Representative Organisations, and establishing a Forum Reference Group with departmental staff, people with disability and an ADS Advisory Council member.

The Forum was attended by 62 people in-person and over 900 people participated online via a virtual platform. Participants heard 2 live addresses from the Minister of Social Services, the Hon Minister Amanda Rishworth MP, and pre-record messages from the Minister for the NDIS, the Hon Bill Shorten MP, and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Hon Tony Burke MP, from all state and territory disability ministers (with the exception of Victoria who were in caretaker) and the President of the Australian Local Government Association.

People were also able to participate in the 7 panel sessions that covered each of ADS's 7 Outcomes Areas. All facilitators of the sessions were people with disability and, with the exception of one person, all remaining speakers were people with disability.

The Forum discussed some key achievements delivered by different levels of government in the first 11 months of ADS. It also provided advice to governments on where further implementation effort is needed. The advice received from people with disability about the Forum is helping to inform the implementation of ADS.

Throughout the 2-day event, participants raised 4 key recurring themes across multiple sessions:

5. Proactive inclusion and accessibility
6. Community attitudes
7. Recognising diversity and intersectionality
8. COVID-19.

Videos of the Forum's panel sessions and addresses, and a report on the Forum, are available on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

Towards Inclusive Practice

The Australian Government funded Inclusion Australia to develop a [Towards Inclusive Practice Guide](#) to support government departments and external agencies to be more inclusive when engaging people with intellectual disability. The Guide's development was led by people with lived experience of disability, and shared within the Australian Government Department of Social Services and other Australian Government agencies.

Case Study: Engaging on ADS Guides

ADS includes commitments to develop guides to support governments, businesses and the community better involve people with disability in the design of policies, programs, systems and services.

Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability

Across late 2022 and into 2023, the Australian Government undertook consultations to develop a practical tool for the engagement and inclusion of people with disability in community consultation, policy development and government decision making. This included:

- Group and one-on-one consultations with 80 community members, aged from 18 to over 65 years, located across metro and regional areas in most jurisdictions, with a range of lived experience of disability and from a variety of backgrounds.
- Consultations with a range of Disability Representative Organisations, the NDIA, UNSW Disability Innovation Institute, and UTS Disability Research Network.
- User acceptance testing with 118 users from 33 organisations across business, and not-for-profit and government organisations.

The Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability were finalised in mid-2023 and published on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

In its central coordination of disability policy role, the Australian Government Department of Social Services is now working to raise awareness around these guidelines across the Australian Government to support continual improvement in the way the Australian Public Service engages people with disability across the policy process.

Continued over >

Guide to the Guiding Principles and Guide to Involving People with Disability in Evaluation

The Australian Government facilitated public consultation to help design ADS Guide to the Guiding Principles and Guide to Involving People with Disability in Evaluation.

The Guide to the Guiding Principles will support governments and organisations apply the Guiding Principles in their work. The Evaluation Guide will help governments, organisations and the community ensure people with disability are involved in evaluating policies, programs, and services.

The consultation for the Guides included:

- A public consultation process, ending in mid-2022, developed with advice from existing governance groups and key external disability advisors.
- A public submission process in late 2021, which received 57 submissions.
- Two workshops with ADS Disability Representative Organisations Implementation Working Group.
- Two academic roundtable discussions with academics from 16 institutions.
- Sixteen targeted focus groups, engaging with 111 people with disability including:
 - Children, young people and older people with disability.
 - Women, men and people identifying as part of the LGBTIQ+ community.
 - First Nations people with disability.
 - People with disability from a range of cultural backgrounds and languages.
 - People with disability from rural and remote and very remote areas, and from every state and territory.
 - People representing a range of disabilities, including people with intellectual disability, cognitive impairment, physical disability, neurodiversity, psychosocial disability, and sensory disability.

Further information about the Guide to the Guiding Principles is in [ADS Guiding Principles](#) section in this Report.

Co-design – Supported Decision-Making Policy

Over the last 2 years, the NDIA has worked with people with disability, their friends, families, carers and the disability community. This involved receiving feedback on a consultation paper and engaging Disability Representative and Carer Organisation, Inclusion Australia, to lead co-design workshops.

Through co-design the NDIA built a strong and shared understanding of the problems people experience in being supported to make their own decisions.

The policy and implementation plan reflect the consultation feedback, ideas, suggestions and experiences from co-design.

Engaging People with Disability, Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) is a Minister-endorsed, fixed-term appointment of 12 people with disability and provides an opportunity for Territorians with disability to advise the Minister for Disabilities on current issues impacting their lives.

The DAC meets tri-annually and while assisting in raising awareness of the rights of people with disability, they are also providing oversight of the implementation of the Northern Territory Disability Strategy Action Plan. The DAC provides feedback and advice on issues raised by Northern Territory Government agencies who may encounter difficulty implementing their assigned action.

In 2021 and 2022, through the work undertaken to develop the *Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022–2032*, there was extensive consultation with local disability service providers and representatives from local disability advocacy groups, along with people with disability, their carers and family. Their input ensured that the voice of people with disability was heard throughout the content of the document and relevant local issues included.

The Northern Territory Government works collaboratively with external organisations, service providers and peak organisations such as Integrated disAbility Action and National Disability Services Northern Territory, to promote a whole-of-Territory focus to achieve positive outcomes against the actions identified in the Northern Territory Disability Strategy.

Each Northern Territory Government agency has its own mechanisms to engage people with disability. All Northern Territory Government agencies are linked to the Northern Territory public sector EmployAbility Strategy, of which the next rendition is being developed. The previous EmployAbility Strategy is available on the Northern Territory Government [Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment](#) website.

The Northern Territory Government also encourages external organisations and providers to seek the voice of people with disability in the development of access and inclusion needs across the broader community. One initiative by Darwin City Council is the DiversAbility Collective. This network of organisations from the disability and social services sector are supported to meet every 2 months to share information, coordinate events and promote inclusivity across the Darwin region.

Engaging and Informing Communities of the State Disability Strategy, Western Australia

Funded by the Western Australian Government Department of Communities, People with Disabilities WA (PWdWA) delivered over 40 state-wide information and education sessions to people with disability and key community stakeholders to promote and inform the broader community of the [WA State Disability Strategy](#) and the first Action Plan.

More than 150 people with disability attended information sessions held in metropolitan Perth and regional and remote locations across the state, including the Pilbara, Great Southern, Southwest and Goldfields-Esperance regions.

Various [accessible formats](#) of the WA State Disability Strategy were developed to facilitate engagement with hard-to-reach groups, including culturally and linguistically diverse groups, newly arrived Australians, and those with visual or hearing impairments.

A [Strategy-on-a-Page](#) was developed, summarising the key underlying concepts of the WA State Disability Strategy and translated into [6 languages](#). The languages were chosen after consultation with the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia and represent the majority of the language groups who arrive in Australia as humanitarian entrants and refugees.

A [short video](#) with an accompanying Auslan Interpreter outlining the WA State Disability Strategy and its vision was also published and shared across various peak bodies social media platforms to further inform the broader community of the WA State Disability Strategy.

ACT Disability Strategy

The ACT Government is developing a new 10-year ACT Disability Strategy. An open consultation on the ACT Disability Strategy took place from April to August 2022. This consultation was co-designed and led by the ACT Disability Reference Group to ensure the voices of people with disability were at the forefront of planning and activities. Of the events held, 31 were facilitated by people with disability and 2 were facilitated by family members. Consultation included:

- Thirty-three public consultation events, which were attended by 415 people.
- Three hundred and ninety-seven completed responses to the online survey.
- Thirty-five children and young people entered the student voice competition.
- Thirty-six submissions from organisations and individuals.
- One hundred and thirty people voting for their top 3 actions at the 2022 Canberra Disability Expo.

A Listening Report is available on the ACT Government [Community Services](#) website.

The ACT Disability Reference Group (DRG) has been extensively involved in the development of the ACT Disability Strategy, including co-designing and leading consultation, and consultation for other ACT Government strategies and priorities. The DRG is an advisory group which works to ensure the ACT Government is aware of the issues which affect people with disability in the ACT, including ways in which the ACT can be a more inclusive community. The work of the DRG is underpinned by ADS, and is actively supported by the ACT Government Office for Disability.

Our Future Focus: Engagement

Engagement with people with disability remains a high priority, and we recognise the need to involve and co-design policies and programs with people with disability. Our goal is to go beyond hearing from people through online consultation processes and third parties, and evolve our engagement maturity by involving and co-designing with people with disability more directly. This includes working to ensure our engagement activities reflect the diversity of Australian communities, and include harder to reach groups, greater cross-sections of the community, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and First Nations communities.

Under [ADS Engagement Plan](#) there is a commitment to deliver at least one public forum or consultation every year from 2022 to 2031. Consistent with [ADS Roadmap](#), public consultations are planned for 2024, 2027 and 2030.

The Australian Government will continue to use formal engagement forums, online and in-person public consultation or co-design processes, as well as ad-hoc opportunities to meaningfully engage with people with disability, Disability Representative Organisations, and other relevant stakeholders.

State and territory governments will continue to undertake engagement activities in line with their ADS commitments, and their commitments to consultation under their jurisdictional disability plans or strategies.

We recognise that some people with disability face barriers to engagement due to COVID-19, virtual restrictions, physical barriers and accessible adjustments. We also recognise there is consultation fatigue and at times multiple competing pressures among non-government organisations and support services. However none of these barriers are impossible to overcome. As we continue to implement ADS, we are committed to delivering inclusive and accessible engagement activities, to involve as many people as possible, to deliver ADS with people with disability.

Targeted Action Plans

ADS acknowledges that its success depends on the actions that entities, particularly governments, take to make real improvements to the lives of all people with disability.

A new approach taken with ADS was to include the commitment to Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) to better facilitate improved outcomes for all people with disability. The TAPs were developed to apply an intensive focus over one-to-three years to achieve specific deliverables which improve outcomes for people with disability. The first 5 TAPs of ADS were released on 3 December 2021, with the launch of ADS.

The first 5 TAPs for the period 2021–22 to 2023–24 are delivering action against:

- Employment
- Community Attitudes
- Early Childhood
- Safety
- Emergency Management.

During the consultation process for ADS, these were the areas people with disability identified as needing immediate action, and where there was an opportunity to take intensive and coordinated action.

Each TAP has been commissioned and endorsed by all Australian disability ministers. The actions in the TAPs were based on available evidence, and people with disability are involved in implementing the actions. There are 417 actions across the 5 TAPs.

In line with the improved reporting approach of ADS, TAPs Reports are being produced annually, on a financial year basis, to provide a high-level update on what has been delivered against each of the actions in the TAPs.

The first annual TAPs Report, for the period 3 December 2021 to 30 June 2022, was published in November 2022. It reported over 80% of actions had been completed or on track. The second annual TAPs Report, for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 will be published soon.

“We would like to see governments develop a targeted action plan on inclusive education that aligns with Australia’s obligations under the CRPD, and the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education’s Roadmap for Achieving Inclusive Education in Australia.”
– Disability Representative Organisation

The second annual TAPs Report shows continued steady progress with the implementation of actions, with those reported as completed or on track remaining at over 80%, and completed actions increased from 10% to over 30% of the 417 actions.

Some examples of work under the TAPs include:

- Under the Emergency Management TAP, good progress is being made in improving emergency and risk management responses for people with disability. This includes through the Higher Risk Weather Season Preparedness Program, which will provide a briefing to the disability sector to support preparedness during emergencies. Mechanisms are being established to identify people with disability needing support during emergencies, and building the capability of the community sector to support people at increased risk in emergencies. These actions link to the [Health and Wellbeing](#) and [Personal and Community Support](#) Outcome Areas of ADS.
- Work to improve and increase employment opportunities for people with disability continues under the Employment TAP, including through recruitment activities to the public services by general and targeted recruitment, affirmative graduate programs, vocational employment programs, and employment programs for specific groups of people with disability, such as neurodivergent people. These actions link to the [Employment and Financial Security](#) Outcome Area of ADS.

ADS Advisory Council acknowledges the significant effort in taking forward the actions under the 5 existing TAPs, with the approach to progressing actions under the Emergency Management TAP an example of good practice. Looking forward, the Advisory Council notes the opportunity for the next TAPs to be more ambitious, directly linked to enabling and embedding system-wide change and supporting a national alignment of actions across governments. ADS Advisory Council has suggested future TAPS could be strengthened by:

- Harmonising efforts across state, territory and the Australian Government, including significant TAP actions and disability inclusion plans.
- Including robust mechanisms that ensure engagement of people with disability in the design and implementation of TAPs activities.

Our Future Focus: Targeted Action Plans

While the TAPs have provided an important initial focal point for governments to progress action, we acknowledge the feedback from ADS Advisory Council and disability sector that the design and focus of TAPs need to evolve, and that future TAPs need to identify more ambitious actions to drive change, and do so in a more strategic and aligned way across the Australian, state and territory governments.

The Australian Government has commenced early work to consider, in collaboration with state and territory governments, those areas which will be a focus of the next set of TAPs. This will be guided by input from people with disability. We are aiming to finalise the next TAPs to commence during 2024–2025.

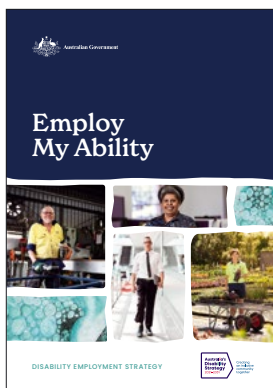
The release of the TAPs and their annual reports are specified deliverables in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about the TAPs and their annual reports is available on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

Associated Plans

Tangible actions are required to deliver on the Outcome Areas of ADS. In addition to Targeted Action Plans, which provide a shorter, more intensive focus, ADS is also supported by Associated Plans that have a longer-term focus on high-level priorities for specific cohorts. Associated Plans are intended to clearly identify how they contribute to improving outcomes for people with disability against ADS Outcome Areas.

Associated Plans are developed in consultation with people with disability and include reporting achievements against ADS Outcome Areas. As Associated Plans are developed they will be published on ADS website.

The Australian Government is developing additional guidance to assist government agencies in their development of Associated Plans.



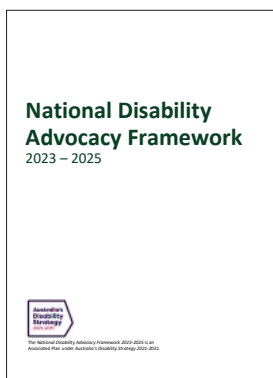
Employ My Ability: Disability Employment Strategy

Employ My Ability was launched on 3 December 2021, as the Australian Government's 10-year commitment to improving employment outcomes for people with disability. Its aim is to drive progress in ADS Outcome Area of Employment and Financial Security, and improve community attitudes towards people with disability.

Employ My Ability was informed by feedback from a large number of stakeholders including people with disability, their families and carers, advocacy organisations, peak bodies, employers and service providers.

Many businesses were already committed to improving diversity within their own organisations. At the time of the launch, 21 employers publically endorsed Employ My Ability in alignment to their own commitment.

A number of actions taken under Employ My Ability are listed in ADS Employment and Community Attitudes Targeted Action Plans. Further information about Employ My Ability is available on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website.



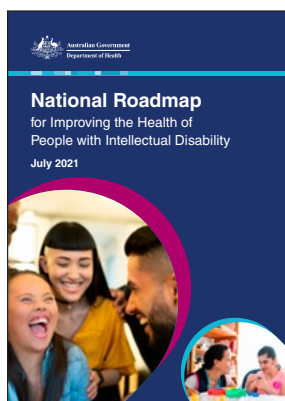
National Disability Advocacy Framework

The *National Disability Advocacy Framework 2023–2025* (NDAF) and its associated *Disability Advocacy Work Plan* (Work Plan) represent the beginning of ongoing work by the Australian, state and territory governments, to improve alignment of disability advocacy services by committing to joint work in key areas.

The NDAF and Work Plan were developed in consultation with people with disability, families, carers, disability advocacy providers

and Disability Representative Organisations. The [2022 public consultation](#) included over 520 people, about half of whom were people with disability.

On 21 April 2023, the Disability Reform Ministerial Council endorsed the new NDAF and its associated Work Plan. The NDAF and Work Plan are available on the Australian Government [Department of Social Services](#) website.



National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability

Development of the *National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability* (the National Roadmap) was led by the Australian Government. The National Roadmap seeks to put people with intellectual disability at the centre of the reform process. It sets out comprehensive actions to improve their health outcomes. It outlines how we can create a health system where people with intellectual disability are valued, respected and have access to high-quality, timely and comprehensive health care.

The National Roadmap was informed by detailed consultations with people with intellectual disability, family members and carers. This included an Intellectual Disability Focus Group to ensure meaningful engagement with people with intellectual disability on National Roadmap projects.

For further information on the National Roadmap, refer to the [Health and Wellbeing Outcome Area](#) of this Report, or the Australian Government [Department of Health and Aged Care](#) website.

National Cultural Policy – Revive, and Arts and Disability Associated Plan

On 30 January 2023, the Australian Government launched Australia's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*. *Revive* is a 5-year plan to renew and revive Australia's arts, entertainment and cultural sector. At the heart of *Revive* is ensuring there is a place for every story, and a story for every place: that artists, arts workers and organisations are supported to tell a rich diversity of Australian stories in every art form, and that everyone can access and participate in arts and culture.

Through *Revive*, the Australian Government committed \$5 million to fund implementation activities for an Arts and Disability Associated Plan to support people with disability to access and participate fully in the cultural and creative life of Australia. The Associated Plan will be aligned with ADS and will replace the current *National Arts and Disability Strategy*. The Associated Plan is currently under development.

Further information about *Revive* and the Arts and Disability Associated Plan is available on the Australian Government [Office for the Arts](#) website.

Outcomes Framework

One of the most important improvements introduced with the launch of ADS was the implementation of the Outcomes Framework, to enhance government accountability by measuring and reporting on outcomes.

Measuring outcomes for people with disability in key areas of their lives – such as employment, housing, health and education – over time will show whether the lives of people with disability are improving.

The Outcomes Framework is measuring, tracking, and reporting on outcomes for people with disability across the Outcome Areas and Policy Priorities of ADS. It includes data that was available at the time ADS was launched. Where there are identified gaps, [ADS Data Improvement Plan](#) commits to develop more data sources.

The [Outcomes Framework](#) webpages were launched on 14 December 2022, and provides interactive and accessible reporting on issues affecting people with disability.

Reporting against the Outcomes Framework includes:

- Quarterly updates to the data.
- A [dashboard tool](#) featuring all the outcome measures with available data.
- [Annual reports](#) providing an overview of all measures being tracked, with the first report published on 28 February 2023.

As of June 2023, baseline data is available for 48 measures. Of these, progress has been reported on 17 measures. Thirty-one measures require more data to be available before progress can be reported. For 40 future measures, data is being or will be developed over the life of ADS; this includes new data for all of the Community Attitudes measures released in October 2023.

The initial data updates have provided a range of different results across progress, regress, and no change. Given the data relates to reporting of less than 2 years of a 10-year strategy, all changes in data should be viewed with caution. A movement in one direction does not indicate a trend this early in the life of the Outcomes Framework reporting.

New data for the 7 Community Attitudes measures was reported on for the first time on 5 October 2023. This data has been collected through [ADS Survey — Share with us](#) and provides a new and important baseline.

The collection of data for future measures is being supported by a [Data Improvement Plan \(DIP\)](#), which was endorsed by disability ministers in December 2022. Data for some of these measures is expected to come from the [National Disability Data Asset](#) in the future.

The introduction of the Outcomes Framework has been noted by ADS Advisory Council as an important reform that provides high levels of transparency and accountability for all levels of government. The first annual report highlights how far we have to go to advance the rights and outcomes for people with disability in Australia, and areas where more focus is required, such as the wage gap.

Disability Representative Organisations have provided us with positive feedback on the Outcomes Framework webpages, however they have also expressed concern that there are some data gaps that need to be addressed.

The reports and webpages are intended for people with disability, government policy makers, disability advocacy groups and anyone who wishes to follow progress made for people with disability. Showcasing progress against the measures will allow policy makers and non-government organisations to see which areas, services and programs are tracking well and which are not. This is important in informing the design and implementation of policies and programs to improve the outcomes of people with disability over the life of ADS.

ADS Survey on Community Attitudes

Information on community attitudes towards people with disability has been limited to date. To improve the information available, the Australian Government has committed to surveys that will occur every 3 years to measure community attitudes. This is reflected in Australian Government action 4.1 under the Community Attitudes TAP: Measure change in community attitudes; where \$2 million was committed to complete Wave 1 of ADS Survey — *Share with us*.

Community attitudes is as a cross-cutting issue for the other 6 ADS Outcome Areas; influencing outcomes for people with disability including employment prospects, educational attainment and health status. Consultation during the development of ADS revealed that changing attitudes will lead to better support, improved treatment and more respect for people with disability. This makes it important to understand the reasons why people without disability hold these attitudes and any factors that affect positive change.

ADS Survey will measure changes in community attitudes over time providing a rich evidence base. The first wave of ADS Survey was conducted in 2022, collecting data from approximately 18,000 people. Data collected included responses from the broader Australian population, as well as the experiences of people with disability, and the attitudes of workers in sectors such as education, health, justice and legal, personal and community support services, and employment.

ADS Survey development was supported by stakeholder consultations, co-design workshops, and cognitive testing. Participants were able to complete the survey online or on paper. An interviewer-assisted completion option was also offered where survey respondents could call a survey helpdesk and interviewers would assist respondents to complete the online survey on their behalf.

As part of the work commissioned under the first wave of ADS Survey, ANU and Purple Orange conducted one Nested (qualitative) Study focused on people with intellectual disabilities' experiences with community attitudes in the education, health, justice and legal, personal and community support services, and employment sectors. The Nested Study Report, including accessible versions, is available on [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

The data from the first wave of ADS Survey is being used to:

- Update the Community Attitudes measures under the Outcomes Framework webpages.
- Develop a Preliminary Analysis Report featuring additional insights and findings on community attitudes.

Information on ADS Survey is available on the [Outcomes Framework](#) webpage and [ADS Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

“If Australia is to achieve its vision for an inclusive society where all people with disability are able to participate on an equal basis, it is essential that the experiences and outcomes of people with disability are effectively measured, tracked, and made available publicly.”

– ADS Advisory Council

Improving the Data

We are committed to collecting and sharing relevant data to support effective monitoring and reporting of outcomes for people with disability in order to drive change.

Focusing our efforts relies on strong data from Australian, state and territory governments for both disability-specific and mainstream service systems. Data is at the core of our evidence-based approach to implementation of ADS. Data plays a critical role in informing government policy and helping with decision-making. Data supports us to understand what is important to people with disability, what is working well, and what we can do better.

However, Disability Representative Organisations have told us that there is a significant lack of data to measure progress on safety, rights and justice, and this needs urgent attention.

The development of ADS Data Improvement Plan is to ensure data needed to measure outcomes for people with disability is collected, shared and progressively improved over the life of ADS. It will also identify where data needs to be linked between systems to improve our understanding of the impact of ADS. Linked de-identified data will provide improved disaggregated data, support the development of new measures and deliver deeper insights into how and why certain outcomes occur.

The National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) could provide a better understanding of how people with disability are supported through services, payments and programs across multiple service systems through the linkage, improvement and sharing of de-identified data.

Improving data to track progress against the Outcomes Framework will also support evaluations and policy development, and will lead to improved outcomes for people with disability.

“Engagement with the National Disability Data Asset is important for building the evidence base.”
– ADS Advisory Council Member

Data Improvement

Lead Australian Government agencies have committed to producing portfolio Data Improvement Plans (DIPs) to set out how data can be improved for people with disability in their portfolios. These are internal documents with a 3-year focus.

As of 30 June 2023, a number of Australian Government agencies have DIPs in place with the remaining progressing work to implement their DIPs.

Lead agencies with DIPs in place:

- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Department of Industry, Science and Resources
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Office for Women)
- The Treasury
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.
- Attorney-General's Department

Lead agencies with DIPs in development:

- Department of Education
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Data Improvement in Focus

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department has been working to implement its [2022–2024 Data Strategy](#) in alignment with ADS, to ensure that data needed to measure outcomes for people with disability is collected, shared, and progressively improved.

The Attorney-General's Department has established a Data Inventory and is seeking to identify and collate data assets that affect people with disability. To this end, the Attorney-General's Department has created a dedicated disability flag in its metadata collection template.

National Disability Data Asset

The Australian Government has committed a total of \$68.3 million for the analysis, research and delivery of the NDDA. The NDDA will be Australia's most comprehensive disability data asset, connecting existing de-identified information from different government agencies. It will provide a more complete picture of the programs and services used by people with disability. It will be integral to achieving the government's commitments under ADS to better measure, track and report on outcomes for people with disability.

In June 2023 all governments had signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing them to deliver the NDDA. This includes commitment to supply data and to co-govern the asset with the disability community through a Council, Charter and the implementation of disability-informed ethical oversight. All governments have provided support for these components and noted they will be essential to the success of the project.

We are working with data custodians to finalise datasets for inclusion in the asset. The Australian Government Department of Social Services is working with project partners the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to progress this.

Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

The ABS provides official statistics on a wide range of topics. The ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers is a key source of data on the prevalence and profile of disability in Australia.

The 2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers completed fieldwork in early 2023, with results due mid-2024. For the first time, the 2022 Survey included questions about whether a person has experienced neglect or abuse, and about sexual orientation. The 2022 Survey also included new questions on dementia.

The initial data release will include a Summary of Findings, national-level data tables and a micro-data release. The ABS is developing a communication plan for the data release, including accessibility options to promote the survey findings to the broader disability community.

The 2022 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers is a specified deliverable in [ADS Roadmap](#). Further information about the Survey is available on the [Australian Bureau of Statistics website](#).

Sharing Systemic and Individual Advocacy Data, Western Australia

Sharing systemic and individual advocacy data across disability advocacy providers strengthens the evidence gap around advocacy demand and activity, and contributes to better, evidence-informed outcomes for people with disability.

With support from the Western Australian Government Department of Communities, Midlas, a not-for-profit community legal centre, is leading work to analyse the opportunities and benefits of data sharing and the most effective mechanisms or platforms to manage this.

Data sharing will:

- Ensure trends and themes captured in disability advocacy data are better articulated and able to be shared with key stakeholders.
- Enable better coordination and collaboration amongst advocacy providers, fostering a more holistic approach to supporting people with disability.
- Identify common trends and systemic issues that could inform targeted advocacy initiatives for people with disability.

Recommendations are expected in early 2024.

Government Data Strategy, New South Wales

The NSW Government has undertaken significant data reform to improve the way data is used and shared. This includes developing the NSW Government Data Strategy, which will grow NSW's maturity in the use of data for better community outcomes. The Data Strategy highlights the work being done to establish the NDDA as a practical case example of how NSW is improving data collection and use.

The NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice reports enhancements are being made to the ChildStory information technology system to make it easier for caseworkers to identify clients with disability, record information about a client's disability and access relevant NDIS information. System enhancements have been made to record general disability, and NDIS related information.

Complex Data, South Australia

The South Australian Government has been working to support staff to understand that disaggregated data on disability status is available through Closing the Gap Outcomes. Where data is not available, staff are advised to consider where further work is required to include First Nations people with disability in their work.

Complexity Indicators

The Child and Family Support System Pathways Service provides a single point of entry to data collection in South Australia. The data includes Family Complexity indicators, based on evidence-informed risk and protective factors, to increase understanding of cumulative harm, service outcome, and level of safety. Data is collected in alignment with national disability data collection guidelines. Analysis of family complexity data supports policy and planning to keep families safe, well, and supported. For example, early indicators suggest that disability may be a factor in around 20% of observed cases for intensive early intervention.

“More effort is needed ensure to data improvement actions consistently improve the visibility of intersectional experiences, to build the evidence base for data-driven policy changes and interventions.”

- People with Disability Australia

Building the Evidence Base and Evaluations

Under ADS, governments at all levels are committed to working together with people with disability, communities, businesses, and the non-government sector to implement ADS and realise its vision in a coordinated way.

The implementation of ADS is based on an evidence-based approach. This means we will incorporate research evidence, along with advice from people with disability, into our decision-making and how we will take action. For example, evidence may impact how services and programs are designed and implemented, and where we prioritise our efforts. Good evidence provides us with a foundation on where and how we will achieve progress.

One of the key initiatives to facilitate this approach is implementing improvements to evaluation and research. The [National Disability Research Partnership \(NDRP\)](#) will be instrumental in building the evidence base. The NDRP research agenda and practical guides for disability inclusive research will help drive improvements for people with disability. Disability Representative Organisations have told us that the NDRP is key to building the evidence base. However, they also note that people with lived experience of disability need to be involved to ensure the success of the NDRP.

“More effort is needed to co-produce a research agenda that reflects the research priorities of people with disability and their representative organisations, so research activity is geared toward priorities that will likely have the most impact.”

– People with Disability Australia

National Disability Research Partnership

The NDRP is a key initiative under ADS. It is being established as a national research, knowledge translation and communication organisation for the disability sector. The NDRP will fund research led by and with people with disability. It will facilitate a collaborative and inclusive disability research program that builds evidence for successful policy and practice.

A 2-year scoping phase occurred from July 2020 to late 2022. This phase was led by Melbourne Disability Institute at the University of Melbourne, and guided by a Working Party comprising people with disability, researchers, and independent advisors.

The NDRP Working Party has produced several foundational documents, available on the NDRP website. These include a preliminary research agenda, which is aligned with ADS Outcome Areas. In addition, the NDRP Working Party is developing a plan to strengthen disability research capacity.

An independent evaluation of the NDRP's scoping phase was undertaken in 2022. Recommendations from this evaluation are being considered as the NDRP is set up.

The Australian Government has provided \$15 million to support the establishment and operation of the NDRP, from 2022–23 to 2024–25. The NDRP is expected to be established and fully operational by 2024.

National Disability Footprint Monitoring and Evaluation

First Peoples Disability Network has engaged an independent consultant to support the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the National Disability Footprint to ensure continuous improvement. An outcomes evaluation to assist in communicating the impact and success of the National Disability Footprint will be completed at the conclusion of the funding period.

A Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (U-MEL) Framework has been drafted, which includes monitoring tools and visual elements based on the theory of change. The Framework will initially focus on data collection within First Peoples Disability Network and over the course of the project will expand to capture input from external stakeholders, including the community-controlled sector and community.

The Framework is expected to be implemented during the second half of 2023.

Policy Evaluations, Northern Territory

Since the development of ADS, a number of evaluation projects have been undertaken that align with actions presented under ADS.

The *NTPS EmployAbility Strategy 2018–22* was evaluated in 2023, however the results have not yet been made publicly available. Input from this evaluation will inform the next rendition of the Northern Territory EmployAbility Strategy that is due to be released in the latter part of 2023.

The Northern Territory Government Department of Education *Framework for Inclusion 2019–29* is being implemented in 3 phases, with an overall evaluation set for 2029. A review of the first phase (2019–22) has been completed in 2023, however it has not been made publicly available at this stage.

In 2021, the Northern Territory Social Outcomes Framework was developed to provide a transparent approach for the government to measure progress towards a broad aspirational vision for the future of the Territory. Additionally, the Northern Territory Government Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities is also working to develop an Outcomes Framework, designed to be aligned with, but sit above, key strategic documents and provide a central structure for measuring the expected outcomes of the Northern Territory Disability Strategy. A key domain to be included in the Outcomes Framework is “Territory communities are inclusive”, which is central to work undertaken given the context of monitoring and delivering on the actions identified in both ADS and the Northern Territory Disability Strategy.

Voice of Queenslanders with Disability, Queensland

Queensland is committed to building a local evidence base, based on the experiences of people with disability, their families and carers across Queensland, and how to make life better for people across the 7 Outcome Areas of ADS.

The Voice of Queenslanders with Disability survey was undertaken in early 2023, seeking experiences of 291 Queenslanders with disability, 117 family/carers and 34 organisational representatives. The *Voice of Queenslanders with Disability* report was published on 19 June 2023. The survey and report were a collaboration between the Queensland Government, Queenslanders with Disability Network and Griffith University.

The survey was delivered in conjunction with a number of citizen researchers with lived experience of disability, ensuring the survey also provided individual development opportunities in skilling and experience in research techniques, and survey design and delivery.

The report found that 30% of people who participated in the inaugural study said that life had improved in the last year. Respondents agreed that they had enough money (53%), a good job (56%), and accessible, safe housing (66%). The report identifies 4 key strategies for action: safeguarding community voice; improving standard of living and social protection; enhancing dignity and equity; and strengthening belonging.

The *Voice of Queenslanders with Disability* report will help to improve the inclusion and service experiences of Queenslanders with disability in line with the 7 Outcome Areas of ADS.

Disability Gateway Evaluation

The Australian Government released the *Disability Gateway* in January 2021, comprising a website and a contact centre providing information about supports for people with disability.

In June 2022, an independent process and outcomes evaluation of the Disability Gateway was completed. The Evaluation considered whether the service is meeting the needs of people with disability, their families, and carers.

The Evaluation noted some limitations with the reach of the evaluation survey and administrative data sourced, but verified the service meets the needs of people with disability, with 96% of users responding they find it easy to use. The Evaluation Report is available on the Australian Government [Department of Social Services](#) website.

Further information on the evaluation and its key findings are included in the [Appendix](#).

Governance

People with disability may use multiple and diverse support systems and services across both mainstream and disability-specific programs. The provision of these is a complex environment, with responsibility and funding spanning all levels of government.

With such diverse responsibility, robust governance arrangements are key to supporting the effective implementation of activities across the nation that will improve outcomes for people with disability.

Feedback on the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* and that received during consultations for ADS included advice that an independent body to monitor progress and oversee implementation of activities would support strong and accountable governance processes.

We have responded to this need by outlining a Governance Model in *ADS* (p. 45; 59–60) that is guiding our work and accountability.

Disability Reform Ministerial Council

The Disability Reform Ministerial Council (DRMC) is the forum for Australian Government and state and territory ministers responsible for disability policy to drive national collaboration and coordination on reform in disability policy and implementation. The DRMC reports directly to National Cabinet.

The DRMC considers ADS, NDIS, and broader disability matters through its regular meetings. The DRMC's role also includes consideration and approval of ADS implementation commitments such as the NDDA, National Disability Research Partnership (NDRP), ADS Data Improvement Plan, ADS Advisory Council, TAPs and ADS reports. Communiqués of the DRMC meetings, which outline matters that have been considered and discussed, are available on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website.



ADS Advisory Council

ADS Advisory Council provides independent advice to Australian Governments and disability ministers on the implementation of ADS. Its members are people with disability from the community and disability sector. The Advisory Council forms the centrepiece of a strengthened governance approach under ADS which, together with other engagement approaches, is ensuring that people with disability have an active role and shape the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of ADS.

The Advisory Council is also a key component of ADS Engagement Plan, which outlines the ways people with disability are being involved in the implementation of ADS. For further information on the activities under the Engagement Plan, refer to the Engaging People with Disability section in this Report.

The Advisory Council was established at the launch of ADS and initially comprised of 6 members, including the Chair, and 2 special advisers. The inaugural meeting was held on 15 March 2022.

Since December 2022, the membership has been expanded to comprise of up to 11 members, including the Chair, and 2 special advisers. The additional members are 4 state and territory disability advisory council representatives, with state and territory representatives rotating through these positions on a 12 monthly basis. The addition of these members has been made to expand the skills and experience of the Advisory Council's membership, to support their efforts in providing advice to governments on the implementation and monitoring of ADS.

The inaugural Advisory Council Chair was Dr Ben Gauntlett to 30 June 2023. Ms Jane Spring AM was appointed as the interim Chair from 1 July 2023.

To 30 June 2023, the Advisory Council has met 9 times. Through its meetings, it has advised on each of the TAPs, the approach to the first ADS National Forum, provided a submission to the 2022 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport; and discussed issues such as disability employment and the Jobs and Skills Summit.

The Advisory Council produced 2 meeting summary communiques in February and April 2023. Communiques will also be produced for future meetings. These communiques provide an overview of the matters considered by the Advisory Council, including any advice or feedback given and the matters the Advisory Council has endorsed or recommended to governments. The communiques are available on ADS Hub on Disability Gateway.

The establishment on the Advisory Council is a specified deliverable in ADS Roadmap. Further information about the Advisory Council is available on ADS Hub on Disability Gateway.

Disability Representative Organisation ADS Implementation Forum

A further element of the governance and engagement approach under ADS is the direct engagement of Disability Representative Organisations to support ADS implementation.

This forum consists of a range of organisations representing the disability sector and people with disability and is a key consultation point for the Australian Government to seek advice and feedback on ADS implementation activities.

ADS Disability Representative Organisation Forum consists of members from a wide range of organisations:

- Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- Disability Australia Consortium, which is made up of:
 - Australian Federation of Disability Organisations
 - Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia
 - Blind Citizens Australia
 - Brain Injury Australia
 - Deaf Australia
 - Deafblind Australia
 - Deafness Forum of Australia
 - Disability Advocacy Network Australia
 - Down Syndrome Australia
 - The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum
 - Physical Disability Australia
- First Peoples Disability Network Australia
- Inclusion Australia
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance
- People with Disability Australia
- Women with Disabilities Australia.

To 30 June 2023, ADS Disability Representative Organisation Forum has met 7 times, providing advice and input to support the development and implementation of matters such as the 3 guides committed to under ADS, the National Disability Advocacy Framework, ADS Data Improvement Plan and ADS National Forum.

ADS Online

ADS Hub on Disability Gateway offers a single place for news, resources, and reports on ADS, accessible at anytime from anywhere in the world. Being conveniently located on Disability Gateway, users can easily switch to finding the disability support they need in Australia.

Launched in mid-2021, the Australian Government has been committed to maintaining and growing ADS online presence.

When ADS launched on 3 December 2021, the Hub was expanded to include the 11 core ADS documents, details on the Advisory Council, and overview on how ADS will drive change and improve outcomes for people with disability. Furthermore, it educated people with disability on their rights and the responsibilities of government.

Core information is provided in accessible formats including Easy Read and 14 community languages including Auslan. Other accessible formats, like Braille, can be provided on request and work has commenced to include a number of First Nations languages in the future.

Two years in, ADS Hub has grown significantly, particularly as reports on the implementation of ADS are published. It now houses the annual Targeted Action Plans reports, and links to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare website where the Outcomes Framework's annual reports and interactive webpages are hosted.

In line with ADS commitments, the Australian Government has worked to develop reports and online progress reporting on the Outcomes Framework of ADS. The Australian Government has contracted the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to design, host and update the interactive and accessible Outcomes Framework webpages, to manage data, and to produce annual reports.

The annual reports for the Outcomes Framework detail progress against the measures in the Outcomes Framework. Launched in December 2022, the Outcomes Framework interactive website reports against the measures in the Outcomes Framework. Data is updated every quarter to include new data as it becomes available.

ADS Hub on Disability Gateway is establishing itself as a valuable disability resource. The public forums and consultations held each year to support implementation are promoted and reported on via the Hub. The Advisory Council publishes communiques on its work. New resources are published, like the Data Improvement Plan released in early 2023 and the Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability in October 2023.

With the Hub constantly expanding, a review and refresh is underway with improvements being rolled out from late 2023 to early 2024.



Appendix: Evaluations

Evaluation is critical to knowing what is working well and what needs improvement for people with disability. ADS commits governments to provide key findings from their evaluations in this Report

| Activity | Evaluation and Engagement |
|--|---|
| <p>Disability Gateway The Disability Gateway includes a website, a dedicated phone line (1800 643 787) and social media channels, to assist people with disability, their families and carers, to find and access trusted information and services.</p> | <p><u>Disability Gateway Evaluation Report</u> ARTD Consultants, 2022</p> <p>In June 2022, an independent evaluation of the initial 12 months of the Disability Gateway. The Evaluation considered whether the service is meeting the needs of people with disability, their families, and carers.</p> <p>The Evaluation verified the service meets the needs of people with disability with 96% of users responding they find it easy to use.</p> <p>The Key Findings of the Evaluation are available on the Australian Government <u>Department of Social Services</u> website.</p> |

Glossary: Words and Abbreviations

| Term | Meaning |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ABS | Australian Bureau of Statistics |
| ACAT | ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal |
| ADS | <i>Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031</i> |
| ADS Hub on Disability Gateway | <i>Australia's Disability Strategy Hub on Disability Gateway</i> |
| Advisory Council | Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council |
| AEC | Australian Electoral Commission |
| AIHW | Australian Institute of Health and Welfare |
| ALGA | Australian Local Government Association |
| AMH | Adult Mental Health |
| APS | Australian Public Service |
| Aurora | Aurora Neurodiversity Program, Services Australia |
| CLMI Act | <i>Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2022 (WA)</i> |
| CTG | Closing the Gap |
| DAC | Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee |
| DAIP | Disability Access and Inclusion Plan |
| DEG | South Australian Disability Engagement Group |
| DES | Disability Employment Services |
| DFV | Domestic and family violence |
| DIAP | Disability Inclusion Action Plan |
| DIP | Data Improvement Plan |

| Term | Meaning |
|--|---|
| Disability Royal Commission | Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability |
| Disability SSP | Community Controlled Disability Sector Strengthening Plan |
| DRG | ACT Disability Reference Group |
| DRMC | Disability Reform Ministerial Council |
| EmployAbility Strategy | <i>Northern Territory Public Sector EmployAbility Strategy 2018–22</i> |
| Hub | Diverse Learners Hub, Victoria |
| Inclusive SA | <i>Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan</i> |
| Inclusive Victoria | <i>Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan 2022–2026</i> |
| IPS | Individual Placement and Support program |
| LGBTIQA+ | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse people |
| MACD | Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability, Western Australia |
| National Roadmap | <i>National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability</i> |
| NCDA | National Centre for Disability Advocacy |
| NDAF | <i>National Disability Advocacy Framework 2023–2025</i> |
| NDDA | National Disability Data Asset |
| NDIA | National Disability Insurance Agency |
| NDIS | National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| NDRP | National Disability Research Partnership |
| NIAA | National Indigenous Australians Agency |
| Northern Territory Disability Strategy | <i>Northern Territory Disability Strategy 2022–2032</i> |
| OCPE | Northern Territory Government Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment |
| PDSI | Prison Disability Support Initiative, Victoria |

| Term | Meaning |
|------------------------------|--|
| Premises Standards | <i>Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010</i> |
| PWdWA | People with Disabilities Western Australia |
| Queensland's Disability Plan | <i>Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27 – Together, a better Queensland</i> |
| SA DHS | South Australian Government Department of Human Services |
| SA Disability Plan | <i>Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan</i> |
| SDA | Specialist Disability Accommodation |
| SSMO | Tasmanian Government State Service Management Office |
| TAPs | Australia's Disability Strategy Targeted Action Plans |
| TFHC | Northern Territory Government Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities |
| Transport Standards | <i>Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002</i> |
| VIRTUS | VIRTUS Oceania Asia Games, Brisbane 2022 |
| WA State Disability Strategy | <i>A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020–2030</i> |
| Work Plan | <i>Disability Advocacy Work Plan of National Disability Advocacy Framework 2023–2025</i> |

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