



Creating  
an inclusive  
community  
together

# Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

## Our report about community attitudes Survey 1

Easy Read version





# How to use this report

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ANU Centre for Social Research Methods (ANU) is an organisation that does research.



ANU wrote this report with the help of the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS).

When you see the word 'we', it means ANU and DSS.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



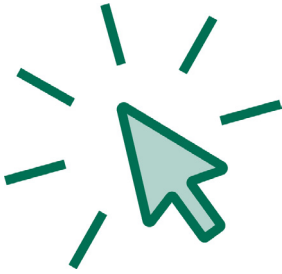
We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 35.



This is an Easy Read summary of another document.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on the Disability Gateway website.

**[www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads)**



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.



# What's in this report?

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# About this report

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Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is a plan to support people with disability in all areas of their life.

In this report we call it the Strategy.



All levels of government run the Strategy.

This includes:

- the Australian Government
- state and territory governments
- local governments.



**Outcomes** are the important results we want to get for people with disability.



The Strategy has ideas about how to make life better for people with disability in 7 main areas.

We call these **outcome areas**.



This report is about one of the Strategy's outcome areas.

The outcome area is called 'community **attitudes**'.



Your attitudes are what you:

- think
- feel
- believe.



All levels of government want the community's attitudes to be **inclusive**.



When the community's attitudes are inclusive, everyone can:

- take part in the community
- feel like they belong.



The Australian Government needs to collect **data** about the community's attitudes to see how they change:

- over time
- while they use the Strategy.

When we talk about data, we mean:



- facts



- information



- records.



In 2022, ANU ran a survey called 'the ADS Survey – Share with us'.



In this report, we explain what we learned from the survey.

## Who we heard from

**18,188**



We heard from **18,188** people.



The survey collected information about the attitudes of different groups in the community.

It collected information from people who work in:



- health – like doctors and nurses



- education – like teachers



- law – like police officers and judges



- support – like carers.



The survey collected information from **employers**.

An employer is a person who hires other people to work for them.

The survey also looked at the way community attitudes affect:



- the experiences of people with disability



- how inclusive the community is.



The survey was in different formats and languages to be **accessible** for everyone.

When information is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- understand.

# What we heard

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The survey showed that most Australians say they have positive attitudes towards people with disability.



But people with disability shared that their experiences were less positive.



It also showed that people had different attitudes depending on the type of disability people had.



# Ideas about people with disability

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One part of the survey asked people to respond to **20 ideas** about people with disability.



We wrote the ideas out as sentences.

And people had to choose how much they agreed or disagreed with each sentence.



These ideas were about the community's attitudes towards people with disability.



The ideas helped collect data for **5 areas** to do with the community's attitudes.



1. How inclusive the community is.



2. How much **discrimination** people with disability experience from the community.

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.



3. The ways people with disability get more out of life than other people in the community.



4. What is possible for people with disability in the community.



5. How much the community supports people with disability to find and keep a job.



We heard that people who had experiences with people with disability had more positive attitudes in these 5 areas.



Over **50%** of people agreed that people with disability find it harder to:

- make new friends
- take part in the community.



**6%** of people agreed that people with disability make things harder for the community.



**17%** of people agreed that people with disability make things harder on their families.



More than **50%** of people agreed that people in the community often make fun of people with disability.



**62%** of people agreed that it's easier to trick people with disability.



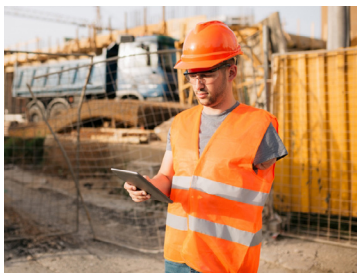
**14%** of people agreed that the community should not expect too much from people with disability.



Only **6%** of people agreed that people with disability should not be hopeful about the future.



Some of the ideas asked people about their attitudes towards people with disability's **employment**.



Employment means you:

- have a job
- go to work
- get paid.



**3%** of people agreed that people with disability don't want to work.



**14%** of people agreed that people with disability don't work as hard as people without a disability.

The survey looked at attitudes from people who work in:



- health – like doctors and nurses



- education – like teachers



- law – like police officers and judges



- support – like carers.





The survey also looked at attitudes from employers.



**93%** of these people agreed that they feel **confident** when they:

- work with people with disability
- support them.



When you are confident, you:

- believe in yourself
- know what you can do
- can try new things.

# Situations involving people with disability

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The survey also asked people to respond to different situations or stories that involved a person with disability.



For example, the survey asked how people would feel if their employer was a person with disability.



**5%** of people said they would feel uncomfortable if their employer had a **physical disability**.



A physical disability affects how someone:

- moves
- uses their body.





**12%** of people said they would feel uncomfortable if their employer had a **sensory disability**.



A sensory disability can affect how someone:

- sees
- hears.



**21%** of people said they would feel uncomfortable if their employer was **neurodiverse**.



When someone is neurodiverse:

- they think in a different way
- their brain works in a different way.



A person with **Autism** is an example of someone who is neurodiverse.



Autism is a disability that can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



**29%** of people said they would feel uncomfortable if their employer had an **intellectual disability**.



An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



**30%** of people who work in law were more likely to feel uncomfortable if their employer had an intellectual disability.



**32%** of people said they would feel uncomfortable if their employer had a disability that affected their mental health.



The survey asked people who work in health if people with disability should make choices about the care they receive.



Most people agreed that they should.



But some people disagreed.

They said people with certain disabilities should not make choices about the care they receive.



The survey asked people who work in law if they believe people with disability when they report **abuse**.

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



Most people agreed that staff would believe a person with disability.



But we also heard that some people disagreed with this idea.

Some people who work in law would not believe people with certain disabilities.

# Experiences of people with disability

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The survey asked people with disability about their experiences with people who work in:



- health – like doctors and nurses



- education – like teachers



- law – like police officers and judges



- support – like carers.

The survey also asked people with disability about their experiences with:



- employers



- the community.



We heard that most people with disability agreed that people treated them with respect.



But only **55%** agreed that people who work in law treated them with respect.



The survey asked people with disability if the community's attitudes ever stopped them from:



- finding or using parts of the community



- taking part in community activities.



For example:

- travelling around
- going to school.



Most people with disability said the community's attitudes never stopped them.



But some people with disability did say that the community's attitudes stopped them.



We heard that the community's attitudes stopped people with disability who have high support needs the most.



# People with disability and employment

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The survey collected information about people with disability and employment.



We heard that there is a large gap between how many:

- people with disability have a paid job
- people without a disability have a paid job.



We also heard that an employer's attitudes affect whether people with disability can:

- find a job
- keep a job.



**87%** of people agreed that hiring people with disability is good for where they work.



**93%** of people agreed that hiring people with disability would make where they work better.



The survey also asked people if they had ever taken part in hiring a person with disability.



In the **last 12 months**, **15%** of people said they had taken part in hiring a person with disability.



And **70%** of people said they had never taken part in hiring a person with disability.



We heard that **44%** of people who work in support had never hired a person with disability.



**68%** of people who work in law had never hired a person with disability.



**74%** of people who work in health and education had never hired a person with disability.



The survey also asked people with disability if the community's attitudes ever stopped them from trying to:

- find or keep a job
- get a **promotion.**



A promotion can mean you are:

- given more things to do in your job
- paid more money.



**67%** of people with disability said the community's attitudes:

- never stopped them
- almost never stopped them.

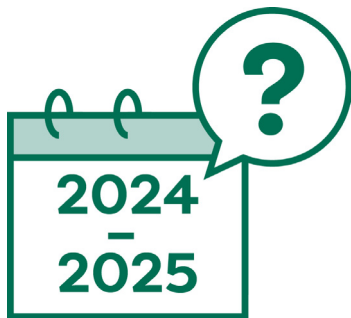


**52%** of people with disability with high support needs said the community's attitudes:

- sometimes stopped them
- always stopped them.

# What happens next

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We will run another survey in **2024 to 2025**.



We will share the information the survey collects in **2025**.



There will be **2** other surveys between **2026 and 2031**.

## Contact us

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You can contact the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) for more information about this report.



You can email them.

**[AustraliasDisabilityStrategyBranch@dss.gov.au](mailto:AustraliasDisabilityStrategyBranch@dss.gov.au)**



You can send them a letter.

GPO Box 9820  
Canberra  
ACT 2601



You can also visit the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's website to learn more about the Strategy.

**[www.aihw.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy/outcomes/community-attitudes](http://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy/outcomes/community-attitudes)**

# Word list

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This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



## **Abuse**

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



## **Accessible**

When information is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
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## **Attitudes**

Your attitudes are what you:

- think
- feel
- believe.



## **Autism**

Autism is a disability that can affect how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



## Confident

When you are confident, you:

- believe in yourself
- know what you can do
- can try new things.



## Data

When we talk about data, we mean:

- facts
- information
- records.



## Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.



## Employer

An employer is a person who hires other people to work for them.





## Employment

Employment means you:

- have a job
- go to work
- get paid.



## Inclusive

When the community's attitudes are inclusive, everyone can:

- take part
- feel like they belong.



## Intellectual disability

An intellectual disability affects how you:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



## Neurodiverse

When someone is neurodiverse:

- they think in a different way
- their brain works in a different way.



## Outcome

Outcomes are the important results we want to get for people with disability.



## Outcome areas

The Strategy has ideas about how to make life better for people with disability in 7 main areas.

We call these outcome areas.



## Physical disability

A physical disability affects how someone:

- moves
- uses their body.



## Promotion

A promotion can mean you are:

- given more things to do in your job
- paid more money.



## Sensory disability

A sensory disability can affect how someone:

- sees
- hears.



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