

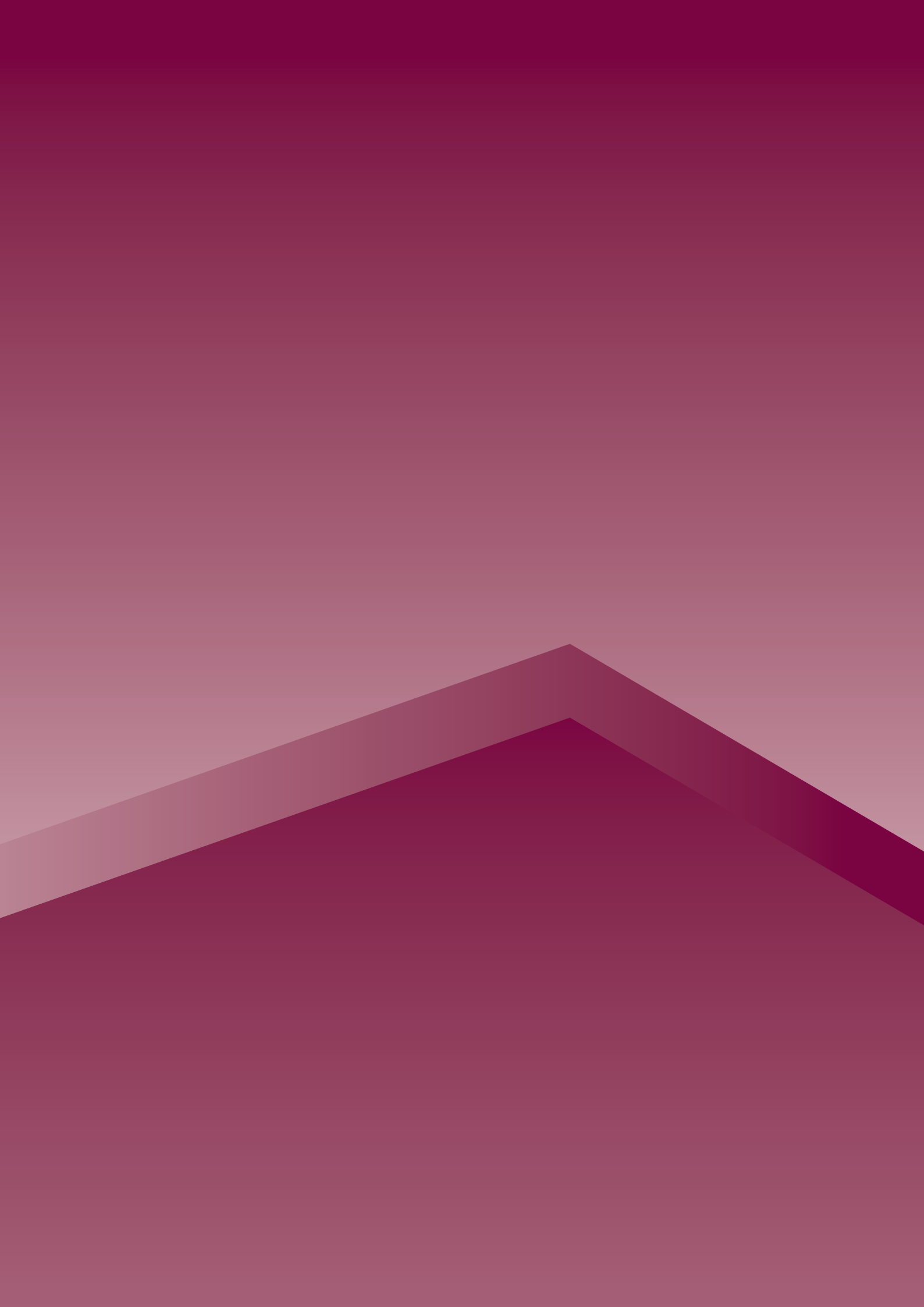


Creating  
an inclusive  
community  
together

# Australia's Disability Strategy

## 2021 – 2031

2024 update:  
Building a more inclusive Australia





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# Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031

**2024 update:  
Building a more inclusive Australia**



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# Foreword

## A message from Jane Spring, Chair of Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council



Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council continues to work with all governments, providing independent advice to guide the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy so that it drives tangible improvements in the lives of people with disability.

This year has marked a number of milestones in our collective journey toward an inclusive, accessible and equitable society for the 5.5 million Australians with disability.

Australia's Disability Strategy has evaluated the first set of Targeted Action Plans, that concluded in June 2024, continued to update quarterly the Outcomes Framework reporting, released the Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability, the Guide to Applying the Australia's Disability Strategy, new Data Improvement Plan, and progressed the design and build of the National Disability Data Asset.

In refreshing Australia's Disability Strategy, governments engaged with the Advisory Council, representative organisations and the disability community, to identify practical ways the Strategy could be improved as governments work to implement reform and change to the policies, programs and services that most impact people with disability. Governments also considered the findings and recommendations from the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We are excited that collectively we are continuing to lift the profile of Australia's Disability Strategy and are pleased to see governments taking a more nationally coordinated approach to the next set of Targeted Action Plans that will focus on Inclusive Homes and Communities, Safety, Rights and Justice and Community Attitudes.

It was an honour to travel as part of the Australian delegation to the United Nations Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in New York showcasing to the world the steps being taken in Australia to become a more inclusive and accessible nation.

As the Chair of Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council, I am proud of the work we are continuing to do to ensure the Strategy is brought to life, resulting in our rights being upheld, and our access to services and the community improved so we can participate on an equal basis. The outcomes under Australia's Disability Strategy will only be realised if governments continue to focus on breaking down the structural barriers that hold people back, working with people with disability in all matters that affect them.

Together we can shape a more inclusive future – one where every Australian regardless of ability, is valued, supported and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

**Jane Spring AM**

Chair

Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council



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## Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031

***Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* calls on all Australians to ensure people with disability can participate as equal members of society.**

This Strategy reflects a collective commitment by all levels of government, Australian, state, territory and local to build an Australia where people with disability are valued, included and empowered to thrive.

It represents a vision for a more inclusive and accessible Australia, where barriers are removed, opportunities are expanded, and the rights of people with disability are upheld.

Throughout the development of the Strategy the voices of people with disability, their families, friends, carers, disability representative organisations and disability service providers have been central and will continue to inform and build the evidence base for informed decision making.

Outcome Areas, policy priorities and targeted actions in the Strategy provide a roadmap to address the systemic and structural barriers faced by people with disability.

By working together with people with disability and across all sectors – governments, businesses and communities – we will create a nation that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion and accessibility that will enable a future where everyone can participate fully in all aspects of life.



## The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

*Signed for and on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia by*



**The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP**  
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia  
19 December 2024

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*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of New South Wales by*



**The Honourable Christopher Minns MP**  
Premier of the State of New South Wales  
10 January 2025

*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of Victoria by*



**The Honourable Jacinta Allan MLA**  
Premier of the State of Victoria  
2 January 2025

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*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of Queensland by*



**The Honourable David Crisafulli MP**  
Premier of the State of Queensland  
21 January 2025

*Signed for and on behalf of the  
State of Western Australia by*



**The Honourable Roger Cook MLA**  
Premier of the State of Western Australia  
20 January 2025

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**Signed for and on behalf of the**  
State of South Australia by



**The Honourable Peter Malinauskas MP**  
Premier of the State of South Australia  
17 January 2025

**Signed for and on behalf of the**  
State of Tasmania by



**The Honourable Jeremy Rockliff MP**  
Premier of the State of Tasmania  
13 January 2025

---

**Signed for and on behalf of the**  
Australian Capital Territory by



**Mr Andrew Barr MLA**  
Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory  
9 January 2025

**Signed for and on behalf of the**  
Northern Territory by



**The Honourable Lia Finocchiaro MLA**  
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory of Australia  
13 January 2025

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**Signed for and on behalf of the**  
Australian Local Government Association by



**Gladstone Regional Council Mayor Matt Burnett**  
President of the Australian Local Government Association  
3 December 2024



# Introduction

***Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (the Strategy)* is Australia's national disability policy framework. It sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over ten years.**

Australia's Disability Strategy represents the collective commitment of all governments to build an inclusive Australian Society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community. The Strategy was developed by Australian, state, territory and local governments, through engagement with, and the involvement of, people with disability, their families and carers.

The Strategy builds on decades of community advocacy, increasing community awareness and government reform across Australia to uphold the rights of people with disability and enable their participation in everyday life.

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Royal Commission), which delivered its final report in September 2023, was Australia's largest inquiry into the experiences of people with disability. It identified a vision for a more inclusive Australia and highlighted that people with disability continue to be subjected to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, exclusion and discrimination at significantly higher rates than people without disability.

As a nation we must do better. Governments, businesses, service providers and community members must work together to ensure all Australians are safe, included and can participate as equal members of society, regardless of disability, gender, age, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation.

Recommendation 5.2 of the Royal Commission sought the review and update of Australia's Disability Strategy. The recommendation indicated that the review should:

- Consider the Strategy and all its implementation mechanisms, including Targeted Action Plans, Engagement Plan, Outcomes Framework, Guiding Principles, reporting arrangements and Data Improvement Plans.
- Be undertaken in partnership with people with disability and their representative organisations.
- An updated Strategy should be released by end of 2024.

This refreshed Strategy, informed by the Australia's Disability Strategy Review (the Review) undertaken with people with disability and their representative organisations, responds to the Royal Commission recommendation and is focused on practical process, governance and reporting improvements, and addressing key gaps or missing elements.

A range of actions were identified and outlined in the Review report. Feedback and information shared that was outside the scope of the review will be considered in the shaping of the Independent Evaluation of Australia's Disability Strategy to commence in 2025 and be released in 2026.

Building on reforms delivered through the [National Disability Strategy 2010–2020](#), a range of significant reforms are being implemented under this Strategy to better support and include people with disability. To date, these include:

- legislative and operational reform to align the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) with its original intent, improve the experience of NDIS participants, deliver decisions that are fairer, transparent and more consistent, strengthen regulation and safeguards and protect NDIS sustainability
- establishing the Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023, which is a contemporary legislative framework for funding and regulating Commonwealth disability services, that emphasises human rights and supports the quality and safety of services for people with disability
- new Australian, state, territory and local government disability inclusion plans
- local initiatives focused on creating inclusive communities, accessible transport, and improved access to health and education services
- the Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024, landmark legislation in Tasmania aimed at advancing and safeguarding the rights of individuals with disabilities
- significant shifts in government and social and community services towards rights-based approaches to remove barriers for people with disability
- establishing the National Disability Research Partnership to facilitate a collaborative and inclusive disability research program that builds evidence for successful policy and practice.

A range of other reforms have been committed to as part of individual and joint government [responses to the Disability Royal Commission](#). For further information on current national disability see the [Disability Reform Roadmap](#).



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## Vision and Purpose

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

In line with Australia's commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), this Strategy will play an important role in protecting, promoting and realising the human rights of people with disability.

The Strategy sets out practical changes Australia can make to improve the lives of people with disability.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability
- drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability
- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

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## The Social Model of Disability

This Strategy is based on the social model of disability. It recognises 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.

This aligns with the UN CRPD, which states that disability results from the 'interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers hindering full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.

The Strategy focuses on removing these barriers so people with disability can fully and effectively participate in and contribute to society. Where this Strategy talks about 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.

People with disability include, but are not restricted to, those who have long-term physical, mental, cognitive, intellectual or sensory impairments. People with disability 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.

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## Outcome Areas

The Outcome Areas in the Strategy set out where governments at all levels, working with the community and business, and people with disability will focus on delivering the needed changes.

By delivering against the Policy Priorities under each Outcome Area, governments envisage all aspects of Australian life becoming more inclusive of people with disability.


Collectively, the Outcome Areas represent the areas people with disability have said need to improve in order to achieve the Strategy's vision. The 7 Outcome Areas are:

- Employment and Financial Security
- Inclusive Homes and Communities
- Safety, Rights and Justice
- Personal and Community Support
- Education and Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Attitudes.

The Outcome Areas are interrelated and necessarily connected. For example:

- improved education and learning outcomes lead to better employment and financial security outcomes
- improved outcomes in safety, rights and justice leads to better health and wellbeing outcomes.

While rights are included as part of the Safety, Rights and Justice Outcome Area to ensure there remains a specific focus on them, in line with Australia's commitments under the UN CRPD, governments are also committed to taking a human rights-based approach to reform and change in all outcome areas.





# ADS Vision

An inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

- Provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- Guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability
- Drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability
- Engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

## Outcome Areas

These are the areas that people with disability have said need to improve. Governments have agreed to focus on these.



Supported by policy priorities:

- Employment and Financial Security
- Inclusive Homes and Communities
- Safety, Rights and Justice
- Personal and Community Support
- Education and Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Attitudes

## Connecting

How we engage with you.



- Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council
- Australia's Disability Strategy Hub (located on the Disability Gateway)
- The Good Practice Guidelines for the Engagement of People with Disability
- National Public Forums
- State and Territory Public Forums
- Public consultations with people with disability
- Engagements with Disability Representative Organisations

## Taking action

How we create change.



- Embedding the Guiding Principles in government policies, programs and services.
- Driving change against the Outcome Areas, and their policy priorities.
- Delivering Targeted Action Plans and Associated Plans.
- Building the evidence base through the National Disability Data Asset and National Disability Research Partnership and data improvement plan.
- Embedding the voice of people with disability across all National Plans.
- Delivering on the Disability Royal Commission recommendations.
- Disability Reform Ministerial Council.

## Impact

How will we know the impact and that change is happening.



- Outcomes Framework quarterly and annual reporting
- Targeted Action Plan reporting
- Two-yearly implementation reporting
- Evaluation
- Reporting Australia's commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council
- National Disability Data Asset Council



# Outcome Areas

## 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



*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 to meet their needs.*

### Policy Priority 1:

#### Increase employment of people with disability

Employment supports people with disability to have more control over their lives, be financially independent and have a better standard of living. Paid employment also leads to better mental and physical health and wellbeing. Rates of employment for people with disability are significantly lower than for those without disability. While recognising some people with disability are unable to work, increasing employment of people with disability will ensure these skilled individuals are fully participating in the economy. Increasing employment opportunities for people with disability includes encouraging business ownership and development, self-employment and entrepreneurship.

*“Increasing the number of people with disability who are employed by 10 per cent would raise national economic output by \$16 billion per year.” (Buckland et al 2024)<sup>1</sup>*

*“Young people with disability are one of the most disadvantaged cohorts in the labour market and the barriers they experience in finding quality and stable work are complex and multi-faceted.” (Children and Young People with Disability Australia 2024)<sup>2</sup>*

*“The unemployment rate of working-age people with disability (7.5% or 120,300) is more than twice the rate for people without disability (3.1% or 362,300).” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024)<sup>3</sup>*

*“Indigenous Australians aged 15 and over who reported having disability in 2018–19 were less likely than those without disability to be employed (35% compared with 56% respectively), and more likely than those without a disability to be living in households in the lowest income quintile (46% and 33%, respectively), and to have had problems accessing services (53% and 33%, respectively).” (Australian Institute of Health of Welfare 2024)<sup>4</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment**

Evidence shows preparing young people for employment, including supporting them to access skills development and work experience, can have long-term benefits for their employment prospects and careers.<sup>5</sup>

*“Access to education and the level of education attained can affect participation in other key life areas, including employment and ability to achieve economic independence. People with disability are more likely to leave school at younger ages and to have a lower level of educational attainment.” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>6</sup>*

*‘Transitioning from school to post-school activities is well known to be challenging for young people as they seek to develop their own identity and opportunities for meaningful roles and occupations. For young people with intellectual disability, poor support with transition planning and navigating complicated policies and services, compound the challenges of post-school transition’ (Mogensen et al 2024)<sup>7</sup>*

*“Young people with disability can face difficulties pursuing further education and qualifications after school. Again, these difficulties result from inadequate transition planning, low expectations about capacity (ableism) and inaccessible post-school education providers.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>8</sup>*



### Policy Priority 3:

## Strengthen financial independence of people with disability

Adequate income provides increased financial security, economic independence and an appropriate standard of living, giving people more choice and control over their lives, and enabling their participation in community life. The income support system provides an important safety net for people with disability who are unable to work or cannot find employment. Ensuring income support, tax and the industrial relations systems work together to avoid creating barriers and disincentives is critical to supporting people with disability to gain employment and increase the number of hours they work.

*"In 2022, the median gross personal income of people with disability was \$575 per week, compared with \$1055 per week for people without disability." (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024)<sup>9</sup>*

*"Consistent with our vision for inclusion, we believe people with disability should have genuine choice and control over where and how they work." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>10</sup>*

*"People with disability need economic security, meaningful social engagement, and the ability for community participation through work. They also need choice in what work they do, where they work, and how they work... Segregation in employment has enabled working conditions that have allowed people with disability to be paid sub-minimum wage, leading to economic insecurity." (People with Disability Australia 2024)<sup>11</sup>*

*'People with an intellectual disability are systematically shut out from obtaining and sustaining equitable employment and are therefore forced to rely on government payments to support their livelihoods.' (Inclusion Australia 2023)<sup>12</sup>*

*"In December 2023, 5.2% of [Australian Public Service] APS employees had disability." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>13</sup>*



## Inclusive Homes and Communities

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



*Having appropriate housing, and a community that is accessible and inclusive, is central to how people with disability live, work and socialise.*

*Accessible housing, transport, communication and the built environment are key factors supporting the participation of people with disability. Accessible public buildings, facilities, parks and events all support the inclusion of people with disability in community life.<sup>14</sup>*

### Policy Priority 1:

#### Increase the availability of affordable housing

Access to affordable, safe and long-term housing underpins a person's sense of home and their ability to participate in their communities. For people with disability to have choice about where to live and with whom, a range of housing options are required, including public and community housing, private rental and home-ownership.

*"Problems with existing housing include poor access; unsuitable internal layouts; inadequately designed bathrooms, kitchens and laundries; and a lack of other qualities such as good light and connections to outdoor views and spaces. As well, dwellings may be poorly located in relation to transport, services and amenities, further limiting life choices, particularly around employment." (Australian Human Rights Commission 2021)<sup>15</sup>*

*"People with disability are much more likely to rely on housing supports than people without disability. In fact, people with disability are: 8 times more likely to live in public housing; 5 times more likely to access specialist homelessness services; and 3 times more likely to receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance." (National Disability Data Asset Pilot 2021)<sup>16</sup>*



*“Accessing suitable social housing can be a difficult and protracted process for many Australians, with demand exceeding supply. The barriers can be higher still for people with disability. We received information about experiences of long wait times, a mismatch between accessibility needs and the housing offered, and barriers to obtaining modifications.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>17</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **Housing is accessible and people with disability have choice and control about where they live, who they live with, and who comes into their home**

Accessible and well-designed housing supports independence and social and economic participation. Increasing the availability of accessible housing provides choices on where to live and, who to live with, and enables people with disability to visit, socialise and connect with neighbours, family, and friends. Improved take up of universal design principles will support people regardless of age or disability to live in their home through all stages of their lives.

*“Lack of available alternatives and fear of becoming homeless also keep many people living in violent, abusive, neglectful and exploitative living environments, as the Royal Commission has already heard in Public hearing 17, which focused on the experience of women and girls with disability with a particular focus on family, domestic and sexual violence.” (People with Disability Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Inclusion Australia 2022)<sup>18</sup>*

*“Fifty-nine per cent of survey respondents said access to affordable and accessible housing and accommodation was a major or severe issue.” (National Disability Strategy Consultation Report 2019)<sup>19</sup>*

*“As individual and systemic advocacy organisations, we find a significant amount of our support is directly or indirectly related to housing. Over the years we have heard from thousands of people with disability who live in unsuitable, insecure and / or inappropriate housing. This neither meets their immediate needs nor allows for choice and control over their lives and futures. Many have also experienced more direct forms of homelessness such as couch surfing and even street sleeping.” (People with Disability Australia, Disability Advocacy Network Australia, Inclusion Australia 2022)<sup>20</sup>*

*“People with disability need real choice and control and shouldn't be expected to live with other people unless they choose to, the same as anyone else. It's a human right. To make this happen we need to see urgent action to significantly increase accessible and affordable housing.” (People with Disability Australia 2024)<sup>21</sup>*

*“In 2023 among tenants of all social housing programs ... tenant needs were less likely to be met among households with disability for all surveyed amenities compared with households without a person with disability, in particular, structural modifications for special needs (68% compared with 80% respectively), energy efficiency (66% compared with 76%), thermal comfort (63% compared with 73%) and safety/security of home (71% compared with 81%).” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>22</sup>*

### Policy Priority 3:

## People with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life

People with disability should be supported to live more accessible and connected lives within their communities, including being able to fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life. This requires accessibility to be an integral part of the design of services and systems to avoid barriers arising. It requires going beyond just physical accessibility. Providing easily accessible information about community services, events and facilities, and providing low sensory spaces, helps support the inclusion of people with disability in their communities.<sup>23</sup>

*“Access to services – such as public transport, shopping, medical, and education services – is important for better health, social and economic outcomes. Yet, social housing households that have at least one person with disability are less likely to live where their needs to access nominated services and facilities are met.” (NSW Ageing and Disability Commission 2023)<sup>24</sup>*

*“Having a long-term disability doesn't stop Australians being active; around four in five (79%) participate in some kind of sport or physical activity at least once a year, a third (32%) play at least one Olympic sport and a quarter (26%) play at least one Paralympic sport.” (Sports Australia 2021)<sup>25</sup>*

*“Social support enables people with disability to participate in many facets of life. Informal support, often by family, friends and the larger community can assist people with disability to be included in society. This is essential for better health as social isolation and loneliness can be harmful to both mental and physical health.” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>26</sup>*

*“Enabling and supporting safe and healthy interpersonal relationships is an integral component to building an inclusive Australia. These may be relationships within families and kinship connections, or with colleagues, peer groups, friendships and intimate partners.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>27</sup>*

*“Low expectations, attitudes, physical access, and other types of barriers to participation, limit access to many arts and cultural spaces, venues and events for both audiences with disability and cultural and creative practitioners with disability.” (Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place – Australia's Cultural Policy 2023)<sup>28</sup>*

## Policy Priority 4:

### The built and natural environment is accessible

Adopting universal design principles enables everyone, regardless of age or ability, to use buildings, transport, parks, and playgrounds without the need for specialised or adapted features. Buildings and outdoor spaces that are not accessible exclude people with disability from participation in work, education, and social and cultural life.<sup>29</sup>

*"[U]niversal design and built environment accessibility often needs to go beyond access for people with physical impairments and should include design for other issues such as hearing impairment, cognitive impairment, psychosocial disability, or autism" (Senate Community Affairs References Committee 2017)<sup>30</sup>*

*"Accessibility isn't just about physical modifications, such as wheelchair ramps, or providing Auslan interpreters. It also includes...how services think about disability (attitudinal factors) ... how information about services is made available (communication factors)." (People with Disability Australia and Domestic Violence NSW 2021)<sup>31</sup>*

*"Consultation participants emphasised the importance of providing education and resources to inform the implementation of inclusive practices, including through the provision of accessible and appropriate information, accessibility measures for public spaces and flexibility to account for the diversity of disabilities." (Women with Disabilities Australia 2022)<sup>32</sup>*

*"In 2022, 74% of people with disability reported they had no difficulty accessing buildings or facilities." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>33</sup>*

## Policy Priority 5:

### Transport systems are accessible for the whole community

Being able to use public, private and community transport to move around the community underpins all aspects of life for all people. Being able to move around the community has positive impacts on everyone's health, social life, education and employment. For this to occur, transport and its entry points (e.g. stations and platforms) need to be accessible to everyone, including people with disability. Other key factors include access to emerging technology and point-to-point transport (e.g. rideshare), proximity of transport systems, frequency of services, information to support the journey (e.g. hearing loops and alerting devices), and getting to and from the transport (e.g. footpaths and walkways).

*"Poor transport accessibility and reliability is a barrier for people with disability to access medical and other health services, safe evacuation during disasters, education and employment opportunities, community supports and services, and social interaction with friends, family and the broader community." (People with Disability Australia 2023)<sup>34</sup>*

*"We regularly hear from people living with disability that they are excluded from mainstream public transport because their access needs are overlooked, and they continue to encounter disrespectful treatment by transport workers." (JFA Purple Orange, 2022)<sup>35</sup>*

*“A whole-of-journey perspective goes beyond the vehicles themselves and focuses attention on the connective infrastructure. For example, the availability of tactile or sensory infrastructure and digital supports, the attention to shared paths, accessible streets and kerbs, as well as physical infrastructure in and around stops and stations. If one element of this connective fabric breaks down, then it does not matter that the train, bus, or tram met a specific accessibility standard. The transport journey must be seen and incorporated into the accessibility standards in its entirety.” (Advocacy for Inclusion)<sup>36</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 6: Information and communication systems are accessible, reliable and responsive**

Being able to access information and communicate is vitally important in all aspects of life. It is central to people’s safety and health, to involvement in their communities, employment and education, and to using transport, banking and shopping. Provision of communication in accessible formats (e.g. Braille, Auslan, Easy Read formats) can have a positive impact on the health of and opportunities for people with disability. With technology becoming a key means to participation across all elements of individual and community life, it is important that technology is inclusive of all Australians.<sup>37</sup>

*“Communication access is as important as physical access to people with disability if they are to participate fully in social, economic, sporting and community life in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.” (Speech Pathology Australia 2021)<sup>38</sup>*

*“Throughout our inquiry, we have learnt that a failure to provide information in accessible formats and to facilitate appropriate communication with people with disability can have serious consequences. This can lead to poor health, education and justice outcomes, reduce employment opportunities and increase the risk of harm during emergencies. People with disability who experience communication barriers and have high support needs are at increased risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>39</sup>*

*“Whether you use a mouse and keyboard, a touch screen, or a screen reader, you will be able to access the same information on an accessible website. This makes accessible websites a level playing field. Inaccessible websites segregate the internet by removing access from people with disabilities. At its core, an accessible website is one where any user, no matter their ability, can access the same information and the same content.” (Vision Australia)<sup>40</sup>*

## Policy Priority 7: People with disability have access to services and supports to prevent and reduce homelessness

Accessible, safe and affordable housing is central to the inclusion and dignity of people with disability however, some people with disability experience homelessness including repeat homelessness. Through the joint response to the Royal Commission, all governments agreed to consult with people with disability to create strategies, policies and action plans that address the risks and barriers to housing stability. This will include a priority focus through Australia's Disability Strategy on people with disability at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

*The 2021 Census data shows that of people aged under 65 with 'severe or profound' disability, 4,792 were homeless and 3,457 were marginally housed on Census night in 2021. The data also indicates a greater prevalence of 'severe or profound' disability among people aged under 65 years who are homeless compared to people aged under 65 in the wider population.*

*The People with Disability in Australia 2024 report suggests that SHS [Supported Housing Services] clients with disability are more likely than clients without disability to have one or more other risk factors that increase their likelihood of experiencing homelessness, or provide additional barriers to exiting homelessness highlighting the intersectional experiences of disability.*

*60% of homelessness service users with disability also experience mental health issues compared with 36% clients without disability*

*17% of homelessness service users with disability experience drug or alcohol misuse compared with 10% clients without disability.*





## 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



*People with disability are experts in their own lives and have the same rights as people without disability. Community acceptance of these rights and experiences will maximise individual power and autonomy, and support economic participation, social inclusion, safety and equality.*

*Australia's Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful in areas including employment, education, and access to premises, goods, services and facilities. Disability advocacy can enable and support people with disability in ways which protect and uphold their rights. Despite this, rights protection, safety and discrimination of people with disability continue to be areas requiring improvement.<sup>41</sup>*

*Refer to Appendix 4 for more information on the UN CRPD, the DDA and the Australian Human Rights Commission, and Appendix 5 for more information on Advocacy.*

### Policy Priority 1:

**People with disability are safe and feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation**

People with disability are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and fare worse in institutional contexts such as group homes and boarding houses where violence may be more common. People with disability are also more likely to be victims of crime. Volume 3 of the Royal Commission Final Report details the nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation experienced by people with disability in Australia.



*"Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation can greatly impact the life outcomes of people with disability, and the trajectories of their lives. This is especially the case for experiences early in life, or during periods of transition." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>42</sup>*

*"47% of adults with disability have experienced violence after the age of 15, compared with 36% without disability... 1 in 5 (20% or 1.1 million) [people with disability] experienced abuse before the age of 15 compared with 1 in 10 [people without disability] (11% or 1.3 million)." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019)<sup>43</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **Policies, processes and programs provide better responses to people with disability who have experienced trauma**

A trauma-informed approach promotes safety and upholds the dignity and wellbeing of people with disability. It also respects and recognises that people with disability are experts in their own lives. Traumatic life experiences require responses catering to the lived experience of the individual.

*"Service providers should ensure their processes recognise that people respond to and deal with experiences of trauma in different ways. Worker training should also recognise and respond to the different needs of people they work with during complaint or incident processes and investigations." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>44</sup>*

*"Trauma-informed services do no harm i.e. they do not re-traumatise or blame victims for their efforts to manage their traumatic reactions, and they embrace a message of hope and optimism that recovery is possible. In trauma-informed services, trauma survivors are seen as unique individuals who have experienced extremely abnormal situations and have managed as best they could." (NSW Health 2022)<sup>45</sup>*

*"Trauma-informed care changes the question from 'what is wrong with you?' to 'what has happened to you?'" (NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation 2022)<sup>46</sup>*

*"Knowing how to 'talk about trauma' is essential to supporting traumatised people. It is also critical to establishing service systems which are 'trauma-informed' i.e. in which all professionals and personnel, regardless of qualification/s, occupation or skill base have a basic understanding of how overwhelming stress can affect the way we function as human beings and a working knowledge of how not to compound stress ('do no harm')." (Blue Knot Foundation 2018)<sup>47</sup>*

### Policy Priority 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

To improve the safety of people with disability there is a need to take targeted action for groups at heightened risk of violence. Women, children and young people are at a particularly heightened risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.<sup>48</sup> Effective preventive actions targeting violence against women and children require an inclusive and collaborative effort across a range of settings.<sup>49</sup> The Strategy should be considered in conjunction with other plans such as the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032, Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031 and Working For Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality.

*"... Australian research has similarly found that women with disability were twice as likely to say they had experienced sexual harassment at work than those without a disability. This data and research is consistent with other research which has suggested that women with disability are at greater risk of violence than other people in the community." (Australian Human Rights Commission 2020)<sup>50</sup>*

*"The prevalence of disabilities in the child protection system suggests a need for awareness of the scope of issues faced by these children and the need for interagency collaboration to ensure children's complex needs are met. Supports are needed for families with children with disabilities to assist in meeting the child's health and developmental needs, but also to support the parents in managing the often more complex parenting environment." (Maclean et al. 2017)<sup>51</sup>*

*"Women with disability may be reluctant to report DFV due to a fear of losing custody of their children. This fear is not unjustified; women with disability do disproportionately have children removed from their care." (People with Disability Australia and Domestic Violence NSW 2021)<sup>52</sup>*

*"Women with disability were more likely than women without disability to have experienced:*

- emotional abuse by a partner (7.0% compared with 4.6%)
- economic abuse by a partner (4.6% compared with 2.4%)

*Women with disability were about as likely to have experienced partner violence (2.2%) as women without disability (1.5%)." (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023)<sup>53</sup>*

*"Women from marginalised communities, including women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, migrant women, women living in regional and remote areas and LGBTQI+ people, are at greater risk of TFCC (technology-facilitated coercive control)." (Australian Institute of Criminology 2024)<sup>54</sup>*

*"Disability does not of itself make a child or young person vulnerable. Other features in young people's environments may have a greater part to play in how vulnerable (or otherwise) they are to abuse. The focus must be on systems and structures to adequately put in place mechanisms to empower and safeguard effectively." (Children and Young People with Disability Australia and Child Wise 2021)<sup>55</sup>*

*"First Nations children are much more likely than non-Indigenous children to be exposed to family violence, and this is even higher for First Nations children with disability. Thirty-six per cent of First Nations children with disability had a mother hospitalised as a result of family violence compared with 26 per cent of First Nations children in general and 3 per cent of non-Indigenous children." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>56</sup>*

*"Just over one in five (21.6%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care had a reported disability in 2023, a slight increase from 2021. The disability status for a large proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care is unknown (30.2%)." (Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report 2024)<sup>57</sup>*

## Policy Priority 4:

### The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected

Promoting awareness and respect for the rights of people with disability and building on Australia's rights-focused legislative protections for people with disability, will help to systematically uphold and safeguard these rights. It will also help realise Australia's commitments under the UN CRPD. The Australian Human Rights Commission, and state and territory human rights/anti-discrimination bodies play an important role in promoting and protecting these rights, including helping individuals and organisations understand and meet their legal responsibilities. Disability advocacy also supports people with disability to safeguard their rights, experience equality and overcome barriers that can affect their ability to participate in the community.

*"The CRPD is the roadmap for the social transformation required to end the inequality, discrimination and segregation that are the enablers of the violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation experienced by people with disability." (Social Policy Research Centre, 2020)<sup>58</sup>*

*"Limited awareness and understanding of the rights of people with disability, coupled with ableist attitudes, are linked to violence against, and abuse, neglect and exploitation of, people with disability." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>59</sup>*

*"In 2022–23, 46 per cent of AHRC complaints were lodged under the Disability Discrimination Act." (Australian Human Rights Commission 2023)<sup>60</sup>*



*“People with disability, their families and supporters turn to independent disability advocacy organisations to make sure they can access mainstream and disability focused services and supports that all too often they are shut out from.” (Disability Advocacy Network Australia 2024)<sup>61</sup>*

*“In 2022–23, 63% of assessed National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) clients reported improved choice and control to make their own decisions.” (Australia Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>62</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 5:**

### **People with disability have equal access to justice**

Effective access to justice for people with disability requires consideration of individual needs. Without this there can be no equitable or equal participation. This requires appropriate strategies, including aids, equipment, and accessible legal information and advice to facilitate equal and effective participation in all legal proceedings. In addition, greater awareness of disability is needed among some parts of the judiciary, legal professionals and court staff.

*“People with disability may come into contact with the criminal justice system as a victim of crime, a person accused or suspected of a crime, or as a witness to a crime. People with disability, including young people, are over-represented across the criminal justice systems in Australia and are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in criminal justice settings.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 2020)<sup>63</sup>*

*“People with disability engaging in the justice system face significant barriers, with many finding access to justice difficult, hostile and ineffectual. As a result, they are often left without legal redress.” (Australian Civil Society 2019)<sup>64</sup>*

*“The provision of mobility aids, devices and assistance technologies, as well as other forms of assistance, services and facilities such as hearing augmentation, Braille signage, Auslan interpreters, use of plain English and other Augmentive and Alternative communication methods, would help to ameliorate some of the difficulties experienced by people with disability in accessing essential services, the justice system and information about their rights.” (Law Council of Australia 2024)<sup>65</sup>*





## Policy Priority 6:

### The criminal justice system responds effectively to the complex needs and vulnerabilities of people with disability

People with disability who have complex needs, multiple impairments and/or multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage, face even greater obstacles within the justice system compared to other people with disability and people without disability. People with disability in the criminal justice system are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Reducing the over-representation of people with disability across the criminal justice systems of Australia and other systems of detention requires appropriate strategies, including adoption of diversionary approaches and transition to community supports.

*“People with disability, particularly cognitive disability, are also exposed to frequent and intense policing. People with cognitive and mental health impairments experience multiple forms of disadvantage, making them more likely to be criminalised and caught up in a cycle of reoffending and incarceration.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>66</sup>*

*“[P]eople with intellectual disability are understood to be over-represented in prisons ... [S]everal studies have found that 25%–30% of people in prison have borderline intellectual disability, and 10% have a mild intellectual disability ... Almost 2 in 5 (39%) prison entrants reported that a long-term health condition or disability affected their participation in everyday activities (30%), education (16%) or employment (21%). (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023)<sup>67</sup>*

*“A lack of screening of, and information about, young people entering detention meant that custodial staff often misinterpreted features of disability as bad behaviour. “ (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>68</sup>*

*“Women with disability have increased vulnerability as victims of crime and abuse. For example, women with an intellectual disability are ten times more likely to experience violence and three times more likely to be victims of assault, sexual assault and robbery. In addition, it is important to recognise that women and girls with disability who experience gender-based violence can be impacted in particular ways, for example if they are from First Nations, culturally diverse, migrant and refugee backgrounds.” (Law Council of Australia 2024)<sup>69</sup>*

*“Significant evidence was provided to the DRC regarding the ill-treatment of people with disability in adult prisons and juvenile detention facilities, including the lack of reasonable supports, lack of access to medication, medical attention and mental health treatment, and significant experiences of violence, restrictive practices, seclusion and solitary confinement.” (Women with Disabilities Australia 2024)<sup>70</sup>*

## 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



*Personal and community supports, including both specialist disability supports and mainstream services available to the general public, are fundamental to improving overall outcomes for people with disability.*

*Some people with disability need support to be able to maintain everyday wellbeing at home and to be fully included in community activities. It is important for people with disability to be able to live independently and be involved in community activities, such as education, work, training, recreation, cultural life and neighbourhood activities.*

### Policy Priority 1:

#### People with disability are able to access supports that meet their needs

Like all Australians, people with disability need access to personal and community supports. This includes both disability services and mainstream services.

Mainstream services such as relationship or financial counselling, parenting support and crisis services need to be universally available and accessible to all people in the community, including people with disability.

*“All mainstream services, institutions and systems must become accessible and responsive to the needs of all people with disability. We need to work in new ways which focus better on the intersectional needs of the people that these systems serve.” (NDIS Review 2023)<sup>71</sup>*

*“People with disability report the education, healthcare, justice and social service sectors to be most impactful and problematic in their responsiveness towards people with disability. This has enduring social, cultural and economic costs for people with disability, and for Australia more broadly.” (Australian Council of Learned Academies 2022)<sup>72</sup>*



*"Living with disability or living in a remote area can present unique challenges that can affect outcomes significantly. Understanding the experiences of different population groups can help to target policies and programs and enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to make more informed decisions about their lives." (Closing the Gap Annual Data Compilation Report 2024)<sup>73</sup>*

*"There is a lack of expertise and a range of structural barriers within domestic violence, sexual assault and women's crisis services that prevent appropriate responses to support women with disability." (Disabled People's Organisations Australia and the National Women's Alliances 2019)<sup>74</sup>*

*"In 2022, 80% of people with disability [aged 15–64] were satisfied with the quality of assistance received from formal service providers ... In 2022, 86% of people with disability [aged 65 and over] were satisfied with the quality of assistance received from formal service providers" (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>75</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **The NDIS provides eligible people with permanent and significant disability with access to reasonable and necessary disability supports**

As a world-first approach to providing disability support, the NDIS is Australia's national scheme for people with disability. The NDIS has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people with disability and their families for the better. Its introduction has transformed the nation, creating social and economic benefits. It has made our country stronger and fairer. The NDIS, along with other supports and services, can help contribute to the broader outcomes of the Strategy.

*"As a social insurance scheme, the NDIS also creates benefits to people without disability and is an important part of Australia's safety net. No one knows when they might acquire a disability or have a child or grandchild who is born with a disability and may need." (NDIS Review, 2023)<sup>76</sup>*

*"The NDIS is a critical investment in the supports and needs of people with disability to live their day-to-day life in their communities, based upon principles of choice and control." (Queenslanders with Disability Network 2019)<sup>77</sup>*

*"As a standard setter within the disability service system, the NDIS should ensure people with disability are at the centre of service delivery and empowered to exercise their rights." (NDIS Review 2023)<sup>78</sup>*

*"The NDIS is a significant investment by all governments on behalf of all Australians. Its sustainability is essential to maintain community support and ensure it can deliver for those who need it now and in the future." (NDIS Review 2023)<sup>79</sup>*

### Policy Priority 3:

#### The role of informal support is acknowledged and supported

The informal support provided by parents, siblings, kinship guardians, other family members and friends is vitally important to people with disabilities. The support provided in these close relationships can often be one of mutual support.

Informal support can include practical and emotional support and representing the interests and rights of the person being supported. The informal support provided by voluntary organisations is also important to enriching the lives of people with disability. Acknowledging and supporting individuals and organisations who provide informal care and support can increase the participation of people with disability in community life.

*“The Royal Commission has heard about the critical role of informal supports for people with disability who are experiencing social isolation. Informal supports are particularly important for people in supported accommodation, living alone or experiencing homelessness. Strong relationships and social support networks can prevent harm and counter social isolation for people living in group homes or living alone.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 2023)<sup>80</sup>*

*“In addition to the support provided [by the NDIS], the close relationships that participants have with the people who provide this informal support can also be highly important. Therefore, the ongoing capacity of family members and carers to provide these informal supports can often be critical to the wellbeing of participants.” (National Disability Insurance Agency 2023)*

*“In 2022, of the 3.2 million people with disability (living in households) who needed assistance, 75.7 per cent received support from informal providers.” (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024)*



## Policy Priority 4: People with disability are supported to access assistive technology


Assistive technology is any device or system used by people to make tasks easier. Most people use assistive technology in their daily lives, such as smart phones or remote controls. Assistive technology also includes grab rails, hoists, wheelchairs, hearing aids, text captioning services, home modifications, digital assistive technology, prosthetics and devices to support memory.

For people with disability, assistive technology supports inclusion, participation, communication and engagement in family, community and all areas of society, including political, economic and social spheres.<sup>81</sup>

*"In 2022, of the 5.5 million Australians with disability, over half (54.2% or 3.0 million) used aids or equipment because of their condition." (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024)<sup>82</sup>*

*"gaining timely access to AT can have a substantial impact on the daily lives of individuals living with a disability, particularly through the ability of AT to enable individuals to achieve desirable social and economic outcomes." (University of Melbourne, 2022)<sup>83</sup>*

*"Technology in the workplace is evolving to make businesses more efficient and to make jobs easier to do for everyone. The use of assistive technology (AT) in the workplace can support people with disability to achieve their full potential – as employees and as business owners themselves." (Disability Support Guide 2022)<sup>84</sup>*



## Education and Learning

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



*Access to formal and informal education is critical to the development of skills, independence and wellbeing of people with disability. It provides pathways to fulfilling employment, financial independence, and enriched lives.*

*Despite educational reforms over the last decade, there remain significant gaps for students with disability. These gaps are notable in attainment of Year 12 or equivalent, vocational education and training qualifications, and participation in university studies.*

### Policy Priority 1:

**Children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care**

High-quality, affordable, inclusive, and accessible early childhood education and care equips children and their families to succeed throughout life. The benefits of accessing quality early-years education continue throughout children's primary education years and can support future success, including educational attainment, employment, and economic and social participation.<sup>85</sup>

*"Good quality early childhood education can help childhood development and make children more ready for school. Children who do not participate in early childhood education have significantly higher chances of being developmentally vulnerable than those who do." (Children and Young People with Disability Australia 2022)<sup>86</sup>*

*"Early childhood educators and other specialists working with children and families need to be adequately trained and disability confident. We need people to undertake disability awareness training that is tailored to their industries while they are still in education and before they move into the workforce." (Australian Federation of Disability Organisations 2024)<sup>87</sup>*



*"Early childhood education and care is crucial in supporting children to develop educationally and socially ... All too often these services lack specialist skills and knowledge about disability. This may lead to children with disability not being able to benefit from these services at the same level as some of their peers." (Children and Young People with Disability Australia 2022)<sup>88</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability**

When children and young people have positive educational experiences, they are more likely to remain engaged in learning. Students with disability have a right to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability, in an environment free from bullying, harassment or exclusion. Education providers who embed inclusion foster a sense of community and belonging and are integral to improving the educational experience of children and young people with disability.

Strengthening system capability to support students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability is essential for improving all students' educational outcomes. While accessibility and inclusion strategies have supported increased secondary school completion for some students with disability, there remains a significant gap in outcomes between students with disability and students without disability.<sup>89</sup> Narrowing these gaps in educational attainment is essential to improve lifetime outcomes for people with disability.

*"Students should be able to achieve their individual educational goals, and positive social outcomes in and beyond school." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>90</sup>*

*"there remain misconceptions about the ability of students, as if students' capacity to learn is somehow predetermined, and their ability to achieve is fixed... This resulted in low expectations for the students with disabilities in their classroom and created an attitudinal barrier regarding their adoption of effective techniques ... Or, in fact, engaging in implementing reasonable adjustments." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2021)*

*"If schools do not have appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, including knowledge and understanding about the use of communication devices, physical accessibility (such as wheelchair ramps) and inclusive classrooms (for example providing a quiet and supportive environment for students who might have attention or sensory processing difficulties during assessments), it can make it difficult or impossible for these students to fully participate in academic and extracurricular activities." (Children and Young People with Disability Australia 2023)*



### Policy Priority 3:

## Improve pathways and accessibility to further education and training for people with disability

Tertiary education attainment supports improved employment rates and income. Improving access to and participation in post-school education and training assists people with disability to achieve their full potential and access the same opportunities as Australians without disability. This includes supporting students with disability in high school with career and transition planning.

*“Having a university degree is associated with an 18.2 per cent increase in the chance of being in work compared to a person who did not complete school. For people with disability, having a university degree is associated with an additional 16.2 per cent higher probability of being in work.” (Buckland et al 2024)<sup>91</sup>*

*“The transition from education to work is one of the most profound and influential life changes for all young adults. How well or poorly we move from school, TAFE or University into a real, meaningful and ongoing job can set our path through life, impacting on our confidence, career options future earnings and our sense of purpose, belonging and social value” (Buckland et al 2024)<sup>92</sup>*

*“The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability highlights that transition planning should commence in year 9 in collaboration with students, their parents and carers to help students define and articulate their goals and aspirations beyond school. This allows adequate time for exploring options, setting goals and making informed decisions about post-school plans. This also provides opportunities for developing skills, building connections and gaining experiences relevant to chosen paths. Early planning can also help alleviate stress and uncertainty during the later years of high school.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>93</sup>*

## Policy Priority 4:

### People with disability have increased opportunities to participate in accessible and inclusive lifelong learning

The benefits of lifelong learning include building knowledge, acquiring, maintaining and developing skills and facilitating career advancement. Opportunities for this type of learning should be equally accessible to people with disability through adult and community education, continuing education and training, professional development and self-directed learning, in both formal and informal settings.

*"People can no longer navigate their life course using only the skills and knowledge acquired at school, college or university. They need to learn throughout life. Lifelong learning is an effective and transformational means of tackling current global challenges." (UNESCO 2024)<sup>94</sup>*

*"Within vocational education and training, in 2023 there were around 191,000 VET [Vocational Education and Training] students with disability. Over half (59 per cent) studied at private training providers, around a third (31 per cent) at TAFE and around one in eight (11 per cent) at community education providers." (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2024)<sup>95</sup>*

*"14 per cent of government funded program enrolments in 2023 at community education providers are from students with disability." (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2024)<sup>96</sup>*



## Health and Wellbeing

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



*Good health and wellbeing are critical determinants of a person's quality of life. This is especially the case for people with disability. In addition to the physical aspects of health and wellbeing, improving mental health outcomes for people with disability is also a key focus of the Strategy. It is also important to address the social, cultural and economic determinants of health and wellbeing.*

### Policy Priority 1:

**All health service providers have the capabilities to meet the needs of people with disability**

People with disability continue to experience poorer health and wellbeing outcomes compared to people without disability.<sup>97</sup> This is not always an inevitable consequence of living with disability. It can be a consequence of inadequate access to health care or inadequate care provided by health care workers. Issues around health care can include access to health services; the appropriateness of equipment, training or facilities; the operation of health systems and processes; and personnel and provider attitudes.

*"Many people with disability require supports or adaptations in order to access health care. However, experiences shared with the Royal Commission, which related mainly to people with cognitive disability, described failures to provide these and the consequences of this for people with disability." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>98</sup>*

*"It is vital that health professionals – both students and qualified practitioners – are better educated about the inequities in health outcomes and the barriers to care that people with intellectual disability face. Health providers also need education on the importance of having positive attitudes towards people with intellectual disability, and to gain the knowledge and skills needed to provide this population group with high quality health care." (National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability 2021)<sup>99</sup>*

*"The Royal Commission agrees healthcare providers should proactively identify frequently needed supports and adaptations to enable people with disability to receive high quality health care. These should be offered as part of standard health care, without the need for people with disability, or their parents, supporters or advocates to negotiate for them, tailored to meet individual needs, and non-exhaustive." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>100</sup>*

*"22% of people with disability who need help with health-care activities have their need for assistance only partly met or not met at all." (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2024)<sup>101</sup>*

*"In 2022, 14% of people with disability reported they experienced unmet need for hospital admission in the last 12 months compared with 10% in 2018." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>102</sup>*

## **Policy Priority 2:**

### **Prevention and early intervention health services are timely, comprehensive, appropriate and effective to support better overall health and wellbeing**

Prevention and early intervention health services are important to lifelong health and wellbeing. People with disability continue to experience preventable health conditions and comorbidities at higher rates than people without disability.<sup>103</sup> This places people with disability at significantly higher risk of adverse health outcomes.<sup>104</sup> Better outcomes are achieved for people with disability when health providers understand their individual situation and circumstances, communicate well, do not allow disability to overshadow health issues, and provide services, premises and facilities that are accessible and appropriate.

Access to early intervention, regular health assessments and rehabilitation is critical for people with disability. This improves long-term outcomes for individuals and can help reduce future costs of care and support.<sup>105</sup>

*"When health professionals listen to the needs of people with intellectual disability and make reasonable adjustments when delivering health care, patient experiences and health care outcomes are greatly improved." (National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability 2021)<sup>106</sup>*

*In 2022, 68% of people with disability aged 15 years and over reported excellent, very good or good health, compared with 95% of people without disability. The proportion of people with disability that reported excellent, very good or good health was lower for those who identified as culturally and linguistically diverse and those with psychosocial disability (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022) "About half (52%) of people with disability aged 15–64 are highly satisfied with their life, all things considered. This is lower than for people without disability, of whom 70% are highly satisfied." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2022)<sup>107</sup>*

### Policy Priority 3:

## Mental health supports and services are appropriate, effective and accessible for people with disability

Mental health is a major determinant of general health and wellbeing. People with disability continue to experience poorer mental health, including higher rates of anxiety and depression, than people without disability. Understanding the relationship between health, mental health and disability is essential for improving outcomes for people with disability.

People's mental health can determine their ability to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Poor mental health can lead to lower levels of social and community engagement, and poorer education, employment and housing outcomes, which can further worsen mental health. Having appropriate, effective and accessible mental health supports and services, including in forensic mental health settings, which meet the needs of people with disability, and embedding a cross-sector approach to building mental health and wellbeing, are essential.

*"There is limited training and experience in co-occurring intellectual disabilities and mental illness in both the health and disability sectors, which is a significant professional barrier to meeting the health needs of people with intellectual disability. Stigma and discrimination also act as barriers to equitable mental healthcare access for people with intellectual disability. When the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and mental health conditions are not met, they may receive inadequate care in the community or be placed in facilities which are not appropriately equipped to meet their needs." (The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists 2022)<sup>108</sup>*

*"People who reported having experienced unfair treatment by a health professional when seeking help for either their physical or mental health were more than twice as likely to report having stopped themselves from accessing health care in the past 12 months than someone who has not reported experiencing unfair treatment (67 per cent versus 30 per cent)." (National Survey of Mental Health-Related Stigma and Discrimination 2022)<sup>109</sup>*



## Policy Priority 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 needs of people with disability should be catered for in disaster risk management plans and public emergency responses in order to protect their mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Before, during and after emergencies, people with disability may require targeted and accessible information and communication. They may also require additional assistance to plan and prepare for an emergency, additional assistance and appropriate support in the event of evacuation or physical isolation, and support through the recovery process.

Organisations responsible for emergency management should also work with those responsible for urban planning and design to understand where people with disability are at greater risk of harm during disasters, and how these risks can be reduced.

Including people with disability in disaster preparedness and risk management discussions, and related policy development, and consulting them in the very early stages of responding to and recovering from emergencies, will ensure their needs are accounted for.

*"People with disability rely on different levels and types of function-based support. Access to this support can be compromised during and after a disaster. People with disability are disproportionately affected and experience higher rates of injury and death as well as facing increased challenges during disaster response and recovery." (Dr Michelle Villeneuve, University of Sydney 2019)*

*"Evacuation shelters designed to protect the community in the event of natural disasters are often difficult to access for people with disability – lacking ramps, railings, accessible toilets and other accessible facilities, including accessible information." (Disabled People's Organisations Australia and the National Women's Alliances 2019)<sup>110</sup>*



## Community Attitudes

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



*Building positive community attitudes towards people with disability is central to achieving an inclusive society and improving all outcomes for people with disability under the Strategy.*

*People with disability report the greatest barriers they face are not communication or physical, rather they are created through stigma, unconscious bias and lack of understanding of disability. This can include ableism, where people with disability can be seen as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute, and not valued as much as people without disability. Removing these barriers will contribute to positive daily experiences and recognition of the contribution people with disability can make to society.*

*People with disability have said changing attitudes of others will provide more choice and independence, and lead to better access to services that meet their needs, improved treatment and more respect. Focusing on community attitudes will lead to better education outcomes, job opportunities, increased feelings of safety, and improved mental health and wellbeing for many people with disability.*

*Community attitudes and awareness of disability have improved in recent years.<sup>111</sup> However, lack of social and professional acceptance of disability and limited disability literacy remain issues which often create barriers for people with disability. Other factors such as gender, age, sexuality, race, type of disability, and cultural background can also influence how people with disability are treated in society.*

## Policy Priority 1:

### Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability

While the majority of people with disability can and want to work, people with disability of working age (15–64 years) are significantly under-represented in the Australian workforce. In 2018, 47.8 per cent of people with disability were employed compared to 80.3 per cent of people without disability.<sup>112</sup> Having career opportunities and finding and keeping a job are significant issues for people with disability.<sup>113</sup>

Many of the obstacles to employing people with disability that employers perceive to exist stem from negative attitudes and misconceptions. Evidence suggests employees with disability may be just as productive or more productive than people without disability and contribute to the profitability of businesses.<sup>114</sup>

*“In terms of employment, 92.5% of those with hiring responsibilities agreed that hiring people with disability would make a valuable contribution to their workplace.” (Australian National University Centre for Social Research and Methods and Social Research Centre 2024)<sup>115</sup>*

*“In addition to valuing Australians with disability as a visible part of the creative sector’s future, by focusing on value, visibility and self-determination, most organisations in the creative sector are providing or actively pursuing policy, protocol and training (formal or informal) to enhance the inclusion of people with disability as both participants/artists and their audience.” (Australian Council of Learned Academies, 2022)<sup>116</sup>*





## Policy Priority 2:

### Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability

An improved understanding of disability by workers in professions where people with disability often interact will increase access to, and the quality of, the services and supports people with disability need. These professions include, but are not limited to, health, education, justice, emergency services and community services.

*“People said disability literacy could be delivered through dedicated education and training programs across the breadth of community services.” (National Disability Strategy Consultation Report 2019)<sup>117</sup>*

*“Professional training with respect to understanding, identifying and responding to disability is critical to ensuring access to justice for people with disability. Training can help challenge negative stereotypes about disability and assist those working in the justice system to identify disability, which is a prerequisite for the provision of appropriate services and support systems.” (Law Council of Australia 2018)<sup>118</sup>*

*“Nothing says disability confidence in an organisation more than seeing people with disability actually employed in leadership positions. So that messaging is really important.” (ACOLA, 2022)*

*“First Nations people with disability often have to choose between services that respond to their cultural needs or their disability needs. First Nations people with disability will avoid supports or services that are not culturally safe.” (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>119</sup>*

## Policy Priority 3:

### Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles

People with disability are significantly under-represented on boards, in politics and in other leadership roles in Australian society. Increased inclusion of people with disability in leadership will enable the perspectives of people with disability to be included in decision-making, thereby making decisions more reflective of the community.

*“First, positions of leadership need to be held by people with and without disability who understand the reasons to effect attitude change. When leadership positions are places where people demonstrate their commitment to change attitudes, then the interventions initiated from other levels are endorsed and gain momentum. Also, when people with disability hold leadership positions throughout organisations, the attitudes of others change, as seeing people with disability in leadership positions becomes an expectation and a common experience.” (University of New South Wales and Flinders University 2022)<sup>120</sup>*

*“Everyday interactions, media representation and presence in leadership roles are crucial to change community attitudes towards people with disability.” (University of New South Wales 2022)<sup>121</sup>*

*“In 2022, 19% of people with disability felt represented in leadership roles.” (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>122</sup>*

## Policy Priority 4:

### Improving community attitudes to positively impact on Policy Priorities under the Strategy

Improved community awareness and understanding of disability will increase inclusion and accessibility for people with disability. Improving attitudes is as important as removing physical barriers to the built and natural environment.<sup>123</sup> The Policy Priorities of this Strategy focus on improving in areas of everyday life so people with disability achieve the same outcomes as people without disability.

*"Nearly three-quarters of the 1,000 respondents agreed with the statement that 'people without disability are unsure how to act toward people with disability' (Department of Health and Human Services, 2018, p.17)." (Australian Council of Learned Academies, 2022)<sup>124</sup>*

*"By changing attitudes in society, we also change behaviours and the way people with disability are treated. Essentially, positive attitudes towards people with disability creates behaviour change, which consequently better protects people with disability against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation." (University of New South Wales 2022)<sup>125</sup>*

*"Attitudes are developed, reaffirmed and shared within the wider community. Research suggests limited contact between people with disability and the wider community can contribute to a lack of understanding of disability. Negative attitudes can cause a social distance between people with disability and the wider community driven by stigma." (Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability 2023)<sup>126</sup>*

*"In 2022, 54% of people with disability felt valued and respected in their community." (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)<sup>127</sup>*







# Implementation — Delivering on the Outcome Areas

**Governments are committed to working together alongside people with disability, communities, businesses and the non-government sector to implement this Strategy and realise its vision in a coordinated and targeted way. This includes ensuring that over the life of the Strategy, its design and implementation is responsive to changing needs.**

The following key initiatives will enable this:

- promoting and ensuring actions to deliver against the Policy Priorities address issues of intersectionality
- a clear and easy-to-locate outline of the roles and responsibilities of governments
- guiding principles for policy and program development that are based on and reflect the human rights principles of the UN CRPD
- the implementation of time-limited Targeted Action Plans and longer-term Associated Plans
- the implementation of an Outcomes Framework to track progress against the Strategy through regular reporting and a data improvement plan that supports improved availability of high quality data about the experiences of people with disability
- the implementation of governance arrangements, including the centralised coordination of disability policy to drive implementation
- the implementation of an Engagement Plan to ensure people with disability actively participate in implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- a clear roadmap to keep governments accountable for achievement of key deliverables and milestones
- independent advice from Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council to all governments, in accordance with its Terms of Reference and Work Plan, on Strategy implementation, monitoring and evaluation to support ongoing improvement and better outcomes.
- online accessible information and resources about the Strategy and its implementation arrangements.



Under the Strategy, all governments are working to improve the lives of people with disability. Each state and territory government has their own disability plan(s) in place to progress the Strategy through initiatives at a local level:

- [Australian Capital Territory Disability Strategy 2024–2033](#)
- [Australian Capital Territory Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029](#)
- [Australian Capital Territory Inclusive Education 2024–2034](#)
- [Australian Disability Strategy Health Strategy 2024–2033](#)
- [New South Wales Disability Inclusion Plan 2021–2025](#)
- [Northern Territory Disability Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2032](#)
- [Queensland State Disability Plan 2022–2027](#)
- [South Australia State Disability Inclusion Plan](#)
- [Victoria Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022–2026](#)
- [Victoria Accessibility in Action: Disability Action Plan 2022–2026](#)
- [Tasmania's Disability Strategy 2025–2027](#)
- [Western Australia State Disability Strategy 2020–2030](#)

In addition, local governments across Australia are also implementing a range of actions that enable inclusion of people with disability within their local community. These are documented standalone disability plans, or disability priorities within other plans, such as their health and wellbeing plans or social inclusion plans. The Australian Local Government Association has developed a disability inclusion planning guide to support this. More details are available on individual local government websites.



## Intersectionality and Diversity

The diversity of people with disability needs to be understood, acknowledged and celebrated. Part of this involves an understanding of the concept of 'intersectionality'. The Strategy recognises the importance of making sure actions taken to deliver on its Policy Priorities are implemented using an intersectional and diversity lens.

Intersectionality recognises that a person or group of people have different experiences and can be affected by multiple forms of marginalisation, racism, discrimination and disadvantage due to their race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, class, religion, culture and linguistic diversity, age, social origin and other identity markers.

Intersectionality acknowledges identity markers (such as "Woman", "Disabled", "Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander", "Culturally and Linguistically Diverse", "LGBTIQ+ ") do not exist independently; rather they co-exist, informing the other and can have an overlapping and compounding effect. These effects can also be felt by other diverse groups of people with disability – for example, those in rural or remote areas.

The impact of this can be illustrated through considering outcomes for some of these groups. For example, people with disability aged 15–64 years experience lower levels of employment (56.1% are employed) than people without disability aged 15–64 (82.3%). Levels of employment also vary significantly for different groups:<sup>128</sup>

- Women with disability aged 15–64 years (57.1%) compared with men with disability aged 15–64 years (54.9%)
- Young people (15–24 years) with disability (46.6%) compared with young people without disability (67.2%)
- People with disability born overseas who speak a main language other than English at home (47.4%) compared with people with disability who were born in Australia who mainly speak English at home (56.1%)
- In 2022–23, almost 4 in 10 First Nations people (37%) identify as a person with disability <sup>129</sup>

Not only can intersectional discrimination impact on how these groups are viewed, understood and treated, but it also impacts on how they access, or are unable to access, resources, services and supports.

Policy responses and strategies which assume the experience and impact of disability and benefit when the intersectional impacts disproportionately affecting groups of people with disability are considered. Activities taken in line with the Strategy's Policy Priorities should consider incorporating tailored approaches designed to enable and include people and groups who face intersectional barriers. For example, our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people work alongside the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

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# Roles and Responsibilities

Australian, state, territory and local governments, along with businesses, the community and the non-government sector all play a role in supporting people with disability to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others.

Clarifying these roles supports the involvement of all parties in designing and implementing inclusive policies and programs for people with disability.

The Strategy recognises that all levels of government continue to play a role in providing mainstream and targeted services, supports and infrastructure systems to people with disability. Governments have obligations to provide services to all citizens and are responsible for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate people with disability so they can access and use those systems and services.

The table at Appendix 6 shows where one level of government holds *primary responsibility* for the delivery of a system. There is also a section in the table showing systems where responsibilities are shared to an extent that primary responsibility for delivery cannot be assigned to one level of government.

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# Guiding Principles

To achieve the Strategy’s vision, governments are committed to the development and implementation of policies, programs, services and systems which reflect the human rights principles of the UN CRPD.

Therefore, the following Guiding Principles are based on Article 3 of the UN CRPD.

Governments have agreed to use these Guiding Principles when developing policies, programs, services and systems. It is vital that business, the non-government sector and the broader community also consider how they can apply these principles.

Principle One	Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons
Principle Two	Non-discrimination
Principle Three	Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
Principle Four	Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
Principle Five	Equality of opportunity
Principle Six	Accessibility
Principle Seven	Equality of people
Principle Eight	Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

Refer to Appendix 7 for further details on the principles, and guidance on how to apply them.



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## Targeted Action Plans

Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) apply an intensive focus over one to three years to achieve specific deliverables which improve outcomes for people with disability.

Each TAP is commissioned and endorsed by disability ministers and includes a series of targeted and coordinated actions from governments. Actions are based on available evidence and people with disability are involved in the implementation of the actions. The annual progress report for each TAP provides an update on what has been delivered against each action.


The initial five TAPs launched with the Strategy focused on improving employment, community attitudes, early childhood, safety, and emergency management.

Working in conjunction with state and territory governments, the Australian Government Department of Social Services undertook an extensive review of the Royal Commission findings, existing advice, and feedback from people with disability, their representative organisations, and the Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council over the life of the Strategy, to inform the new TAPs.

There are three TAPs for 2025–2027: Community Attitudes, Inclusive Homes and Communities, and Safety, Rights and Justice. Each TAP is intended to focus governments on a specific area of the Strategy's implementation, with clear actions and timeframes.

The new TAPs represent actions that are in line with what was heard from people with disability. There are fewer actions that bring strong focus on ensuring a coordination of governments' efforts across the entire disability service system – reflecting the shared accountability and governance arrangements for supporting all Australians with disability.

Over the life of the Strategy, new TAPs will be commissioned. The focus of the TAPs will be informed through engagement with people with disability. All Targeted Action Plans will be published on the Strategy's website.



## Associated Plans

Associated Plans are strategies, plans, roadmaps and frameworks that focus on improving aspects of Australian life for people with disability and also work to deliver the vision of the Strategy. Associated Plans can be sector specific (e.g. the arts sector) or for a specific segment of the community (e.g. people with intellectual disability) and generally run for 3 to 10 years.

Associated Plans were introduced to provide a more coordinated, long-term approach to how governments work to improve outcomes for people with disability. All Associated Plans clearly identify how they contribute to achieving the outcomes of the Strategy and are reported on in the 2-yearly Implementation Reports.

This recognises that the Strategy sets the high-level policy framework for disability to guide public policy decisions by governments and outside of government.

Associated Plans show how different government initiatives work together to support people with disability. They are developed in consultation with people with disability and they track, monitor and report on their achievements against the Outcome Areas of the Strategy.

The current Associated Plans under the Strategy are:

- Employ My Ability – the Disability Employment Strategy
- National roadmap for improving the health of Australians with intellectual disability
- National Disability Advocacy Framework
- The Arts and Disability Associated Plan

To increase recognition of Associated Plans and other documents, they may feature the Strategy brand set out below. All Associated Plans will be published on the Strategy's website.



Business and community organisations may also show their commitment to the Strategy by using the logos below.



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## Outcomes Framework

Australia's Disability Strategy Outcomes Framework aims to track, measure and report on outcomes for people with disability. This includes measuring the contribution key systems such as healthcare, housing, education and employment are making to achieve outcomes. It also tracks the changes in outcomes happening over time for people with disability.

The Outcomes Framework includes quarterly data updates and annual reports showing what progress is being made against each Policy Priority of the Strategy. Where data is available, information is disaggregated to provide detail on what progress is being made for specific cohorts of people with disability.

Governments will work together to link de-identified data between systems, to improve measures and to refine the Outcomes Framework. The Outcomes Framework is published on the Strategy's website. The version launched with the Strategy has future measures that will be introduced when data is available and some of these measures may replace the measures used at launch.

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## Improving the Data

Governments 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. Australian and state and territory data, for both disability-specific and mainstream service systems, will be essential for measuring outcomes and tracking the degree of change.

Governments have worked together to develop and update Australia's Disability Strategy Data Improvement Plans (DIP). This ensures data needed to measure outcomes for people with disability is collected, shared and progressively improved over the life of the Strategy. It also identifies where data needs to be improved and linked between systems to enhance our understanding of the impact of the Strategy. 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) is being developed to improve insights and outcomes for people with disability. It will bring together a range of Commonwealth and state and territory datasets from disability, health, social security, education, employment, housing, transport and justice to better understand the experiences of people with disability and the programs and services they use. This will help improve outcomes for people with disability and better support people with disability, their families, and carers. The first release of data is expected in December 2024.

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.

## Reporting under the Strategy

All levels of government have committed to delivering more comprehensive and visible reporting. Reporting under the Strategy aims to ensure accountability and build the evidence base for making informed decisions on areas of future focus. It will also drive improvements in the design and implementation of future policies and programs. Reporting under the Strategy will be an important input to reports developed to meet Australia's reporting obligations under the UN CRPD and will support Australia in continuing to strengthen its response to ensure the equal rights of people with disability in line with the UN CRPD.

Reporting will capture available information from Australian Government agencies, state, territory and local governments, the Australian Human Rights Commission, state and territory human rights/anti-discrimination bodies, the National Disability Insurance Agency and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. It will also capture information from people with disability, Disability Representative Organisations and the Strategy's Advisory Council (the Advisory Council). Reporting under the Strategy will complement the reporting already undertaken by state and territory governments, and many local governments, as part of their own disability plans.

- **Targeted Action Plans Report** – Produced annually on a financial year basis. This high-level report will cover the implementation of the Targeted Action Plans, actions and successes, other key steps taken or planned, and overall status. It will be coordinated by the Australian Government.
- **Outcome Framework Reporting** – high level and disaggregated data on the Strategy's outcome measures are published quarterly, and in annual reports on accessible and interactive webpages that are maintained by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.
- **Implementation Report** – Produced every two years. This implementation report will include the voice of people with disability and the broader community. It will include progress against disability initiatives at all levels of government. People with disability, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and key stakeholders, including the Advisory Council, will be consulted in preparing the report before it is provided for endorsement by Australian, state and territory disability ministers. This report will also include progress updates on all Associated Plans under the Strategy.
- **Australia's Disability Strategy Review report** – The Australian Government committed to review *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* by the end of 2024. The Review considered existing advice and feedback from people with disability and their representative organisations, in addition to targeted and public consultation activities. The Review report included actions to update the Strategy with a focus on practical improvements to implementation mechanisms in response to feedback.
- **Evaluation reports** – The two Major Evaluation Reports (2025 and 2029) will provide analysis and findings from independent evaluations of the Strategy, including recommendations for improvement. They will be undertaken by an independent reviewer. People with disability, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and key stakeholders, including the Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council, will be consulted before the report is endorsed by Australian, state and territory disability ministers.

A number of ongoing projects will strengthen the quality and quantity of data available for reporting. Over time, reporting will improve, increasing the evidence base to make informed decisions to enhance service systems.

Reports developed under the Strategy will be available on the Strategy's website and will be in accessible formats.

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## Evaluating what we do

Evaluation is critical to knowing what is working well and what needs improvement for people with disability. Evaluations of policies, programs and systems are key to understanding why current outcomes are being achieved and point to strengths and gaps in these interventions. The information and results provided by evaluation will inform investment decisions and the design of future policies and programs.

Evaluations will be able to show how policies, services and programs have contributed to the outcomes under the Strategy. A list of planned evaluations and links to published evaluation reports will be made available on the Strategy's website.

Evaluations will enable a clear link to be drawn between the Outcomes Framework, Outcome Areas, Policy Priorities and their impact on the lives of people with disability.

The Strategy's [Evaluation Good Practice Guide Checklist](#), published on the Strategy's website, will help governments to conduct evaluations for disability specific and mainstream policies and services.

Governments are working together with people with disability to develop a guide on how to involve people with disability in evaluation. This is expected to be completed in 2025 and will be published on the Strategy's website.

Under the Strategy, governments are making a commitment to:

- publicly list planned policy, program and system evaluations
- consider the Strategy's Evaluation Good Practice Guide Checklist when conducting evaluations involving people with disability
- publish evaluation findings to build the evidence base and help inform policy decisions across Australia
- include key findings from evaluations in Strategy's two-yearly Implementation Reports.



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## Building the Evidence Base

Building the evidence base is a key part of the Strategy. The Strategy will do this by supporting the development of disability research, including the translation of this research into tangible concepts and policies supporting the outcomes of the Strategy. This will encourage continued reform of disability and mainstream policy in government, in business and in the non-government sector.

The National Disability Research Partnership (the Partnership) will be instrumental in building the evidence base. The Partnership will facilitate a collaborative, translational research program through partnerships between academics, people with disability, their families and carers, peak advocacy and consumer groups, governments and service providers to conduct cutting-edge policy-relevant research that enables people with disability to participate fully in society.

The Partnership promotes the use of evidence-informed policy and practice to ensure people with disability have equal opportunities and are included in all aspects of community life.

The Partnership focuses on disability and mainstream services including education, health, housing, and justice, and facilitates research recognising the diversity of experiences for people with disability.

The Partnership's research agenda and practical guides for disability inclusive research will help drive improvements for people with disability.



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## The Governance Model

The Governance Model (the Model) sets out a visible and robust accountability structure to drive implementation and decision-making under the Strategy. The Model helps governments work together in a coordinated way to achieve the goals of the Strategy. It identifies and prioritises areas of focus, drives change across these areas and reports on progress made to improve the lives of people with disability.

Mechanisms to achieve this include:

- establishing the Advisory Council, which will play an important role in both governance and the engagement of people with disability under the Strategy
- identifying and prioritising key areas of focus under the Strategy
- promoting the Strategy and the work being undertaken to drive change
- creating initiatives to address Strategy priorities – for example, Targeted Action Plans
- influencing or guiding government policies at local, state and national levels
- sharing knowledge, such as best practices and research.

Further detail on this Model is at Appendix 8.

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## Engaging People with Disability

People with disability will play a central and active role in the Strategy over its life. For the Strategy to be implemented effectively, the views of people with disability, disability sector stakeholders and diverse groups within the sector must be heard and considered. Consistent with the Strategy's approach to intersectionality and diversity, engagement will seek to reach different groups within the disability community to ensure their voices are heard.

The Strategy's Engagement Plan is published on the Strategy's website. It outlines the ways people with disability will be engaged over the life of the Strategy to inform its implementation, monitoring and reporting, and the future direction of policy. The engagement plan will be updated in collaboration with community.

The Engagement Plan will give people with disability a voice in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy and a structured, ongoing role in influencing how it is addressing their rights and needs. Ensuring people with disability can make a tangible difference to a Strategy designed to assist them, is an important step in helping the Strategy achieve its vision and purpose. The Engagement Plan will also ensure people with disability are connected with governments and can be involved in guiding governments to consider how policies and programs impact on their lives.

The Engagement Plan includes:

- The Advisory Council, which provides advice to Australian, state, territory and local governments, and to disability ministers on implementing and monitoring the Strategy.
- The Strategy’s public forums and consultations, one of which will be held every year from 2022 to 2031, including the:
  - National Public Forums to enable all people with disability to play an active role in shaping implementation of the Strategy
  - State and Territory Forums hosted by jurisdictions in years the National Public Forum is not held
  - Public Consultations to align with the Major Evaluations.
- A commitment to involve people with disability and organisations such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, Disabled People’s Organisations and Disability Representative Organisations in designing and delivering the public forums and consultations. The forums and consultations may be conducted in a range of ways and could include face-to-face and virtual elements.
- The development of Good Practice Guidelines for the Engagement of People with Disability. The Guidelines will facilitate improvements in the engagement and inclusion of people with disability in community consultation, policy development and government decision-making.

## THE FIVE ENGAGEMENT PLAN ELEMENTS



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## The Strategy's Roadmap (Roadmap)

The [Roadmap](#) gives a simple overview of the key deliverables being produced under the Strategy. This provides transparency of the road ahead and accountability for delivery. It helps raise awareness of when reports are expected to be delivered and when consultations and other major activities will occur. The Roadmap will be updated as required.

The Roadmap is published on the Strategy's website.

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## The Strategy's Website

A dedicated website accessible to people with disability has been created to make it easier to locate the latest information on the Strategy.

The [Strategy's website](#) provides easy access to:

- the [Strategy and its supporting documents](#), such as the Outcomes Framework, the Engagement Plan and Roadmap
- an overview of the disability landscape including Australia's international obligations, [state and territory disability plans](#) and other related frameworks
- information on the rights of people with disability through sources such as the UN CRPD, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and Disability Standards, and other guidelines
- the [Strategy reports](#), including Targeted Action Plans Report, Outcomes Framework Reports and Dashboard, two-yearly Implementation Reports and Evaluation Reports
- [research, evaluation and data](#) to show how outcomes for people with disability are tracking and to provide the evidence required to inform policy.

The website complements the [Disability Gateway](#), which provides information and services to help people with disability and their family, friends and carers access the support they need in Australia.

Both websites have been developed following the Australian Government's Digital Service Standards. This includes ensuring the websites are accessible and inclusive of all users. The websites will be expanded over time.

The Strategy's website is at [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads) and the Disability Gateway is at [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au)







# Appendices

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## Appendix 1 Review of the Strategy

The Review of [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031](#) has focused on identifying practical, process improvements that can be made to the Strategy's implementation mechanisms. The Australian Government has heard what the disability community have said and used this feedback to guide the actions of the Review.

As endorsed by Disability Reform Ministers Committee on 1 November 2024, the Strategy Review Report includes findings and actions to update the Strategy, and summary version, are available on [Australia's Disability Strategy Hub on Disability Gateway](#).

The Royal Commission and the work of everyone involved in the inquiry informed the development of the Strategy and will help shape future updates. Under the Strategy, governments were committed to reviewing the Strategy upon the release of the Royal Commission's [Final Report](#).

In early 2024, the Australian Government worked with the Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council, and state and territory governments, to develop a Terms of Reference for the Review, which aligned with the Royal Commission's recommendation 5.2, and acknowledges the Review will consider the Strategy and its implementation mechanisms and be undertaken with people with disability and their representative organisations.

The Review has focussed on practical changes which can be made now, with some potential reforms deferred for consideration until post the Independent Evaluation in 2025. This will give people with disability time and opportunities to be involved in the development and implementation of future reforms.

The Review consisted of a thorough literature review, collating feedback from the disability community into meaningful insights on the Strategy, and both targeted engagement with the Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council members and Disability Representative Organisations, including a public consultation to hear from the disability community directly.

People with disability and representative organisations told government they want to see an improvement on how governments work together, more accessible information and communication, and more opportunities to participate and engage with the Strategy.

The Review honours the government's commitment to listen to what people with disability have said about the Strategy and to be led by their advice on how to take action now and into the future.

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## Appendix 2

# Disability Reform Environment 2024

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Royal Commission) was Australia's largest inquiry into the experiences of people with disability, noting it was targeted at the experiences as they relate to violence, abuse and neglect. On 29 September 2023, the Royal Commission released its [final report](#), which enabled us as a nation to better understand what needs to change to end the unacceptable treatment of people with disability in Australia. The final report sets out 222 recommendations which reach across all aspects of society, from safety and human rights to inclusion and access to mainstream services like health and education.

On 31 July 2024, the [Australian Government and all States and Territories \(except Northern Territory\) formally responded to the final report](#). The responses centre on fostering an inclusive society with the necessary supports for people with disability to live, work, and engage alongside those without disability.

To inform the government responses, we have listened to what is most important to people with disability. We have focussed the first stage of reform implementation activities and investment on measures that will deliver better safeguarding, promote inclusion and accessibility, uphold human rights, and recognise the unique perspectives and experiences of First Nations people with disability.

Implementation of reforms in response to the Royal Commission will be phased to ensure it allows for immediate change in key areas, while providing time for consultation on more complex reform, with all governments having agreed to six-monthly reporting on implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

All Governments support the Royal Commission's vision for an inclusive Australia, in which:

- People with disability live free from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Human rights are protected, and
- Individuals live with dignity, equality and respect and can fulfil their potential.

This vision is at the heart of the broader disability reform agenda and will shape the development and implementation of reforms.

In October 2022, an independent review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Review) was commenced. The NDIS Review handed down its final report on 7 December 2023, responding to the three overarching objectives set out in NDIS Review Terms of Reference:

- Putting people with disability back at the centre of the NDIS.
- Restoring trust, confidence and pride in the NDIS.
- Ensuring the sustainability of the NDIS for future generations.

Governments are working together to implement reforms agreed through National Cabinet on 6 December 2023. All Governments are committed to achieving lasting change through disability reform. This will take a coordinated effort from everyone – all levels of government, service providers, employers, education and health bodies, schools, advocates and representatives and the Australian public.

We will continue to listen to the voices of people with disability and work in partnership with them to implement reforms that make Australia more inclusive, accessible and safe for people with disability.

Further information about national disability reform is available on the Department of Social Services website.



## Appendix 3

### Development of the Strategy (2018–2021)

#### Consultation

The voices of people with disability, their families, friends, carers, advocacy organisations, peak bodies and service providers were central to developing the Strategy.

Consultations on the Strategy were designed and delivered in collaboration with people with disability. The consultations were flexible and adaptable to provide a range of different ways for people with disability to participate. The consultations also had a focus on engaging directly with people who do not typically participate in high numbers in public consultation processes.

All consultation activities were delivered in a range of accessible formats. This included the production of Easy Read and Auslan materials, captioning, the use of interpreters, and the ability to provide submissions in a range of formats (e.g. written, audio or video). Many of the focus groups, workshops and forums were co-facilitated by people with disability and run face-to-face where possible, as well as through online platforms to consult in a COVID-safe environment.

Consultations were run in stages over three years to enable people with disability to have a say during all phases of developing the Strategy.

In 2018, targeted consultations were held with around 150 people from 80 organisations. These consultations focused on the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* to understand what worked well and should be retained in a new Strategy for beyond 2020, and what could be improved.

In 2019, Stage 1 consultations were held to inform development of the new Strategy. These consultations reached around 3,000 people through 17 community workshops, consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, an online public survey and 15 targeted stakeholder meetings.

The advice people provided in the 2018 and 2019 consultations was used as a key input into the National Disability Strategy Position Paper (the Position Paper), which was publicly released in July 2020. The Position Paper was also informed by a number of reviews and inquiries into the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*.

The Position Paper outlined governments' proposals for the new Strategy and formed the basis of Stage 2 consultations held in the second half of 2020, which saw:

- 237 submissions from people and organisations with feedback on the proposed features of the new Strategy
- more than 800 people registered for a webinar on the new Strategy, hosted by the Australian Human Rights Commission and Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health
- 132 people participate in 18 focus groups with cohorts of people with disability who did not participate in high numbers during Stage 1 consultations
- 102 people participate in five cross-sector collaborative workshops
- a series of workshops held directly with Disability Representative Organisations.



In addition, 74 submissions were received on a separate public submission process on the Outcomes Framework proposed for the new Strategy.

Reports on the Stage 1 and Stage 2 National Disability Strategy consultations are available on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

## Reviews and Reports that Informed the Strategy

A series of reviews, inquiries and reports were conducted that looked at the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*, National Disability Agreement, and the rights of people with disability. These included:

- the Senate Inquiry report into the delivery of outcomes under the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* to build inclusive and accessible communities (2017)
- the Social Policy Research Centre's independent review of the implementation of the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* (2018)
- the Productivity Commission Review of the National Disability Agreement (2019)
- the Australian Government reports and the Civil Society reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Committee's Concluding Observations (2013, 2019)
- The Royal Commission into the Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, including the hearings and interim report.

The findings and recommendations from these have informed the development of the Strategy.

## The Outcome

Feedback from consultations and the findings and recommendations from the reviews and reports listed above, has resulted in the Strategy having stronger reporting, monitoring and implementation than its predecessor. It has also resulted in a stronger and a more structured role for people with disability in the implementation of the Strategy, as outlined in the Engagement Plan. These structures mean people with disability will be able to have a say on the things that are important to them and will influence the future direction of the Strategy, including actions and investments made as part of it.

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## Appendix 4

### The UN CRPD, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and the Australian Human Rights Commission

#### UN CRPD

In 2008, Australia ratified the UN CRPD. The UN CRPD is a human rights treaty establishing normative standards and principles for the treatment of people with disability under international human rights law. Its purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

In line with Australia's commitments under the UN CRPD, the Strategy will play an important role in protecting, promoting and realising the human rights of people with disability. The Strategy will also contribute to Australia's reporting responsibilities under the UN CRPD.

#### *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

The Strategy is reflective of the objects of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA), which is in place to eliminate discrimination against people with disability as far as possible. This Act also aims to promote community acceptance of the principle that people with disability have the same fundamental rights as all members of the community.

The DDA provides that direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of disability is unlawful in a broad range of areas of public life. This includes employment, education, access to premises and access to goods, services and facilities.

#### Employment

Subject to some exceptions, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the ground of that person's disability in determining who should be offered employment, or the terms and conditions on which employment is offered, or by dismissing the employee, or subjecting the employee to any other detriment.

Further, people with disability may face barriers in their employment because of a feature of their work situation which could readily be altered. Making these changes is referred to as 'reasonable adjustments'. Employers can be required by law to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace. Failure to do so may be discrimination. Examples of adjustments include changes to work premises, changes to work schedules, modifying equipment and providing training.

## Standards

The Attorney-General, under section 31(1) of the DDA, has formulated three standards that aim to provide more detail on rights and responsibilities about equal access and opportunity for people with a disability:

- The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) to enable public transport operators and providers to remove discrimination from public transport services.
- The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Premises Standards) aim to provide people with disability with dignified and equitable access to buildings and provide certainty to industry that they are complying with the DDA.
- The Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Education Standards) clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

## Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission is accredited as an A-status national institution under the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (the Paris Principles).

The Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body with functions relating to education and awareness training, investigating complaints of unlawful discrimination, and conducting national inquiries and reporting on issues of human rights concern.

The Australian Human Rights Commission, through the Disability Discrimination Commissioner, works with governments, businesses and civil society to help individuals and organisations understand their rights and meet their legal responsibilities.

The Australian Human Rights Commission undertakes educational programs to raise awareness of the human rights of people with disabilities, ensuring people with disability and their representatives are actively involved and represented in its awareness campaigns and strategies.

The Disability Discrimination Commissioner leads the Australian Human Rights Commission's work relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, including:

- promoting understanding and acceptance of, and compliance with, the DDA
- encouraging reform by promoting disability standards and guidelines
- engaging with stakeholders to address disability discrimination in the workplace and in the community
- addressing barriers to equality and participation caused by disability discrimination
- undertaking research and education projects to combat the attitudes and stereotypes that can contribute to disability discrimination
- implementing and monitoring actions relating to the UN CRPD
- building the knowledge and capacity of domestic and international organisations to understand the UN CRPD.

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## Appendix 5

### Advocacy

Advocacy helps safeguard people's rights and overcome barriers to their inclusion and participation in the community.

Disability advocacy supports people with disability by ensuring their rights are maintained, promoted and valued. It can enable people with disability to actively participate in decisions and processes which advance their rights, wellbeing and interests. For some people with disability this involves being supported by advocacy services to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, especially around access to services and support, and to be actively involved in their communities.

Advocacy can support people with disability in all areas of their lives and in ways which relate to all of the Outcome Areas of the Strategy. It also helps to identify where the quality of services and support provided to people with disability is inadequate or inhibits their participation.

Individual advocacy supports people with disability to understand and exercise their rights, through one-on-one support or by supporting people to advocate by themselves or on a group basis.

Systemic advocacy seeks to introduce and influence longer-term changes to ensure the rights of people with disability are realised and upheld through changes to legislation, policy and service practices. Systemic advocacy works towards raising and promoting community awareness and education of disability issues.

The Australian Government funds the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) to provide people with disability access to effective advocacy support. This support works to promote and protect the rights of people with disability by helping to remove barriers to their full and equal participation in the community.

NDAP is for people with disability who are facing complex challenges. The program provides support in situations where people with disability feel unable to act, speak or write about a difficult situation on their own, or do not have the support required to resolve an issue.

In addition to the NDAP, state and territory governments provide funding to disability advocacy organisations through specific programs.

On 21 April 2023, Disability Ministers endorsed the National Disability Advocacy Framework 2023–2025 (NDAF) and associated Disability Advocacy Work Plan (Work Plan).

The NDAF commits governments to work together to improve national consistency and access to advocacy services for people with disability across Australia.

The NDAF and Work Plan were developed by the Australian, state and territory governments, in consultation with people with disability, families, carers, disability advocacy providers and disability representative organisations.

## Appendix 6

# Roles and Responsibilities of Governments

Listing key government roles and responsibilities helps everyone understand which level of government is responsible for the systems that may be used by people with disability.

In many cases, more than one level of government has some responsibility for a support, service or system. For example, the Australian Government and state and territory governments are all involved in funding, delivering and/or regulating systems like education, community housing, and the NDIS.

The table on government roles and responsibilities that is included in this Appendix shows where one level of government holds *primary responsibility* for the delivery of a system. There is also a section in the table showing systems where responsibilities are shared to an extent that primary responsibility for delivery cannot be assigned to one level of government.

More detailed information about roles and responsibilities, as well as some of the key systems outside of government, can be accessed through the [Strategy's website](#). This information includes:

- points of contact for people to identify and contact the agency responsible for delivering the service they want to access or to handle a specific issue they are experiencing
- legislation and agreements outlining the funding, regulation and operational responsibility for those services and systems
- the Applied Principles and Tables of Support setting out responsibilities between the NDIS and other service systems.

People who do not have access to the internet can contact the National Disability Information Gateway telephone helpline on 1800 643 787.

The table on government roles and responsibilities is high-level and does not include every support, service or system. It lists the main service and support systems within the scope of the Strategy's Outcome Areas. The table also does not include all systems provided by governments.

All governments will work together to seek collaborative solutions to progress the Strategy and enhance access and inclusion for people with disability where roles and responsibilities cross multiple agencies or levels of government.



**Table on Government Roles and Responsibilities**

Primary responsibility for delivery lies with the Australian Government	Primary responsibility for delivery lies with state and territory governments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS* (administration)</li> <li>• Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC)</li> <li>• NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission</li> <li>• Employment services</li> <li>• Income support payments</li> <li>• Federal justice system</li> <li>• Australian Federal Police</li> <li>• Child Care Subsidy</li> <li>• Medicare Benefits Schedule</li> <li>• General practitioners</li> <li>• Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme</li> <li>• Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations</li> <li>• Aged Care system</li> <li>• My Aged Care</li> <li>• Veterans' Care system</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Hearing Services Program</li> <li>• Commonwealth Ombudsman</li> <li>• Australian Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public, social and community housing</li> <li>• Public hospitals</li> <li>• Community health services</li> <li>• Home and Community Care programs for under 65s****</li> <li>• Public transport services</li> <li>• Public primary and secondary schools</li> <li>• TAFE/Vocational Education and Training (VET)</li> <li>• Kindergartens and pre-schools</li> <li>• Jurisdictional court systems and correctional centres</li> <li>• State and territory Police</li> <li>• Guardianship, Public trustees and Ombudsman</li> <li>• Child protection</li> <li>• Community visitors programs for disability**</li> <li>• Domestic and family violence services</li> <li>• Major sporting facilities</li> <li>• State and territory human rights/anti-discrimination bodies</li> </ul>
Primary responsibility for delivery lies with local governments***	Responsibility for delivery is substantially shared across levels of government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban planning/design of the built environment</li> <li>• Accessible buildings</li> <li>• Local development planning</li> <li>• Local roads, bikeways and footpaths</li> <li>• Local parks and recreational facilities</li> <li>• Local sports grounds</li> <li>• Public toilets</li> <li>• Playgrounds</li> <li>• Council-run childcare and aged care centres</li> <li>• Municipal services</li> <li>• Parking regulation</li> <li>• Public libraries and community halls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDIS* (funding and shared governance)</li> <li>• Mental health supports and services</li> <li>• Disability advocacy services – individual and systemic</li> <li>• Concessions for government services</li> <li>• Community infrastructure</li> <li>• Arts and cultural funding and support</li> <li>• Public museums, galleries and performance facilities</li> </ul>

**Note:** This listing of roles and responsibilities is not comprehensive, and some responsibilities may change over time.

\* The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a nationally based scheme jointly governed and funded by the Australian, state and territory governments. Delivery of the NDIS is the responsibility of the National Disability Insurance Agency, a Commonwealth Corporate Entity.

\*\* Not all states have community visitors programs for disability (e.g. Tasmania, Western Australia).

\*\*\* Local governments are established by state and territory governments (except the ACT) to deliver a range of municipal services and infrastructure, which is determined by each state and territory government. Listed examples of key responsibilities of most local governments are not representative of the responsibilities of all local governments.

\*\*\*\* Not all state and territory governments have existing HACC programs

The Australian, state and territory, and local governments make and uphold laws, rules and regulations, and agreements that play a role in supporting people with disability and upholding their rights.

Examples include:

- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Commonwealth) and the Standards made under this Act
- The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Commonwealth) and NDIS Rules
- Bilateral Agreements on the NDIS
- Applied Principles and Tables of Support for NDIS and intersection with other service systems
- National guidelines for safety, employment, and disability access
- Agreements between the Australian Government and state and territory governments under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations
- State and territory disability services Acts and disability inclusion Acts
- State regulations on planning, development and management of state-based infrastructure and resources
- Local government planning and regulation.

There is also a range of international instruments that establish normative standards and principles for the treatment of people with disability. Examples include:

- The UN CRPD
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



# Appendix 7

## Guiding Principles

The table below sets out prompting questions to help governments, business and the community apply these principles.

The prompting questions aim to draw out the key issues which may need to be addressed so the policy, program, service or system is appropriate and accessible for people with disability.

These questions have been supplemented with a guide to these principles which has been released in 2024 and published on the Strategy’s website.

Principle	Questions
Principle 1: Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices, and independence of persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the policy/program/service/system (proposal) allow people with disability to make their own choices in the same way as people without disability?</li><li>• Does the proposal give access to supported decision making as required?</li></ul>
Principle 2: Non-discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the proposal avoid both direct and indirect discrimination?</li><li>• Are reasonable adjustments available that meet the needs of each individual, so people with disability can exercise the same rights and freedoms as other Australians?</li><li>• Is the proposal compliant with the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>, the UN CRPD and with state and territory anti-discrimination legislation?</li></ul>
Principle 3: Full and effective participation and inclusion in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will the proposal support people to fulfil their potential?</li><li>• Will the proposal provide for a person’s inclusion and participation in all aspects of community life?</li></ul>
Principle 4: Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the proposal respect and recognise the equal value, worth and dignity of all people with disability?</li></ul>

Principle	Questions
<b>Principle 5: Equality of opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal provide for people (including people facing multiple forms of discrimination) to be treated fairly, including by taking positive actions to accommodate differences?</li> <li>• Are there any barriers or processes in the proposal that unfairly limit people with disability from achieving their goals?</li> </ul>
<b>Principle 6: Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can people with disability access all aspects of the proposal, including the information, technology, services and location?</li> <li>• Have the principles of universal design been applied?</li> </ul>
<b>Principle 7: Equality of people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal support the full development, advancement, empowerment and equality of all people irrespective of differences and identities, including in relation to gender, age, sexuality, race, or cultural background?</li> <li>• Has consideration been given to ensure policies/programs/ services/systems are culturally safe and appropriate?</li> </ul>
<b>Principle 8: Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are children with disability being treated equally to children without disability?</li> <li>• Is the best interest of the child a primary consideration?</li> <li>• Are children with disability being given the opportunity to participate in decisions based on their age and maturity, and on an equal basis with other children?</li> <li>• Do children with disability have access to appropriate supports to make or participate in making decisions?</li> </ul>

The Guiding Principles and prompting questions aim to assist individuals and organisations to consider whether their proposal upholds the rights of people with disability in accordance with the UN CRPD. They do not exhaustively indicate when Australia's obligations under the UN CRPD are being fulfilled. As such, those using the Guiding Principles are encouraged to:

- look at the *Guide to Applying Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* available on the Strategy's website
- reference general comments and statements noting they provide interpretive guidance to the provisions of CRPD.

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## Appendix 8

### Governance

The Governance Model for the Strategy consists of three main components:

- **sources of input and advice** that will feed into decisions on the implementation of the Strategy
- the **decision-making** process that will provide direction and accountability
- the **coordination** of the governance process.

#### Sources of input and advice

Throughout the life of the Strategy, the voices and lived experiences of people with disability will be central to decisions and actions by governments. Governments will actively involve people with disability, Disability Representative Organisations and the Advisory Council in the Strategy's implementation. The ways people with disability can have their say or get involved are set out in the engagement plan. In addition, input and advice will come from a range of sources:

- **Jurisdictional advice** – for example, state and territory governments, disability advisory bodies, ministerial advisory councils, human rights/anti-discrimination bodies, and input from local governments.
- **Australian Human Rights Commission** – in line with their role as the Australia's National Human Rights Institution for the protection and promotion of human rights.
- **Australian Government agencies** – a working group of Australian Government agencies discusses implementation of the Strategy across the Australian Government departments and Agencies.
- **Ad hoc input** – a range of stakeholders are consulted on a regular basis, or when appropriate, to provide input and advice on particular matters. Stakeholders could include people with disability, peak bodies, service providers, Disability Representative Organisations, research bodies, data specialists etc.

The Engagement Plan includes periodic public consultations to ensure people with disability and their representatives can have genuine, regular input.



## Decision-making

Major decisions on the Strategy are approved by a forum comprising Australian Government, state and territory disability ministers. Ministers are supported by their own government departments with responsibility for disability matters in their jurisdiction.

Overall strategic oversight and direction for the Strategy is managed by a forum of Deputy Department Heads from the Australian Government and state and territory government departments with responsibility for disability matters.

General operational decisions around the implementation of the Strategy will be made by the Australian Government with state and territory governments. Consultation and engagement with people with disability and other stakeholders will guide these decisions. Australian Government ministerial approval will be sought where appropriate.

All levels of government, businesses, communities and organisations are encouraged to implement the Strategy in a way that aligns with the Guiding Principles and is appropriate to their circumstances and stakeholders. This can be done through specific disability strategies and plans, while still reflecting the vision and purpose of the Strategy.

The Advisory Council will periodically provide advice to disability ministers to ensure people with disability have a direct line of advice to the top line of decision makers on matters related to the Strategy. As part of this role, the Advisory Council will engage people with disability and the broader disability sector through sub-groups and other initiatives outlined in the Strategy's Engagement Plan.

## Coordination

A Central Policy and Implementation Unit has been established to drive implementation of the Strategy and manage the governance process. The unit is managed by the Australian Government.

Australian, state and territory governments will work together to deliver the Strategy, ensuring communication is streamlined and as simple as possible.

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