Australia's Disability Strategy
2021–2031

Creating
an inclusive
community
together

Data Improvement Plan 2024 Summary

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031

Contents

Introduction

This 2024 Data Improvement Plan (DIP) Summary under <u>Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031</u> (ADS) aims to improve the data that is able to be used to track progress against the <u>ADS Outcomes Framework</u> (Outcomes Framework), with a focus on collecting and reporting data for future measures.

The data used to report against the Outcomes Framework helps to support the development and implementation of policies and programs to improve the lives of people with disability.

The DIP Summary:

- provides a progress update on the data gaps that have been addressed, including more detailed data since 2022

- considers how linked data can help develop data for future measures and deliver deeper awareness into intersectionality for different groups of people

- outlines areas for data development, collection and reporting to address data gaps over the life of ADS

- provides a DRC Action Plan that outlines actions to implement some of the key data related recommendations from the <u>Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability</u> (DRC), noting the need to undertake further work to settle the timeframes and approaches for some of these actions

- identifies other data improvement activities relevant to ADS that enable data-driven and evidence-based policy and decision making.

In 2024, a targeted review of ADS was undertaken to take account of the DRC's Final Report to the Australian Government in September 2023 and other learnings from the first few years of ADS implementation. The DIP was revised in consultation with <u>Disability Representative Organisations</u> (DROs), ADS Advisory Council and Australian, state and territory government agencies. The revised DIP has also been endorsed by members of the <u>Disability Reform Ministerial Council</u> (DRMC). This revision occurred as part of the broader *ADS review* work under <u>ADS Roadmap</u> commitment. Future revisions of the DIP will be undertaken and endorsed through the same mechanisms.

In addition to this review point, there are two major evaluations of ADS planned to occur in 2025–26 and 2029. The first major, independent evaluation of ADS is scheduled for 2025–26, providing an opportunity for a broader review of the Outcomes Framework.

Defining and measuring disability

ADS is based on the <u>social model of disability</u>. It recognises that attitudes, practices and structures can be disabling and act as barriers preventing people from fulfilling their potential and exercising their rights as equal members of the community. People with disability may have specific needs, priorities and perspectives based on their individual identities including their gender, age, sexuality, race and cultural background, and can face additional barriers and inequities. ADS focuses on removing these barriers so people with disability can fully and effectively participate in and contribute to society.

Where ADS mentions people with disability, it means people with disability of all ages, whether their disability has been present from birth or acquired through illness, injury, accident or the ageing process. It is important to note that disability can also be self-identified by the individual.

First Nations people often have their own understanding of disability based on cultural practices and beliefs, which is quite different from both social and medical models of disability. This cultural understanding of disability needs to be thought about in the collection, analysis, use and reporting of data.

Progress on data improvement for future measures

The Outcomes Framework consists of 88 measures across 7 Outcome Areas. Forty-one are systems measures, 40 are population measures and 7 are community attitudes measures. There were 41 future measures at the time of release of the initial DIP in 2022. Future measures refer to measures where data needs to be developed to report on them.

This section provides an overview of the progress on reporting of these measures over the last two years, including the key achievements along with delays in collecting and reporting data for some of the future measures.

Key achievements for future measures

Significant progress has been made on the data collection and reporting of several future measures. One key achievement was the reporting of data on the 7 measures in the Community Attitudes Outcome Area. Prior to conducting the ADS Survey there were no existing data relating to community attitudes towards people with disability.

Reporting on Community Attitudes provides various benefits which link into the goals of ADS. In particular, the measures in the Community Attitudes outcome area relate to the social model of disability as it considers the personal barriers which could affect people with disability. These measures are useful in helping governments and the disability community understand the community attitudes towards people with disability, to foster more positive attitudes within the community, as well as improve outcomes such as health, education and employment.

Another future measure that is now regularly reported on is the proportion of public sector employees with disability. This data is collected from APS administrative data and is updated twice a year. This measure links into the economic independence priority of ADS, which is about supporting people with disability to earn enough money to live well, plan for their future, and have choice and control over their own lives.

Thirteen more measures are expected to be reported on in 2025. Data for 8 of these measures are being collected for the first time as part of Wave 2 of the ADS Survey and are expected to be reported in the second half of 2025. The other five measures will be obtained via data linkages through the implementation of the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA).

Future measures where data collection timeframes exceed 18 months

While some good progress has and is being made in reporting on future measures in the Outcomes Framework, the reporting of some future measures remains outstanding. Work is ongoing for all governments to develop an approach that ensures data for these future measures will be collected and reported on over the life of the ADS.

Three future measures have had some progress towards data collection. These measures are expected to come from the NDDA; however, the linkages are complex and may require further definitional work. As such, these measures are not expected to be collected within the next 18 months.

Nine measures are under development and the timeframe and process for collecting data and reporting on these measures is unclear due to the fragmentation, incompleteness and/or inconsistency of data collection, as well as requiring additional scoping and development of suitable data collection approaches. Further details on these future measures are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Measures where data collection timeframe exceeds 18 months

Measures with complex NDDA data linkage		
% of school leavers with disability who are not in employment/education/training 12 months later	% of children with disability who meet school readiness indicators in first year of school	% of students with disability attending school 90% or more of the time
Measures where data collection approach is under development		
% of compliance with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport	% of Australian, state and territory, and local government websites that meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 accessibility standard or above	% of National Disability Insurance Scheme participants who report systems accessed through their individual support package were effective
Number and % of homes that are built to standards according to the National Construction Code (NCC) and the Livable Housing Design, Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) Standard	% of people with disability who can access public or private transport when needed	% of domestic and family violence services that are accessible and inclusive for women with disability
% of social housing dwellings that meet Livable Housing Design silver accessibility standards	% of people with disability who can access the assistive technology they need	% (and number) of disaster management services that have disability inclusive plans in place

Discussions with key stakeholders and all governments are ongoing to develop a data collection approach for these future measures, including data sharing arrangements.

Next steps: Reporting on data for future measures

- **Work to continue across Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments and the disability community to progress the collection and reporting of data for future measures through development of enhanced and consistent data collection and linking data into the NDDA over the next 12 months.**

Measures to be re-evaluated at the first major evaluation point

Eight future measures and one current measure have been identified as being difficult to capture or unclear as they are currently written. The first major evaluation is scheduled for 2025 to coincide with the mid-point of ADS. As a part of the planned work leading up to this evaluation these measures have been identified as potentially requiring amendments. Other measures may also be reviewed in light of assessing the effectiveness of ADS Outcomes Framework.

Consultation with states and territories as well as other relevant stakeholders is planned to capture their views on the suitability and efficacy of measures in the Outcomes Framework. Any changes will need to be agreed to by Disability Reform Ministers.

Next steps: Review of Outcomes Framework

- **Seek approval from DRMC of a proposed approach for future reporting under ADS, including any changes to ADS Outcomes Framework in the context of the first major independent evaluation by the end of 2026.**

Data improvements for current measures and other developments

Improvements to current measures

Current measures are measures where data are now included in ADS Outcomes Framework reporting. ADS is introducing the use of linked data to improve reporting on current measures. This will improve the quality of data and allow a deeper understanding of 18 currently reported measures. Some of this will be through existing data linkages and/or the NDDA when it is established.

Next steps: Improving data for current measures

- **Work to continue with key data agencies (such as Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)), all governments and other key stakeholders to improve reporting on current measures, including the ability to report more frequently, improve reporting on sub-populations and increase disability identification over the next 12 months.**

Other data improvement activities

There are several other data improvement activities that are happening in parallel to ADS. These activities will support the use of data and evidence in decision making processes. Much of this work uses linked data to inform service planning, monitoring and evaluation, and policy development at the national and state and territory level.

Among recent initiatives are projects that bring together de-identified data on National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants with administrative data from other sectors such as aged care, child protection and health. For example, linked data are being used to increase understanding of younger people in residential aged care so that informed program and policy changes can take place to better support people in this group.

NDIS data are also being linked with other health data including the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System to inform policy relevant questions on disability and strengthening evidence-based public health and health system planning and management for future pandemics.

The new Disability Employment Service (DES) program includes a major digital uplift to modernise the ICT system and a range of other improvements to support ongoing quality, monitoring, and evaluation of the new program including DES data and reporting. Some of the current initiatives to be completed by June 2025 include:

- enhancements to data clarity and frequency improvement in publishing the Caseload & Commencement report for Providers to better support DES participants

- a new Performance Framework and associated dashboard and reports for the DES Program

- adding DES program data (existing and new) into the NDDA.

The National Autism Strategy will be the Australian Government's first ever framework setting out the long-term vision, goal, guiding principles and commitments to improve life outcomes for Autistic people. A strong Evidence Framework that aligns data, research and evaluation is important to the implementation and impact of the Strategy.

The final Strategy is expected to be considered by Government by the end of 2024.

For more on other data improvement activities please see the full Data Improvement Plan 2024.

Action plan for Disability Royal Commission data related recommendations

The DRC Final Report was released on 29 September 2023. It highlighted the importance of high-quality data and research to measure the effectiveness of policy and hold government organisations to account. It made 222 recommendations of which 16 were data related and proposed ways to improve the evidence base of disability policy and services including:

- a nationally consistent approach to collecting disability information

- improved data collection about people with disability in closed and segregated settings, with communication support needs, and groups with intersecting and multiple disadvantage.

The NDIS Review final report also recommends governments invest in more regular and improved data.

DRMC agreed, in January 2024 that Australian Government, state and territory officials work together to develop an action plan, with agreed timeframes, to drive data collection and reporting on data related DRC recommendations.

All Australian governments except the Northern Territory (due to being in caretaker at the time) released <u>formal responses</u> to the DRC's recommendations. As part of the response, Government agreed for DRMC to report each year to National Cabinet on the implementation of DRC recommendations.

A key element of DRMC's annual reporting is the DRC National Monitoring and Reporting Framework. This Monitoring and Reporting Framework sets out arrangements to enable the ongoing monitoring of the implementation of all reforms in response to the DRC recommendations.

The DRC Action Plan was developed in consultation with state and territory governments and feedback received from the <u>Australian Government Public Consultation on the DRC's Final Report</u>. The intent of the DRC Action Plan is to drive implementation of data related recommendations in the DRC Final Report, noting the Australian, state and territory governments may need to undertake further work to settle timeframes and approaches, in consultation with other Ministerial Councils and relevant stakeholders.

More detailed actions are provided in the full version of the ADS Data Improvement Plan 2024.

Next steps: Implementing DRC Action Plan

- **Conduct further discussions with all governments and other stakeholders to implement DRC data related recommendations.**

- **Provide regular assessments of the implementation of DRC data related recommendations to DRMC.**

Diversity and intersectionality

ADS recognises the importance of understanding, acknowledging and celebrating the diversity of the disability community. This includes an understanding of intersectionality, meaning the potential for people to experience disadvantage due to the intersection of their sex, age, race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, disability status, socioeconomic status, religion and other dimensions. These dimensions are connected; each informs the other and they have overlapping and piled on effects.

The purpose of the Outcomes Framework is to provide more broad and visible data to track the progress of ADS. At present, there are some limitations in the ability to break down data for measures in the Outcomes Framework. This is due to decisions made prior to ADS about what information was to be collected on various groups, and limitations on the scope and sample sizes for survey data. There have been some improvements to the reporting of intersectionality, for example, significant work has been undertaken to improve reporting on Autistic people.

Making changes to survey instruments and running new surveys provides another important way to improve the ability to break down data. For example, the ADS Survey on community attitudes was the first new data collection to be commissioned to provide data for the Outcomes Framework. The data from this survey can be broken down by numerous dimensions.

Other work underway that will allow for better break down of some measures relate to the ongoing efforts around linking different datasets, such as the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) and the NDDA.

Next steps: Intersectionality reporting

- **Work to continue across the Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments to break down data by socioeconomic group and other dimensions by improving survey tools, designing new surveys and investing in linkage of datasets via the NDDA to analyse and report on intersectionality for people with disability over the next 12 months.**

Data and reporting on First Nations people

Understanding the intersectionality experienced by First Nations people with disability is a key priority for ADS. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement) has been developed to enable First Nations people and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by First Nations people and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians.

The National Agreement works together with ADS as the key strategic policy frameworks for First Nations people with disability. The Outcomes Framework plans to improve access to data and data capabilities to reflect the priorities, needs and experiences of First Nations people, organisations and communities.

The First Action Plan (2023–2027) provides a roadmap for the first 5 year effort towards achieving the vision of the National Plan. A goal of this plan is to support First Nations people's data capability and to foster partnerships between First Nations representatives and government organisations to inform shared decision-making for the benefit of First Nations people

The Australia and New Zealand School of Government and the Australian National University are developing a framework for measuring progress under the Priority Reforms included in the National Agreement. The work of the project is overseen by an Expert Governing Committee of Indigenous leaders in the fields of data and evaluation (Indigenous led approach), and the final report is expected by the end of 2024.

Next steps: Improving data on First Nations people

- **Partner with First Nations people with disability, DROs, and stakeholders across the Australian, state and territory governments to improve access to and availability of locally relevant and data reporting capabilities on First Nations people with disability over the next 12 months.**

Data sources and disability indicators

Data used for Outcomes Framework reporting currently comes from two main sources, administrative and population survey data. Detailed information about the data sources used to report on current measures can be found on the Outcomes Framework webpages.

Administrative data refers to the data collected from running a service or program. National Disability Insurance Agency administrative data currently provides data for 9 current measures in the Outcomes Framework. Population survey data is data collected from a typical sample of respondents on a given topic. The Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) is the broadest source of disability survey data in Australia and is an essential data source for the Outcomes Framework, providing the data for approximately one-third of measures.

Data improvement work is currently underway by the ABS to review the data collection methods for determining disability status in population surveys. The aim of this work is to propose a short standard set of questions for the collection of data on disability status in population surveys, to support a nationally consistent approach to measuring disability.

Other progress in this space is the ongoing data linkage work. Data linkages is a method of joining multiple sources of data about individuals. This can be used to provide a deeper understanding about the characteristics and experiences of populations of interest. Data linkage, particularly through the PLIDA and NDDA, will be drawn on to report against several future measures and improve the reporting of some current measures.

The NDDA is being designed as a long-term national asset containing linked, de-identified Australian, state and territory government data on all Australians. The purpose is to address the problem of inconsistent and poor-quality data on disability. The first set of linked data from the NDDA that will enable measurement of ADS outcomes are expected by early 2025. Once launched, the NDDA will provide improvements to the measures reported from SDAC, including more frequent reporting and better break down of data.

A key piece of work under the NDDA is the development of disability indicators to address issues around inconsistent definition of disability and poor use or absence of a disability flag across data sources. There are some limitations with the proposed method of identifying people with disability in the NDDA. Accessing disability-related supports and services influence who is included in this population. Over time, the group of people with disability captured in the NDDA will be expanded and improved, in consultation with people with disability.

Next steps: Improving data collection and reporting

- **Deliver the first set of linked data from the NDDA that will support measurement of ADS outcomes by early 2025.**

- **Deliver a report with recommendations on how the collection of data on disability status can be improved in the first half of 2025.**

- **Report for the first time on 8 future measures using data collected from Wave 2 of the ADS Survey in the second half of 2025.**