Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

Creating an inclusive community together

Toolkit for engaging with people with disability in evaluation

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing acknowledges First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to all Elders both past and present.

Acknowledgement of people with disability

This *Toolkit for Engaging with People with Disability in Evaluation* would not have been possible without:

- people with disability
- the families and carers of people with disability
- representative organisations
- Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council.

We want to thank everyone for their meaningful work.

'Nothing about us, without us'

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Foreword

Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council provides advice to all levels of government on how well *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* (ADS) is working. We take action to achieve ADS vision for an inclusive society where people with disability are:

- treated equally
- supported to live a good life.

We look to drive action and improvements to achieve the vision for an inclusive Australian society that makes sure all people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community. Achieving this vision requires people with disability and governments to work together with people with disability to understand how well ADS is working and how it can be improved.

In ADS consultations, people with disability said that a guide to working with people with disability in evaluation would be an important resource. We proudly support this *Toolkit for Engaging with People with Disability in Evaluation* (the Toolkit), as a needed step toward embedding the voices of people with disability in all stages of policy, practice and evaluation.

Evaluation can tell us many things. Importantly, they allow us to understand:

- how useful our actions are
- what the impact of our actions is
- who our actions support
- if our actions are achieving the outcomes we want.

Evaluation can be a useful tool to share stories about how people feel. It can also share stories about how different policies and programs affect people's lives.

The Toolkit tells us what an evaluation is and how people with disability can get involved. For the people who plan and run evaluations, it gives advice on how to make evaluation accessible and inclusive. It recognises that people with disability are part of every community and that we are the experts on our own lives. It also acknowledges the important role we can play in improving the programs and services that affect our lives.

We know a more inclusive society needs change that will only happen when the voices of people with disability are amplified. Together, we can make sure our voices are heard and valued in the evaluation of the plans, projects and programs that matter to us.

We look forward to seeing how people with disability, evaluators and the organisations commissioning (or funding) evaluations use the Toolkit to make sure all people are a part of saying what has worked and what needs to be different.

Evaluation should not be a tick box. It should be a mirror, a compass, and a platform. This toolkit helps ensure our evaluations reflect reality, guide inclusive action, and amplify voices often left unheard.
(Sisaleo Philavong – ADS Advisory Council)

Executive Summary

1 in 5 Australians identify as a person with disability. This figure can be much higher in some communities. Recognising people with disability can be a part of many communities like First Nations, LGBTIQA+ and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

ADS sets out a vision for an inclusive Australian society that makes sure people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of community. Achieving this vision requires a whole-of-community response, inclusive of government, business, the non-government and services sectors, community and individuals.

The intent of this Toolkit is to support people with disability to be confident to engage in evaluation and make sure evaluations are accessible and inclusive.

The Toolkit talks about why people with disability need to be involved in evaluation activities. It aims to help anyone commissioning, funding or conducting an evaluation to remove barriers to equal participation, support the vision of ADS and uphold the rights of people with disability.

To make this Toolkit, we worked with the disability community to understand how we can create inclusive and accessible evaluation. This included people with disability, their representative organisations, academics, the public and government colleagues.

A report on consultation activities and findings has been published as a companion to this Toolkit. You can access the report on Australia's Disability Strategy Hub.[1]

Who this toolkit is for

This Toolkit will support greater inclusion of people with disability by providing guidance and advice. There are 2 primary audiences for the Toolkit:

- people with disability who would like evaluation to include their experiences and understand what is involved in an evaluation
- anyone funding or planning an evaluation to be confident in undertaking inclusive evaluation and to take action to make evaluation activities accessible.

This Toolkit can also be used as a resource to assist families, carers and allies of people with disability to understand evaluation and support the voices of people with disability to be heard.

People who run evaluations of Australian Government programs should also refer to the Commonwealth Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Toolkit.[2]

Toolkit structure

The Toolkit is divided into 3 parts:

1. Getting involved in evaluation as a person with disability
2. For evaluators and evaluation commissioners
3. Fact sheets, resources and checklists

Our approach to disability and evaluation

What is disability?

ADS acknowledge that people use different words to talk about disability. Each person with disability has a way of talking about disability and about themselves that they like best.

We also acknowledge that there isn't a definition of disability that everyone agrees on and the way disability is explained and understood varies between different people, cultures and communities. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD[3]), disability can be broadly defined as an evolving concept that results from the interaction between a person with impairment(s) and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

ADS takes a strengths-based approach and uses person-first language to talk about disability. This means 'people with disability' is often used in this Toolkit.

What is evaluation?

Evaluation[4] is about looking at a policy, program or service to tell us if it is working. It tells us what can be improved and helps us to learn from what has happened.

The people planning and paying for an evaluation are known as evaluation commissioners or evaluation funders. Someone who is hired (or commissioned) to check how well something is working and suggest ways to improve it is an evaluator.

Who is involved

Different people can be involved in an evaluation, depending on how big or small it is.

They include:

- community stakeholders – people involved in or impacted by the policy, program or service who can share their experiences and feedback
- evaluators – someone who is hired (or commissioned) to check how well something is working and suggest ways to improve it
- evaluation commissioners – the people planning and paying for an evaluation. They are also known as evaluation funders.

Ways to collect data

To answer questions about a program, an evaluator will collect data. Data includes many kinds of information including stories and numbers.

There are many ways to collect data. An evaluator will be interested to talk with people and listen to their views.

Examples of evaluations

There is no one way to evaluate something. A good evaluation is designed to match what is needed. This means it collects the best data to answer the evaluation questions. It is not about doing things in the same way each time.

Some people who commission an evaluation have money available for a large evaluation. They might hire lots of evaluators who might talk with people all over the country and collect a lot of data. But not every evaluation needs to be big. For example, a smaller evaluation can work well for a local program.

Some evaluations are about value for money. They use amounts of money and numbers to explain if the activity has made a difference. This kind of evaluation is used to decide whether to keep funding a policy, program or service.

Examples

Below we mention some examples of existing evaluations.

Western Australia for Everyone

The Western Australian Government commissioned an independent evaluation of the Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030 (the Strategy)[5].

The evaluators collected data through:

- co-design workshops

- conversations with people with disability

- surveys with a range of people, including disability sector organisations.

The evaluation found that after 3 years, the Strategy was still important and relevant for supporting the inclusion of people with disability in Western Australia.

Be Connected

The Department of Social Services funded an independent evaluation of the Be Connected Program.[6] The evaluation found that for every $1 spent there was $4 created in social value by the program. The evaluation found that the program made a real difference with older Australians. The program supported them to build confidence in their digital skills and stay safe online.

Link-Up

The National Indigenous Australians Agency co-commissioned a monitoring and evaluation strategy with the National Link-Up Leadership Group.[7] Link-Up Services support First Nations peoples who were removed from their families and communities as children, as well as their descendants. Descendants are people who come after someone in their family tree. For example, if you have children, they are your descendants.

The program helps them to reconnect with family, community, culture and Country. The monitoring and evaluation strategy is used by 8 Aboriginal community-controlled organisations. These organisations are independent and run Link-Up Services.

Payment by Outcomes Trial

The evaluation of the payment by outcomes trial for social enterprise[8] was split into 2 parts. The first part looked at the program design and how it is being rolled out. The second part looked at the program findings. The evaluation used storytelling to share the voices of people with disability. Its approach centred around people with disability providing important insight into making employment more inclusive.

Part 1: Getting involved in evaluation as a person with disability

> It should be a priority to ensure that people with disability know about, and be included in, decisions about all parts of the evaluation … evaluations need to be about giving people with disability choice and control over their own lives … and evaluations are about people with disability knowing what is best for themselves.
>
> (Physical Disability Council of NSW focus group)

Your voice matters

As a person with disability, you are an expert on your own life and experiences. When you take part in an evaluation, it will reflect more diverse ideas and experiences. It will also help the evaluation be correct and clear about how well a policy, program or service is working.

You have the right to take part in decisions about policies, programs and services that affect your life. You have the right to tell people about barriers and share your ideas about how to remove them.

The experiences and ideas of people with disability can lead to stronger findings. These can be used to improve how things work for all Australians.

What you can expect

There are many reasons to evaluate: to learn, measure outcomes and show the value of something. Evaluation show us what is working and how we can improve.

We have written a checklist to help people with disability, their families and allies. It will give you some examples of things to think about before and during an evaluation.

If you decide to take part in an evaluation, your role and the questions you answer will depend on how and when you are involved. For example, you might:

- help plan or design the evaluation
- be a participant – someone who answers the evaluation questions
- look at people's answers and give advice about what has been learned.

Respect your privacy

Evaluators and evaluation commissioners must respect people's privacy. This includes yours. They should tell how they will store, share and destroy personal information.

Support to make decisions

Everyone has the right to make choices about their own life. If you are thinking about taking part in an evaluation, you can ask the evaluators for any extra information to help you decide. If you need support to make decisions, the evaluators can work with you and the people you trust. For example, your:

- guardian or person who helps you make decisions
- friends or family.

This is known as supported decision-making.

It is important that people with disability have the information they need to decide if they want to take part in the evaluation and understand what they're agreeing to.

You can learn more about supported decision-making by going to the Supported Decision Making Hub.[9]

Other support you might need

It is important to know that you might be asked about topics that affect your life directly. These topics might be uncomfortable or upsetting. Before you take part in an evaluation, it is good to find out if there is someone you can contact if you feel this way. The evaluators and evaluation commissioners should help you feel safe and supported to speak about any concerns. You can ask what support is available if you do not know or if it is not clear.

Deciding to take part

To decide if you want to be part of an evaluation, it is important to think about:

- if you want to be a part of the evaluation
- why you want to take part in the evaluation
- if there are other people taking part who have different experiences
- your role and what is expected of you
- how much time you will need to give
- if you will be paid and how you will be paid
- what supports are available
- what accommodations or adjustments will be made
- how your information will be used.

This resource will provide the understandings necessary for researchers to do evaluation effectively and respectfully in collaboration with people with disability.

(Keran Howe - ADS Advisory Council)

Being involved and recognised in evaluation

Your time, ideas and knowledge are important. It is important that this is shown. There are many ways this can happen, someone might:

- pay you – this is called remuneration
- formally acknowledge your work – for example, including your name in a written report
- say 'thank you' – this is more likely if someone fills out an online survey or something similar that does not include meeting or working with others.

It is important that the evaluators are clear from the beginning about how they will show they value the work of people with disability. They also need to be clear about how much of your time is needed.

You can tell the evaluators if you think you will need more time to contribute. You can tell evaluators if they have left out some of the costs for you to take part. You can ask evaluators if they can help with these things.

If you are being paid, you might receive this money:

- directly into their bank account
- as a gift card.

You can learn more about having your time and work recognised in Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised.

How people with disability can take part

If you decide to take part in an evaluation, you might be asked to take part at different stages and in different ways. This Toolkit explains evaluation in 3 simple stages: plan, do and use.

You can learn more about collaboration in Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation.

Evaluation Stages		
Plan	**Do**	**Use**
Plan, scope and design evaluation	Collect data for the evaluation	Report findings
Describe what is being evaluated	Analyse data and interpret results	Make good use of evaluation lessons learned and findings

1. Plan the evaluation

In the first stage, evaluation funders or commissioners will decide what the evaluation will look like. They will think about:

- why they need the evaluation
- what they need to evaluate
- how they will evaluate it
- who will take part in the evaluation
- how much the evaluation will cost
- who will run the evaluation
- how long the evaluation will take.

You might help make these decisions or you might be one of the people they ask to run their evaluation.

The evaluation stays in the planning stage after the evaluators have been chosen. This is because more decisions need to be made about how to run the evaluation.

Every evaluation should start with being clear about what is being evaluated. A common tool to explain what is being evaluated is a 'theory of change' or 'program logic'. You might be asked to help make this.

A theory of change is a clear and logical explanation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a specific context.

Program logic is a structured representation that links a program's activities to its intended outcomes, showing how and why the program is expected to achieve its goals.

You can learn more about how to do this through a video made by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.[10] The video is a step-by-step guide to program logic.

In the planning stage, you might be asked about:

- what is the problem
- what group of people the problem affects
- how the problem affects them
- what the goal of the policy, program or service is
- how the policy, program or service tries to reach its goal
- what is already known about the policy, program or service
- the connection between the organisation that runs the policy, program or service and the community it affects
- what needs to happen for the policy, program or service to change.

The National Disability Research Partnership[11] have some tips to help understand policy, program, service and impact in Australia. It also explains who in governments is involved in making decisions. You can use it for support if you're thinking about taking part in an evaluation that looks at government policy, program or service.

2. Do the evaluation

This stage is where evaluators will ask people to participate. They will ask people for information and then look at what they can learn from that information. This is known as data collection and analysis. The 'data' refers to the feedback heard from the people involved. It might include your feedback. Data can be things like interview notes, focus group recordings, written submissions, survey results or video recordings.

Data collection requires evaluators to work out what information they need to collect and how to collect it. Evaluation data often includes both stories and numbers, as combining different types of information makes the findings stronger.

If you are taking part in this stage, you will be giving feedback and sharing your experiences about the evaluation topic. You may be asked about:

- how the policy, program or service helped
- what did and didn't work
- how the policy, program or service could be better
- what might have happened if there was no policy, program or service.

You may be one of many people asked to share ideas. There might be other participants who don't agree or who have a different opinion. The people who organise the evaluation should make sure everyone has a chance to talk about their ideas. They should also support everyone to share their ideas privately or in a different way, if they would like.

You can ask for support if you need more time or information to answer any of the questions. You can ask to check how your answers have been recorded to make sure they show what you wanted to say.

Analyse the data

To analyse means to study something in detail to understand more about it. If you are involved in this stage, you are helping to analyse the data that has been collected.

Once all the data has been collected, you might be asked to help summarise the information and look for patterns. These are the outcomes. When you are taking part in this stage, you might be asked to look for:

- patterns in the numbers and things people have said
- any changes over time or for different groups of people.

3. Use the evaluation

Once the evaluators have finished doing the evaluation, they need to decide how to tell people what the evaluation found. The most common way to do this is through a written report, but that is not the only way.

When evaluators share what they found out, they should explain:

- what happened
- what feedback people shared
- the findings and what they mean
- recommendations or next steps.

They should share this information clearly and in ways that people can use to make better decisions.

If you take part in this stage, the evaluators might ask you to think about:

- what you think would make the policy, program or service better
- if you think the findings show what is happening in the real world
- which recommendations you think are the most important to tell decision makers
- any ideas about how to share the information in the report.

To help make sure the evaluation is useful and leads to change, evaluators might ask you to help share the findings and recommendations. If you want to do this, this might include:

- your friends and family
- people you work with
- service providers you use
- other forums and groups.

You might also want to think about whether you need support to do this and what kind of support you need.

Part 3 of this Toolkit includes a number of fact sheets and checklists to support you in evaluation.

Part 2:
For evaluators and evaluation commissioners

> Good evaluation means people with disability are to be consulted at multiple stages throughout the design process of the evaluation, initially before anything is designed, looking at what the goal is, what the information they're trying to get out of the evaluation is and helping to suggest ideas of going about this, questions to ask, etc. and then being able to come back and see the draft of what's being created, give feedback on that.
>
> (Children and Young People with Disability Australia targeted focus group)

The information in this section is not intended to tell evaluators and evaluation commissioners how to evaluate. It is intended to support good practice from the start so that evaluation processes uphold the rights of people with disability and address barriers to inclusion.

This section gives key information and helpful resources. It is designed to help evaluators and evaluation commissioners plan for inclusive and accessible evaluation processes. More detailed information can be found in the fact sheets, links, and resources throughout.

The benefits to involve people with disability in evaluation

People with disability have been clear that they want to be involved in evaluation. 1 in 5 Australians identify with disability. This number can be much higher in some communities and groups of people. People with disability have the right to be involved in making decisions about their own lives. They should also be able to speak up and influence things that affect them.

When people with disability are involved in all stages of an evaluation, it's more likely to focus on what really matters for the people affected. It helps make sure the right questions are asked, in the right way and to the right people.

There are many benefits to involving people with disability, including:

- supporting stronger findings by including a wide range of points of view, experiences and expertise

- promoting inclusion and equity

- more believable and trustworthy outcomes

- building confidence and skills for both people with disability and evaluators. Some evaluators may be people with disability

- supporting shared ownership of the outcomes, including with the disability community

- saving time and money in the long-term by improving design and testing of programs that impact people with disability.

To fully realise these benefits, people with disability should be leaders and have the power to make decisions from the beginning.

> Relationships grounded in collaboration, mutual respect, and shared decision-making are key to ethical co-production. This requires a person-centred approach addressing power dynamics and accessibility so that the perspectives of co-researchers are valued and included.
>
> (Strnadová, I., Dowse, L., Garcia-Lee, B., Hayes, S., Tso, M., & Leach Scully, J.)[12]

Planning and funding evaluation

You can plan from the beginning for people with disability to be a part of shaping the proposed goals of an evaluation. To do this, the tender or proposal should clearly say that evaluators need to make accommodations or adjustments. A tender is the process of asking organisations to formally submit an offer to provide goods or services. Accommodations or adjustments might include changing the location or the way the evaluation is done to help remove barriers and make sure everyone can take part equally. This may include paying people with disability for their time and work. It also means finding different ways to involve people, so everyone has a chance to take part. A good resource to help is the Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability.[13]

Include people who have lived experience of disability in all stages of the process. This means involving them as evaluators and making sure they are part of decision-making groups. You can set up co-chairing arrangements, where leadership is shared. You can look for people with disability who are subject matter experts on the evaluation topics and methods.

It is important to include multiple people with disability as participants. This helps evaluators collect information from a wide range of views, experiences, and knowledge.

Why take action to make evaluation accessible

To get the most benefit of including people with disability in all stages of an evaluation, planning needs to start early. Evaluators and evaluation commissioners should think about a few key things from the beginning. This includes accessibility, inclusivity, staff capability and ethics.

Share power

The need for real collaboration is something people with disability often raise in feedback. Sharing power and working together to design and run evaluations helps make this happen. It makes sure people with disability, and other diverse groups, are truly involved. These ways of working are called co-design and co-production.

Co-design and co-production should be standard for evaluation processes. However, sharing power equally is not always possible. For example, sometimes experts need to make final decisions. In these cases, people can still work together and have a say during an evaluation. But if there is not equal power sharing, the processes can't be called co-design or co-production.

You can learn more about collaboration in Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation. It includes definitions of co design and co-production.

Make sure activities are accessible

Working with people with disability at all stages of evaluation goes beyond just meeting the rules about accessibility. However, these resources are a good place to start:

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)[14]
- Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability.[15]

All evaluation documents and processes should be accessible and inclusive. Engagement activities should give people with disability equal opportunity to participate and support the Universal Design Principles.[16]

The Australian Human Rights Commission have guides that give extra advice on making activities accessible:

- Hosting accessible and inclusive in-person meetings and events[17]
- Hosting accessible and inclusive online meetings and events.[18]

Provide accommodations and adjustments

Even when engagement activities are planned to be inclusive and accessible, some people might need extra help to take part equally. These extra supports are sometimes called accommodations or reasonable adjustments.

Accommodations or reasonable adjustments are types of support or changes that make spaces equal for everyone. They can reduce barriers that stop people from participating. These changes can help people with disability (or anyone who needs more support) take part equally.

When planning how to implement accommodations and adjustments, evaluators and evaluation commissioners need to think carefully about the language they use when asking people what support they need. Not every person who might need extra support will say they are a person with disability. People will find it helpful to see examples of what adjustments are available.

What can you do?

You can proactively and clearly explain what access features you can offer. You can also say that if anyone needs other accommodations or adjustments to take part, they can contact you to arrange them.

For example: 'These are the access features we have on offer to support you. They include an accessible location, hearing loop, natural lighting and an Auslan interpreter. Please let us know what support you need to take part in the evaluation.'

This will help people know you are thinking about their different needs and are willing to meet these needs. This will also help build trust with people. It will help make people feel safe to ask for the supports they need.

This is particularly important when you consider the context around disability. Some people have faced stigma and discrimination in the past. Stigma is a negative belief people share about certain traits. Discrimination is when people are treated badly because of who they are. This can make people not want to say they have disability.

Other people might have different reasons not to identify with disability. For example, because of their culture. Dr Scott Avery explains in Culture is Inclusion,[19] there is no word for disability in First Nations languages and many First Nations people don't identify with Western terminology about disability.

You can learn more about adjustments and supports in Fact sheet 1: Adjustments and supports. It includes examples of the types of adjustments and supports that you can offer.

Disability confidence and awareness training

Think about the skill level of the team involved and if they could benefit from disability confidence and awareness training to help them:

- feel confident in supporting people with disability
- better understand the diverse experiences of people with disability.

If people have completed this training in the past, they might need to refresh their skills. Training works best if it is led by a person with disability. It should also be flexible so it can meet people's different needs.

There are many Disability Representative Organisations[20] and advocacy groups[21] across the country that support people to become more confident about disability. Those organisations are trusted by the disability community. They can help share opportunities and connect evaluators to different voices and communities. They also often publish resources[22] that can help build understanding of disability.

Reach out to local organisations and build relationships. These organisations can suggest local training and support. They can help connect you to local people with disability who can take part in evaluation. There are also some disability awareness training programs[23] listed on the Job Access website.

There are online courses you can undertake and videos you can watch, such as SBS's 'Inclusion' disability training program.[24]

Griffith University[25] offers 2 micro-credential training programs through its Inclusive Futures: Reimagining Disability initiative.

The first one is called Citizen Researcher Essentials: A Short Course.[26] It is free, online and self-paced program. It helps people learn how to take part in research. It teaches topics like consumer involvement principles, ethics, collaboration and data handling.

The second course is called **Partnering with Consumers in Research**. It is designed for researchers, PhD students and people starting their career in research. It provides evidence-based training aligned with the National Health and Medical Research Council and Australian Research Council. It provides evidence-based training that focuses on:

- ways to engage consumers that is authentic
- research practices that are inclusive
- diverse ways to work together with disability
- First Nations partnerships.

Respect the diversity of people with disability

People with disability across Australia have different identities, points of view and experiences. It is important to make sure to work with people with disability who are most likely to be affected by the policy, program or service being evaluated.

People are more than the definition of their disability. Disability is experienced[27] in different ways. This goes beyond disability types. Evaluators need to consider how different parts of a person's identity can overlap and affect their experiences. This concept is known as 'intersectionality'. Intersectionality can include a person's experience of:

- cultural and social background
- sex and gender identity
- sexual orientation
- disability
- level of literacy
- age.

Different intersecting parts of a person's identity can strongly affect how they can take part in an evaluation. These parts – like disability, culture and age – can shape what someone needs or prefers when they are involved. You can learn more about making an evaluation safe and inclusive in Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation. You can also learn more about how to make sure an evaluation supports diverse perspectives in Fact sheet 7: Making sure evaluations include diverse views.

Be trauma-informed

Evaluators and evaluation commissioners need to remember that some people with disability may have experienced trauma. Because of this, it is a good idea to take a trauma-informed approach. Trauma-informed practice means making sure people feel safe, respected and supported. It also means building trust and giving people choices in how they take part. Evaluators and evaluation commissioners need to be able to:

- know the signs that someone has experienced trauma

- avoid re-traumatisation

  and

- make sure that everyone can get the support they need. This includes participants and the evaluation team.

You can learn more about trauma-informed approaches in Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation. You can also learn more about using a trauma-informed approach on the Australian Institute of Family Studies website.[28]

Supported decision-making

To make sure informed consent and confident decision making, some people use supported decision-making. This could mean some people have formal arrangements about making decisions, like guardians or representatives. Other people might choose to ask trusted friends or family to help them decide. This is known as supported decision-making. To learn more about supported decision-making go to the Supported Decision Making Hub.[29]

Recognition and remuneration

When people with disability are involved in a feedback process like an evaluation project, they should expect to receive fair recognition for their time, insights and expert knowledge.

You can learn more about remuneration in Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised. It includes examples of current remuneration policies and guidelines and how much people are paid under these.

We've heard feedback from people with disability that they prefer to be paid for their work. The income gap between people with disability and people without disability was $480 per week in 2022, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.[30]

People with disability have different preferences for how they want to be paid. Some people would rather get a gift card instead of having money transferred into their bank account. Some people like to be paid straight away, while others are happy to wait. The way that someone wants to be paid often depends on their personal situation. For example, it might affect payments or benefits they already get.

For some people with disability, out-of-pocket costs can be a barrier to taking part in an evaluation This can include costs for travel or meals. Think about whether the evaluation can cover reasonable out-of-pocket costs. Removing the financial barrier will make it easier for people with disability to join in with an evaluation. This makes it more equal with others.

Evaluators should make sure they say what out-of-pocket costs can be paid. It is important to be clear about this from the beginning to avoid miscommunication. This will make sure all people involved can:

- be confident that their time is valued

- make an informed decision about taking part

- have the chance to talk about any concerns.

Important factors to consider when planning for remuneration include:

- Payment rates should increase in line with the level of involvement. The more time, effort and thinking people contribute, the more they should be recognised for it.

- People contributing to the design of an evaluation strategy should be paid equally to the consultants or academics involved.

- Where possible, participants should be given options for how they are paid. This may include bank transfer, visa gift cards, taxi vouchers or gift cards for specific stores. You can learn more about renumeration in Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised.

Although remuneration is dependent on the engagement activities and individual circumstances, it is important that evaluators take a consistent approach. The Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability[31] provide advice on remuneration that evaluators can refer to This includes guidelines around types of remuneration and factors that should be considered when deciding.

Ethical research requirements

Evaluation processes and outcomes must meet the highest standard of ethical conduct and treatment of participants with disability. This means evaluators and evaluation commissioners need to make sure activities are safe and inclusive. There are also formal ethics requirements that need to be considered.

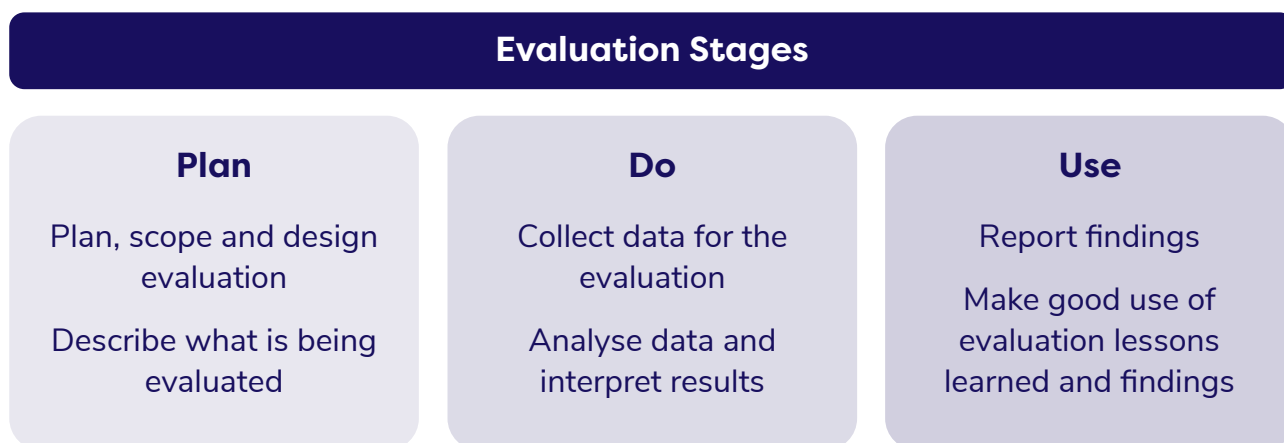All research in Australia that involves people must follow the:

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2025)[32]

  and

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.[33]

This can be relevant to research methods used in evaluation, such as interviews, focus groups, workshops, data collection and analysis. You can learn more about these requirements in Fact sheet 6: Ethics.

Engaging people with disability at every stage

This Toolkit breaks evaluation into 3 main stages: plan, do, and use. The steps within these stages include scoping and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of outcomes, reporting findings, and making good use of evaluation.

Evaluation Stages

Plan	Do	Use
Plan, scope and design evaluation Describe what is being evaluated	Collect data for the evaluation Analyse data and interpret results	Report findings Make good use of evaluation lessons learned and findings

1. Plan the evaluation

Early planning is best to make sure an evaluation is implemented well and meets expectations. While evaluation planning can take a variety of formats, a formal planning document should include:

- the extent the evaluation will partner with people with disability. You can learn more about collaboration in Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation

- an outline of governance structures. This should include how people with disability will be involved in decision-making and management processes. This should also outline accountability and responsibility

- an outline of resources and checks to inform the scope of the evaluation. This will inform how to make sure you pay people with disability fairly for their involvement. You can learn more about renumeration in Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised

- how the evaluation design should address any limits related to budget, time and data availability

- how the evaluation is designed to be inclusive and accessible so it is relevant and useful to people with disability.

Every stage of the evaluation should be carried out in a way that respects and meets the expectations of people with disability. Evaluation processes should help everyone who takes part to feel safe, included and equally supported. For example, evaluators should:

- commit to working with people with disability in a way that is sensitive, ethical and appropriate so that they can engage with dignity and respect. You can learn more in Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation and in Fact sheet 6: Ethics

- make sure people can get the information they need about the evaluation and they understand their role and contribution

- ask people if they need any adjustments and supports so they can fairly take part in meetings, workshops or other ways people share ideas. You can learn more in Fact sheet 1: Adjustments and supports

- identify at least 2 people from the evaluation team who participants can feel comfortable to communicate with for any questions or concerns

- make sure there is time to create and respond to follow-up communication to provide a feedback loop – a way to give feedback

- think about using an expert panel if expert views or specialised input and opinion is needed

- work together with disability specialists and disability organisations to facilitate activities. They are experts and might have built trust and relationships with participants. Think about what services are needed, find the right person or group, and be prepared to work together

- talk with the people involved and ask for feedback. This helps makes sure everyone shares the same values when working with people with disability. This will mean the contribution of people with disability will be central and genuinely valued

- involve the right people in the recruitment process – ideally led by a person with disability. People with disability can be recruited through multiple channels, including client organisations, interviews or peer networks.

Evaluation commissioners need to commit to genuine engagement with people with disability. This includes being flexible with timeframes, resources and training considerations to support people with disability to contribute to the evaluation.

2. Do the evaluation

Evaluators have a responsibility to make sure people with disability understand how data will be collected and why. It is also important to let people help decide what questions are asked for data collection. To make sure data is collected in an ethical and transparent way, evaluators should:

- consider a formal ethics review, which is important for managing risk of harm

- be clear and upfront about decisions and processes for data collection, including which parts are fixed and which can be influenced

- provide an accessible consent form[34] and information in advance that explains what the evaluation is about and how information will be used. This way participants can provide informed consent to be involved. Make sure participants are aware they can withdraw at any time

- set up processes, such as working groups or advisory boards, that make sure people with disability are actively involved in data collection and analysis. These working groups or advisory boards can also include other relevant participants such as family members

- be aware of adjustments that can make different types of data collection activities more accessible. For example, it might be easier to call someone to complete a survey over the phone or allow them to provide their input by video.

Analyse data and understand findings

Consultation and engagement can be undertaken during the analysis and interpretation stage, and this analysis and reflection[35] can be led and guided by people with disability.

Involving people with disability as co-producers in analysis and reporting can result in findings that are more likely to translate into real life improvements for people with disability.

When engaging people with disability in this stage, evaluators also need to:

- consider the experience and confidence of the people with disability involved, particularly in relation to analysis and interpretation of data. Offer to provide support and capacity building if this is something people are interested to learn about. Such as, training to give people the skills to do evaluative analysis and develop recommendations

- be mindful of cultural safety and engage with data analysis that thinks about bias, also using a strengths based approach

- consider the importance that analysis of data about First Nations people with disability is guided by First Nations people and informed by the Indigenous data sovereignty principles - MnW Principles — Maiam Nayri Wingara[36]

- make sure analysis processes are made transparent to people with disability

- give people with disability enough time or supports to respond to invitations or requests for input.

3. Use the evaluation

Report findings

One of the key things people want when they get involved in evaluation is to hear about what happened and receive the evaluation findings in a format that they can understand. Following up and 'closing the loop' allows people to see how their efforts have been used and a way to encourage more people to get involved.

Some things to consider when reporting evaluation findings include:

- the outcomes and findings are widely shared with people directly involved, key community stakeholders, and the broader disability community
- the evaluation outcomes are communicated in a way so everyone can access, understand, and use the report
- it is clear how evaluations involving people with disability link the outcomes and findings to improvements in the lives of people with disability.

Make good use of the evaluation

Making good use of the evaluation includes:

- learning from it
- measuring outcomes
- showing the value of a policy, program or service.

People with disability who take part in evaluation have a right to know how evaluators have used their work and what the outcomes of the evaluation were. Sharing this information shows honesty and builds trust.

When considering how to make good use of evaluation findings and recommendations, evaluators need to think about:

- sharing de-identified responses openly across relevant forums and the disability community. This includes information about why some actions have been committed to and others have not
- making the expertise of people with disability and their guidance central to translating evaluation findings into use. Ideally, a range of opportunities are provided to people with disability to consider, plan, or present actions from the evaluation findings, including in accessible forums
- giving people with disability the opportunity to provide feedback on the evaluation activities and processes, with this feedback used to inform and improve future evaluation approaches. Feedback and other responses to evaluation should be documented and published (with permission) for the purpose of transparency
- establishing an ongoing feedback loop with participants who give their consent. This can give both evaluators and participants the opportunity to see how things are changing and how well the changes are working for people with disability.

The See Me. Hear Me. Respect Me[37] campaign by Queensland Health is an example that promotes inclusion and respect for people with disability through targeted resources and messaging. An evaluation of the campaign, From Awareness to Action[38] by Inclusive Futures: Reimagining Disability, as an example highlighting its impact and effectiveness in fostering greater awareness and driving meaningful change.

Part 3 of this Toolkit includes a series of fact sheets and Disability inclusive evaluation checklist for evaluators to support you in evaluation.

Part 3: Fact sheets, resources and checklists

> Some [First Nations] people with disability also need to have the chance to get to know people from the organisation – [they] engage with people whom they know and trust. This means that when they meet a worker who is different from the person they have previously encountered, they need to get to know and trust that person. It is important for [them] that they feel heard.
>
> (Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council focus group)

This section sets out more resources that can help make evaluation inclusive and accessible.

Checklists

- Checklist for people with disability
- Disability inclusive evaluation checklist for evaluators

Fact sheets

- Fact sheet 1: Adjustments and supports
- Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation
- Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation
- Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised
- Fact sheet 5: Methods for inclusive evaluation
- Fact sheet 6: Ethics
- Fact sheet 7: Including diverse views

Current at time of publication – September 2025.

Checklist for people with disability, families and allies

You can use this checklist to support you when taking part in evaluation.

1. Plan

Stages	Things to think about	Yes
Deciding to take part	You know why you want to take part in the evaluation.	
	You know what you must do and how to do it.	
	You know how much time you need to give.	
	You know if you will get paid.	
	You know what supports you can get. This includes adjustments and accommodations.	
	You understand how the evaluation will use your information.	
Evaluation purpose	You know what the evaluation is trying to achieve.	
	You know what questions the evaluation will ask.	
Evaluation scope	You understand what is and is not included in the evaluation.	
	You have ideas about what can happen to make change.	
Community stakeholders	You know who is impacted by the work that is being evaluated.	
Your role in the evaluation	If you are part of the design work, think about what you want to share.	
	If you are part of collecting data, you know what is expected of you.	

Stages	Things to think about	Yes
Your role in the evaluation	If you are part of analysing data, you know what is expected of you.	
	If you are part of reporting and sharing information about the findings, you know what is expected of you.	
Data collection and information gathering	You know when and how data collection will take place.	
	You have been clear about any supports, accommodations or adjustments you need to fully take part in the data collection.	
	You know what tools will be used to collect data. For example, interview guides or questionnaires.	
	You've shared your ideas about tools to collect data that you think would be helpful. For example, kitchen table conversations and Photovoice.	

2. Do

Stages	Things to consider	Yes
Data analysis and reporting	You understand how the data will be analysed.	
	You know how the evaluation will present its findings. For example, through a report or a video.	

3. Use

Stages	Things to consider	Yes
Findings	You know what the plan is for after the evaluation.	
	You know if you will get a copy of the evaluation report.	
	You know how to find out more information about the evaluation. For example, the final report.	
	You know how to find out whether the evaluation was used to make changes.	

Disability inclusive evaluation checklist for evaluators

You can use this checklist to make sure your evaluation is inclusive and accessible for people disability.

Stages	Things to consider	Yes
Planning	If you are the evaluation commissioner, you have thought about how to include and support people with disability. For example, there are terms of reference to specify inclusion.	
	People with disability have helped design the purpose of the evaluation.	
	People with disability are part of the evaluation governance.	
	You have thought about remuneration cost and type. You have clearly communicated this in a way that everyone understands.	
	It is clear how people with disability will actively take part in the design of the evaluation. This includes building in feedback loops.	
	You know how you are recruiting people with disability. This includes diverse representation that considers intersectionality.	
	You have clearly explained what each person's role is. This includes what they need to do and how they need to do it.	
	You know whether evaluation staff need to upskill their disability confidence.	
	You have thought about ethics and how you will minimise risk of harm through the design of the evaluation.	
	You know how you will think about adjustments and accommodations.	
	You have planned for adjustments and accommodations. This includes thinking about: • the physical environment • the online environment • if a participant needs a carer, support person or family member • the different experiences people bring to a discussion • the language and images you use • creating a psychologically safe environment – this means people feel safe to speak up and share their thoughts.	

Stages	Things to consider	Yes
Planning	You have thought about how you will know if adjustments meet the needs of people with disability.	
Doing	People with disability are giving you advice on the evaluation. They are also giving you advice on how to reach and talk to the community.	
	People know how and have given informed consent.	
	People with disability are taking part in collecting data. You know what supports you will offer. This includes helping people build their skills.	
	You know what mixed evaluation methods will meet the needs of specific cohorts.	
	There are governance arrangements to guide or lead you on engagement with people with disability.	
	You will pay all participants equally, depending on the type of work they are doing.	
	People know and understand what will happen with the information and data you collect.	
	People with disability are taking part in the analysis of data. You know what supports you will offer. This includes helping people build their skills.	
	The evaluation is culturally informed and safe.	
	You will be honest and clear about how data will be analysed.	
Making good use of the evaluation	You have shared the findings with people with disability.	
	You have given people who took part in the evaluation a way to give feedback and improve things.	
	You have linked the findings with experiences of people with disability.	
	You have sought feedback from people with disability.	
	You have shown you value the work of people with disability in the evaluation.	

Fact Sheet 1: Adjustments and supports

Good evaluation should make sure people with disability have an equal chance to take part. Some participants might need additional support to help them take part fairly. These are sometimes called reasonable adjustments. The best way to understand what adjustments and supports people need is to ask them.

Examples of adjustments and supports

The types of adjustments needed will depend on the needs of participants.

This table includes examples of adjustments and supports. These examples show ways to help make evaluation activities more inclusive and accessible.

Make sure questions are easy to understand.

- Work with experts to make sure information is accessible.
  This includes design, questions, briefings and background information in accessible languages.

- Suggest sending questions early ahead of any activity and ask:
  - if they make sense
  - ways to improve them.

Make sure everyone can use and understand the content

- Provide support to read and understand information. Check preferred method to read information such as:
  - sign languages, for example Auslan, Deafblind and First Nations sign languages
  - languages other than English, for example First Nations languages.

- Offer to provide information in Braille.
  Note that people might prefer screen readers, so it is best to check.

- Support the use of support workers.

- Offer materials in large print, Easy Read, Plain English, and any requested languages or formats. You can learn more at Language and definitions | Disability Gateway.[39]

- Offer different ways for people to take part in activities. For example, speaking, writing and drawing.

Give people time to learn about and respond to content

- Provide questions in advance so people are not surprised and do not feel pressured to come up with an answer. Then ask people to say if the questions don't make sense or if they have any other concerns.

- Give participants enough time to understand, complete and send documents.

Make sure the environment feels safe and accessible for participants

- Give participants plenty of time so they can make sure they can attend on the day or time.

- Acknowledge inequity of device, technical and internet access, and have alternative processes available if needed.

- Think about how many people you are meeting with. Some participants might feel more comfortable in smaller groups and others might prefer to take part online.

- Make sure participants know they can withdraw at any time.

- Take time to follow up and offer support if difficult subjects are talked about.

Make sure physically accessible

- Run evaluation activities in places that are physically accessible. What this looks like depends on the participants' needs. It could mean choosing places that have:
    - an elevator or no steps
    - accessible toilets
    - sensory-friendly spaces – for example, spaces without bright lights
    - hearing loops
    - accessible parking.

  Make sure to know how everything works before the day of activity.

- Make sure the chosen place allows people to adjust lighting, noise levels and temperature to create a suitable environment and make sure people are comfortable.

Provide travel and money support

- Offer to organise transport and accommodation or offer to reimburse up to a reasonable amount if participants wish to organise their own transport and accommodation.

- Support or cover transport, accommodation and meal expenses, including any other expenses for carers, support workers, Guide Dogs and other support animals.

Supporting resources

- Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2023), Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/9881

- Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2024), Guide to Applying Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/document/11446

- Australian Government, Disability Gateway (n.d.), Meet people's accessibility needs, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/strategy/good-practice-guidelines/accessibility-needs

- Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.), Hosting accessible and inclusive in-person meetings and events, https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/hosting-accessible-inclusive-in-person-meetings-events

- Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.), Hosting accessible and inclusive online meetings and events Australian Human Rights Commission, https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/hosting-accessible-inclusive-online-meetings-events

- Christian Blind Mission (n.d.), Inclusive Participation Toolbox, https://participation.cbm.org/supporting-material/additional-resources

- Children and Young People with Disability Australia, DREAM resources for employers, https://cyda.org.au/youth-hub/dream-employment-network/dream-resources/dream-resources-for-employers/

- Department of Social Services, Improving the digital inclusion of older Australians: The social impact of Be Connected, https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/improving-digital-inclusion-older-australians-social-impact-be-connected-16-june-2020.pdf

- Government of South Australia, Inclusive SA (2019), Engagement and consultation with people living with disability, https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/124636/Engagement-and-consultation-with-people-living-with-disability-toolkit.pdf

- Inclusion Australia (n.d.), Towards Inclusive Practice, https://www.inclusionaustralia.org.au/towards-inclusive-practice/

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (2021), Consulting with people with disability during a practice review, https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/consulting-people-disability-during-practice-review-fact-sheet-practice-reviews.pdf

- Queensland's Disability Plan, Inclusive language and communication toolkit, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/campaign/queenslands-disability-plan/resources/training-resources/inclusive-language-and-communication-toolkit/5-tips-to-be-more-inclusive

- Queenslanders with Disability Network in partnership with Queensland government (2024), Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy, https://qdn.org.au/qld-disability-co-design-strategy/

- Research for Development Impact Network (2020), Research for All: Making Research Inclusive of People with Disabilities, https://rdinetwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RDI-Network-R4All-Accessible-PDF-1.pdf

- St Jude's Aged Care and Disability Services provider, The Importance Of Reasonable Adjustments For People With Disability, https://stjudes.com.au/news/importance-of-reasonable-adjustments

- Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Disability Employment, https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/ssmo/workforce_diversity_and_inclusion/disability-employment

- World Wide Web Consortium (2025), Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/

Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation

Including people with disability in evaluation helps shape the design and outcomes. Strong collaboration leads to more appropriate evaluation questions and more relevant outcomes.

Collaboration describes a level of involvement where people with disability have the power to make decisions.

Levels of participation

Collaboration is when people with disability have the power to make decisions.

This toolkit uses 5 levels of participation based on the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 Spectrum.[40]

- **Empower:** People with disability are owners of the project and its outcomes. They have power and are in charge of making decisions. They hold decision-making power and responsibility and lead the development of all parts of the evaluation. This can include co-creation with people with disability or when the project leader is a person with disability.

- **Collaborate:** People with disability are partners and can share ideas about how to improve something. This can include roles on advisory committees, co-design or co-facilitation of workshops, or when a member of the project team is a person with disability.

- **Involve:** People with disability provide information, advice or opinions. This can include roles on advisory committees, co-design workshops or symposiums.

- **Consult:** People with disability provide feedback based on their experience of a policy, program or service. This can include interviews, focus groups and surveys.

- **Inform:** People with disability get information to help them understand the evaluation purpose, process and findings. This can include newsletters, emails and other ways to share information.

Co-design and co-production

Co-design is a way of working together to create something new. In research, co-design involves people with lived experience working alongside researchers to shape research questions, methods, tools and outcomes.

Co-production means sharing power through the whole research process: planning, designing, doing and evaluating.

What makes collaboration work

The need for real collaboration is something people with disability often raise in feedback through engagement. Genuine collaboration can be achieved through co-design and co-production and sharing power with people with disability or other diverse groups.

Co-design can be an effective way to make sure shared decision-making power with people with disability or other diverse groups. In evaluation, co-design involves people with lived experience working alongside evaluators to shape the evaluation. This includes the evaluation topic, scope, questions, methods, provide analysis and outcomes.

It's important to recognise that it isn't always possible or necessary to have co-design at every stage of an evaluation. Evaluators and commissioners should be transparent about the extent of stakeholders' involvement and influence.

You can learn more about co-design and co-production on the National Disability Research Partnership's Embedding Co-design in your Research page.[41] The page also provides useful advice on how to make it work. Some of the information from this page is included below:

- Start early. Co-design isn't something to add at the end. It should shape the project from the beginning.
- Build real relationships. Trust takes time. Make space for it.
- Be flexible. Co-design is not always neat and tidy. Research plans need to allow for adjustments and change.
- Share power. That means people with lived experience lead, or help lead, not just comment on plans.
- Focus on real needs. Co-design needs to address issues that are relevant to people with disability.

What authentic collaboration looks like

- Be specific. Say where and how co-design will happen in the project
- Be honest. Don't use co-design as a buzzword if the project isn't collaborative
- Show the impact. Explain how lived experience will shape the research
- Be realistic. Not every stage of research will be co-designed, and that can be okay.

Supporting resources

- ARTD Consultants (2023), Working With Lived Experience Researchers in Evaluation: A Practical Framework, https://www.artd.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Working-with-lived-experience-researchers-2023.pdf

- Australian Government, Disability Gateway (n.d.), Define the level of participation, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/strategy/good-practice-guidelines/level-participation

- Australian Government, Disability Gateway (n.d.), Partner with disability specialists, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/strategy/good-practice-guidelines/partner-disability

- BetterEvaluation (2021), Participatory evaluation, https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/participatory-evaluation

- Douglas, T, et al. (2024), Inclusion in Disability Evaluation and Surveillance Projects: Reflections and Recommendations For Inclusive Project Teams, https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/ddnj/vol4/iss2/7/

- Fraser-Barbour, E, et al. (2023), Shifting power to people with disability in co-designed research, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2023.2279932

- Government of Western Australia and People with Disabilities Western Australia (2024), Connect with Me Codesign Guide, https://pwdwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/180813-co-design-guide1-002.pdf

- Health Consumer Council WA: Training, support groups & events – Health Consumers' Council WA, https://www.hconc.org.au/what-we-do/workshops/

- JFA Purple Orange (2021), Guide on Co-Design with People Living with Disability, https://purpleorange.org.au/application/files/7416/2510/1861/PO-CoDesign_Guide-Web-Accessible.pdf

- Joly, V, et al. (2023), Advancing an ethical imperative for collaborative approaches to evaluation with low incidence and underserved communities: Insights from a DeafBlind Support Services pilot program evaluation, *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 23(3), 150-162 https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1035719X231179984

- National Disability Research Partnership (n.d.), Principles, https://www.ndrp.org.au/principles

- Mental Health Commission of New South Wales (2024), Leading the change: A Toolkit to evaluate lived experience inclusion and leadership, https://www.nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/sites/default/files/2024-08/Leading%20the%20Change%20Toolkit.pdf

- National Disability Research Partnership (n.d.), Embedding Co-design in your Research Guide on Co-Design with People living with disability, https://www.ndrp.org.au/resources/co-design

- People with Disabilities Western Australia and Government of Western Australia (n.d.), Co-design Guide, https://pwdwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/180813-co-design-guide1-002.pdf

- Queenslanders with Disability Network, Co-design principles, https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/QDN_Co-Design-Principles_FINAL_2022.pdf

- Queensland Government with Queenslanders with Disability Network,
  Why is co-design important?, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/campaign/state-disability-plan/factsheet-1-why-is-co-design-important.pdf
  Working with the principles of co-design?, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/campaign/state-disability-plan/factsheet-2-working-with-the-principles-of-co-design.pdf

When should co-design be implemented?, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/campaign/state-disability-plan/factsheet-3-when-should-co-design-be-implemented.pdf

How should co-design be implemented?, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/campaign/state-disability-plan/factsheet-4-how-should-co-design-be-implemented.pdf

- Queensland Government Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-2027: Together, a better Queensland, https://www.families.qld.gov.au/_media/documents/campaign/state-disability-plan/qdp-2022-27.pdf

- Queenslanders with Disability Network in partnership with Queensland government (2024), Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy, https://qdn.org.au/qld-disability-co-design-strategy/

- University of New South Wales, Disability Innovation Institute (2024), Doing Research Inclusively: Guidelines for Co-Producing Research with People with Disability, https://www.disabilityinnovation.unsw.edu.au/inclusive-research/guidelines

Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation

Evaluation should be safe and inclusive for all people with disability. To do this, people must plan to support different needs. This includes thinking about:

- ethics
- intersectionality
- cultural safety
- trauma-informed practice.

The examples in Fact sheet 1: Adjustments and supports can be useful to support safe and inclusive evaluation for people. This includes people from intersectional cohorts and/or those who have experienced trauma.

Ethics

Ethics is about more than just knowing what's right and wrong, or fair and unfair. For human research, including evaluation, we need to think about:

- the benefits and risks of research
- how we will manage the risk of harm.

Some evaluation might need a registered Human Research Ethics Committee[42] to approve the ethics of its research. Evaluators must make sure the benefits of evaluation activities outweigh any possible harm to participants.

You can learn more about ethics in Fact sheet 6: Ethics.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality recognises that identity markers, such as gender, race or religion, can overlap and have a compounding effect. These effects can also be felt by other diverse groups of people with disability, such as those living in rural or remote areas.

This can affect how people engage in evaluation, and the people organising evaluations should take tailored approaches to make sure intersectional groups are safe.

Fact sheet 7: Including diverse views talks about making sure evaluation includes the voices of people who experience intersectionality. Evaluations should think about:

- People with disability living in regional, rural and remote areas. They might find it harder to take part in in-person evaluation. They are also likely to have limited internet which can make it hard to take part in online evaluation.

- People with disability whose first or main language is not English. They might need or want information translated. They also might need to use language interpreters.

- Children and young people. They need their family or carer's consent and support to be able to take part in evaluation. Families, including siblings, can also offer important insights when caring for and or living with a child, young person or adult with disability. Evaluation with children and young people need to be appropriate for their age.

- People with intellectual disability. They can face barriers that can lead to them being excluded from evaluation. This can include information and questions being unclear, difficult to read or not accessible. This can also include people with intellectual disability not having the support they need to take part.

- First Nations people with disability. They might not recognise disability the same way Western cultures do. There is often no word for 'disability' in First Nations languages. They might prefer to take part in evaluation on Country. They also might prefer to have local organisations they trust run or support evaluations.

- People might rather someone with shared experience lead or run evaluations. For example, women with disability might prefer other women to lead.

Inclusion Australia has published multiple resources for their Towards Inclusive Practice project.[43] These resources can help to make sure evaluation is inclusive and accessible for people with intellectual disability.

You can learn more about the voices of people who experience intersectionality in evaluation in Fact sheet 7: Including diverse views.

Cultural safety

Cultural safety[44] is when someone's cultural identity is respected and they feel valued, safe and trusted. First Nations people can decide what cultural safety looks like for them.

When working with First Nations people with disability, all stages of evaluation must be underpinned by cultural safety and self-determination.[45] Self-determination refers to a person's right to control and make decisions about their own life.

Dr Scott Avery's book, *Culture is Inclusion*,[46] talks about First Nations understandings of disability. It includes a section titled 'A playbook for community-directed research'. This section shows different types of research, including how researchers chose and used them.

Making sure evaluation supports cultural safety

To make sure evaluation supports cultural safety, First Nations people with disability should be leaders and partners in all stages of evaluation. Where possible, this should include collecting and using data.

There are good resources about how to do this, such as:

- the Maiam nayri Wingara Principles[47]
- the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.[48]

The Australian Evaluation Society's First Nations Cultural Safety Framework[49] is also a good resource. It includes:

- advice about what culturally safe environments should look like
- 10 principles for culturally safe evaluation.

Using these principles is an important step in planning a culturally safe evaluation. Evaluation that includes First Nations peoples in research should follow the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research.[50]

People from the Australian Government who run and plan evaluations should refer to the Commonwealth Indigenous Evaluation Strategy.[51] It explains the best ways to evaluate policies and programs that affect First Nations peoples.

The Australian Public Service Commission's First Nations Partnership Playbook[52] is also a good resource. It aims to guide government workers on how to create good partnerships with First Nations peoples, communities and organisations.

Trauma-informed

Trauma-informed practice recognises the impact of trauma on people's well-being. It aims to make sure participants do not experience more distress and trauma. This means:

- creating safe spaces
- building and maintaining trust
- working together
- making sure participants don't experience more trauma.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies published a guide called 'Principles for doing trauma-informed research and program evaluation'.[53] This guide uses evidence to explain what trauma-informed research looks like. It says trauma-informed research and evaluation can be on any topic and with any group of people.

Consultation fatigue

Consultation fatigue – also known as participant fatigue – happens when people with disability are asked to take part in too many consultations or research. They can feel tired or not engaged. This can happen when participants:

- are asked the same questions
- not seeing any real change from their input
- experience emotional stress from sharing their stories repeatedly.

It's important to make participant experiences positive.[54] This can help with participant fatigue. For example, evaluators should make sure they:

- show that they value participants' time and work
- show how participants' feedback makes a difference
- create safe and respectful spaces for participants.

Supporting resources

- ARTD Consultants (2023), National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Evaluation Framework, https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-mental-health-and-suicide-prevention-evaluation-framework?language=en

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- Department of Social Services, Improving the digital inclusion of older Australians: The social impact of Be Connected, https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/improving-digital-inclusion-older-australians-social-impact-be-connected-16-june-2020.pdf

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- Research for Development Impact Network (2020), Research for All: Making Research Inclusive of People with Disabilities, https://rdinetwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RDI-Network-R4All-Accessible-PDF-1.pdf

- Respect Victoria (n.d.), Monitoring, evaluation and learning toolkit, https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning-toolkit

- University of New South Wales (2022), Building effective system-wide disability research capacity in Australia, https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/4815355/Building-effective-system-wide-disability-research-capacity-2022.pdf

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- Warr, D, Mills, A, and Kasidis, V (2023), Listening to community voices: perspectives on consultation and engagement from people using disability services, https://www.bsl.org.au/research/publications/community-voices/

Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised

Current at September 2025

When people with disability take part in an evaluation, they should expect recognition for their time, insights and expert knowledge. Their lived experience of disability should be valued, as well as other experiences they might bring. For example, their experience with positions in governance, leadership, and co-researcher roles.[55]

Show you value people's work

Recognition can happen in multiple ways. It can include payment (often known as 'remuneration') and acknowledgement of a person's contribution. Ideally, all participants will be paid fairly based on their role in the evaluation.

The type and amount of recognition will depend on the type and level of participation. For example, a person filling out a simple online survey might not be paid and may instead be recognised with a thank you or acknowledgement.

It is okay for a person to ask about remuneration if they are contributing to the evaluation. The amount they will be remunerated depends on their role. The more involved a person is, the more recognition they should receive.

Although remuneration is dependent on the engagement activities as well as individual circumstances, it's important that evaluators take a consistent approach.

What you need to do

The Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability[56] provides advice on remuneration that evaluation funders or planners can refer to. This includes guidelines around types of remuneration and things that should be considered when determining remuneration.

Payment guidelines and examples

It is important for evaluation commissioners to think about and budget for how they will pay people for their contributions. The more involved people are, the more recognition they should get. Below we mention some examples of existing policies to follow.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Participant Engagement Payment Guidelines

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Participant Engagement Payment Guidelines[57] is an easy guide on payments. It's a good starting point for evaluation commissioners. It sets out payment rates as:

- $50 per hour for up to 4 hours (pro-rata)
- $250 per day up to 8 hours.

New South Wales Health Guidelines on Paying Community Members

The New South Wales Health Guidelines on Paying Community Members[58] includes:

- payment rates
- examples of good practice.

The rates offer examples of how payments increase based on how much participants take part in an evaluation:

- Inform: No payment
- Consult: $42 per hour
- Partner: $52 per hour
- Control: $62 per hour.

National Mental Health Commission's Paid Participation Policy

The National Mental Health Commission's Paid Participation Policy[59] sets out a daily fee. This fee is based on the 'Offices not specified' fee from the Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination.[60]

The current fee is $464 per day. The Mental Health Commission states it will pay participants 20% of the daily fee per hour. The most it might pay a participant for is 5 hours per day.

Note for Australian Government evaluations

Remuneration rates for people with lived experience in Australian Government evaluations in ongoing roles for appointed 'other office holders' could be guided by the Remuneration Tribunal (Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-time Public Office) Determination 2024.[61] This lists the sitting fee for 'other office holders' (ongoing work) members at $464 per day.

Examples of payment types

Participants should be able to choose how they receive remuneration. Many organisations have procedures in place to make payments to people for contributing to their work. These payments can take different forms, for example:

- bank transfers
- store gift cards or visa gift cards
- out-of-pocket costs such as cab vouchers or bus passes.

Other ways to encourage people to take part

Some evaluation commissioners provide incentives for engaging, which is not a direct payment for contribution but a chance at remuneration.

This method can be used by businesses, companies and evaluators to gain feedback in a cost-effective way that applies to the same chance at receiving remuneration to everyone taking part.

An example could be completing survey questions and then going into the draw to win a gift voucher. This is a cost-effective way of getting many people to engage in a small amount of time. It can be useful to encourage a large number of responses and diverse points of view.

Incentives are different to remuneration. It is important for evaluators and participants to know the difference.

Supporting resources

- Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2023), Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability. https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-10/3826-dess5092-good-practice.pdf

- Australian Government, Disability Gateway (n.d.), Define the level of participation, https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads/strategy/good-practice-guidelines/level-participation

- Mental Health Commission Western Australia, Consumer, Family, Carer and Community Paid Participation Policy, https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/awcontent/Web/Documents/2015-2024/paid-participation-policy.pdf

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- Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Government Boards, https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/office_of_the_secretary/Executive_Services/tasmanian_government_boards

- WA Country Health Service, Consumer Representative Participation Payment Policy, https://wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/WACHS/Documents/DHAC/DHAC-guidelines-policies-and-member-resources/Consumer-Representative-Participation-Payment-Policy.pdf

Fact sheet 5: Methods for inclusive evaluation

Inclusive evaluation are those that allow everyone to engage and take part on a fair basis. Engagement can be a powerful way for people with disability to share their experiences directly with decision-makers to influence change. Many evaluations use a combination of methods to meet their goals and be inclusive and accessible for diverse communities.

Examples of methods

Over the following pages are examples of methods evaluators can use to support inclusive evaluation.

Surveys

A survey is a set of questions or statements that participants respond to or answer. Surveys focus on specific ideas. They are also fast and don't cost too much money.

You can learn more about creating accessible forms and surveys on the Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability.[62]

Photovoice

Photovoice is a research method where people use photos to share their experiences and ideas. It is participatory, meaning the people involved help guide the research and tell their own stories visually. It combines photography and storytelling to share lived experience. It supports participants to express themselves. Photovoice also gives researchers the chance to work with marginalised communities.

The 'Through my eyes' research project[63] is an example of Photovoice. The project worked with women with disability in Australia to explore themes of identity, inclusion and disability.

You can learn more information about Photovoice on the Better Evaluation website.[64] It includes examples and links to more resources.

Most Significant Change

Most Significant Change (MSC) is a participatory approach used to understand the key changes resulting from a policy, program, or service. It centres on real stories shared by those involved and includes 3 main steps:

- Storytelling: Participants describe the most significant change they have seen or experienced because of the policy, program, or service.

- Selection: The group reviews and selects the stories they believe are the most important.

- Reflection: They discuss why these stories matter and what they reveal about the impact of the work.

You can learn more about MSC on the Better Evaluation website.[65] This includes examples and a step-by-step guide on how to do it.

Kitchen table conversations

Kitchen table conversations are informal meetings held in places where people feel comfortable. For example, homes and cafes. It focuses on community and gives people who are hard to reach a chance to take part.

Kitchen table conversations give participants a chance to talk about issues that matter to them. These talks are often shaped by questions from community groups or local governments, but there is no formal plan.

Health Consumers Queensland[66] have been using this approach since 2018. They note the method's strengths, for example it lets participants lead the conversation. They also note it gives a more broad and diverse understanding of the community.

Workshops

Workshops are short sessions where people come together to learn, talk about or work on a certain topic or skill. It is usually interactive and hands-on, encouraging everyone to take part.

Focus groups

Focus groups are a practical way to collect information from several people at once about a certain topic. This is useful if evaluators have limited time and resources. Focus groups help evaluators gather important insights from participants, managers and community stakeholders.

Having participants connect with each other can be beneficial. Though, sometimes being in a group can make participants feel pressured to agree with others.

It's important that the person leading the focus group has the right skills. This can make sure that everyone has a chance to share their thoughts, values and diverse opinions. This can also make sure someone keeps the conversation on track.

Going through notes or recordings from focus groups can take a lot of time. It can be helpful for the evaluation team to work together to find common themes and analyse the information.

Citizens' Jury

A Citizens' Jury is a panel of diverse people who have been randomly selected. They think about and discuss important issues. They also develop recommendations for decision-makers.

Citizens' Juries[67] aim to be fair, representative, well-informed, impartial and thoughtful in how they explore topics.

An example of a Citizens' Jury in Australia is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Citizens' Jury Scorecard project.[68] This project used the method to review how well the NDIS works in some areas.

Culturally grounded methods

Culturally grounded methods are ways to do engagements that are culturally safe and appropriate. They focus on the values and beliefs of different communities.

Aboriginal Participatory Action Research (APAR)[69] is an example of culturally grounded research. It is a strengths-based research method based on First Nations knowledge systems, cultural practices and world views.

Supporting resources

- Australian Capital Territory Government (n.d.), Helping to Create a Disability Strategy for the ACT: A Kitchen Table Conversation Kit, https://yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/act-disability-strategy/kitchen-table-conversations-kit

- Avery, S (2018), Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, Chapter 3: A Community-Directed Research Methodology. First Peoples Disability Network (Australia). Sydney, Australia. https://fpdn.org.au/product-category/publications/

- Better Evaluation The engagement toolkit | Better Evaluation, https://www.betterevaluation.org/tools-resources/engagement-toolkit

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- Government of South Australia, Department of Premier and Cabinet (n.d.), Citizens' Jury, https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/community-engagement/engagement-tools/citizens-jury

- Government of South Australia, Inclusive SA (2019), Engagement and consultation with people living with disability, https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/124636/Engagement-and-consultation-with-people-living-with-disability-toolkit.pdf

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- Oystrick, V and Shapiro, S (2024), Photovoice as a Participatory Evaluation Method: Evaluating a Collective Kitchen Program in Northern Ontario, Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, Volume 39, Number 2, https://utppublishing.com/doi/10.3138/cjpe-2024-0015

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- United Nations Children's Fund (2022), Disability-Inclusive Evaluations in UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/2866/file/Disability-Inclusive%20Evaluations%20in%20UNICEF:%20Guideline%20for%20Achieving%20UNDIS%20Standards.pdf

- United Nations Evaluation Group (2022), Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2022/06/uneg_guidance_on_integrating_disability_inclusion_in_evaluation_0.pdf

- United Nations Population Fund (2020), Guidance on disability inclusion in UNFPA evaluations, https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/guidance-disability-inclusion-unfpa-evaluations

- University of New South Wales Disability Innovation Institute (n.d.), Inclusive research, https://www.disabilityinnovation.unsw.edu.au/

- Government of South Australia, Inclusive SA (2019), Engagement and consultation with people living with disability, https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/124636/Engagement-and-consultation-with-people-living-with-disability-toolkit.pdf

- New South Wales Government State Insurance Regulatory Authority (2020), Engaging with Lived Experience, https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/engaging-with-lived-experience-framework.pdf

Fact sheet 6: Ethics

Human research in Australia must follow these guidelines on ethics:

- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2025)[70] (the National Statement)

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.[71]

This can apply to research methods used in evaluation. For example, interviews, focus groups and workshops.

You can find out more about ethics on the Disability Gateway's Follow ethical standards[72] page.

What to do

Evaluators need to look at the guidelines and decide how they apply to their evaluation. Evaluators should:

- check the National Statement and decide if their proposed activity is likely to be lower or higher risk to participants

- if the activity is higher risk, seek ethics approval from a registered Human Research Ethics Committee.[73] The evaluator will need to show they have thought about possible risks and benefits and how they can address them

- make sure privacy risks are managed according to the Privacy Act 1988. States and territories might have their own laws, administrative codes or rules about privacy that evaluators need to follow

- create ways that make it easier for people to give informed consent. This includes plain language statements and consent forms to make sure everyone taking part can provide free and informed consent.

National Statement on disability ethical conduct in human research

In the past, some groups of people might not have been able to take part in research. This was because researchers thought these groups were 'vulnerable', including people with disability.

The National Statement focuses on the need to make sure research is inclusive and focuses on people's strengths. It explains how to do research in ways that reduce risks to participants.

The National Statement recognises that some characteristics might increase a person's risk of harm when taking part in research. These characteristics might also decrease someone's ability to provide informed consent to take part.

Evaluation that includes diverse views are more likely to address the needs of diverse populations and make sure there are fairer outcomes.

Evaluators should not assume that people who may be more vulnerable to risk of harm are not able to take part based on health, disability or shared experience.

Supporting resources

- Australian Institute of Family Studies (2021), Ethics in evaluation, https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/ethics-evaluation

- University of New South Wales (2022), Building effective system-wide disability research capacity in Australia, https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/4815355/Building-effective-system-wide-disability-research-capacity-2022.pdf

- University of New South Wales (2024), Doing Research Inclusively: Guidance on Ethical Issues in Co-production, https://www.disabilityinnovation.unsw.edu.au/inclusive-research/guidelines

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2020), AIATSIS Code of Ethics. https://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/aiatsis-code-ethics-jan22.pdf

- El Boghdady, M (2025), Equality and diversity in research: building an inclusive future - PMC, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11734222/

- Research for Development Impact Network (2020) Research for All: Making Research Inclusive of People with Disabilities, https://rdinetwork.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/RDI-Network-R4All-Accessible-PDF-1.pdf

- National Health and Medical Research Council (2018), Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders, https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/ethical-conduct-research-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-and-communities

Fact sheet 7: Including diverse voices

People with disability are diverse and cannot be defined by a single part of their identity.It is important that evaluation includes different voices, views, experiences and values. This will:

- fairly show the different experiences of people with disability
- lead to findings that are more accurate, inclusive, and impactful.

Benefits of including diverse voices

Purposefully inviting people to take part can be a useful way to make sure evaluation represent more people. This includes diverse people and people who experience intersectionality.

For example, evaluation about policy, programs or services that affect children need to include:

- children with disability
- parents and carers of children with disability.

This will make sure the evaluation correctly reflects their experiences.

Amplifying the voices of groups who are sometimes excluded can support change. It can lead to more inclusive policies, programs and services in the future.

Australia has a diverse population. Everyone benefits from evaluation that includes diverse views.

You can learn more about intersectionality and inclusive evaluation in Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation.

Supporting resources

- Department of Social Services, Improving the digital inclusion of older Australians: The social impact of Be Connected, https://www.dss.gov.au/system/files/resources/improving-digital-inclusion-older-australians-social-impact-be-connected-16-june-2020.pdf

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- National Ethical Disability Alliance, What is CaLD, https://neda.org.au/what-is-cald/

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- Respect Victoria (N.D.), Key concepts for practice, https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/key-concepts-practice

- UN Women (2022), Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit, https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit-en.pdf

Glossary

Auslan – the name for Australian Sign Language and the main language of Australia's Deaf community.

Accessible – environments, facilities, services, products and information that people can use and interact with in a way that suits their needs.

Barriers – attitudinal and/or societal actions, physical and/or environmental factors, and policy, and/or systemic issues that create a disabling effect. Such as inadequate time and resources to allow people with disability to contribute meaningfully.

Bias – an unfair outlook or perception towards someone or something based on opinion or experience.

Carer – someone who provides supports to a person with disability, often a family member. Some people with disability prefer the term over support person.

Citizens' Jury – a panel of diverse people who have been randomly selected. They aim to be fair, well-informed and thoughtful in how they explore topics.

Co-design – a design process where stakeholders are equal partners and take leadership roles in the design of products, services, systems, policies, laws and research.

Co-facilitation – is when 2 or more people work together to lead or guide a group activity, workshop or meeting. They share responsibilities like planning, presenting and supporting participants.

Co-production – an extension of co-design, where stakeholders are involved in the development and design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of products, services, systems, policies, laws and research.

Collaboration – working together with others to achieve a shared goal. It involves sharing ideas, helping each other and combining strengths.

Cultural safety – respects, supports and empowers the cultural rights, identity, values, beliefs and expectations of a particular culture while providing quality services that meet their needs.

Descendants – people who come after someone in their family. For example, if you have children, they are your descendants.

Disability – an evolving concept that results from the interaction between a person with impairment(s) and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Discrimination – is when people are treated unfairly or different because of who they are. It often results in people being excluded, hurt or denied opportunities.

Easy Read – is a way of presenting written information to make it easier to understand. It typically uses simple words, short sentences, accessible fonts and layouts and images or photos to assist in illustrating the information.

Ethics – is more than just knowing what's right or wrong – it is about doing what is fair, respectful and responsible in how we treat others and make decisions.

Evaluation – is a structured and fair way to see how a policy, program or service is working. It looks at how relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable it is. An evaluation helps to strengthen accountability and learning.

First Nations people – First Nations people include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as such and are accepted as such by their community.

Human rights approach – disability is a natural part of human diversity that must be respected and supported in all its forms. People with disability should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, including respect for their inherent dignity; freedom from all forms of violence and abuse; and to participate fully in the community.

Inclusive – making sure everyone feels welcome, respected, and able to take part – no matter their background, identity or ability. It is about treating people fairly and making sure no one is left out.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty – the right of First Nations peoples to exercise ownership over Indigenous Data. Ownership of data can be expressed through the creation, collection, access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination and reuse of Indigenous data.

Intersectionality – recognises that each person's identity is made up of many parts — like age, gender, race, disability and religion. These parts work together, not in isolation, shaping unique life experiences.

Ownership – is when people with disability have a level of control and power over an evaluation's aims, processes and actions.

Partnership – means working together to achieve a common goal.

Person-centred – puts an individual at the centre of all actions and decisions.

Program logic – is a structured representation that links a program's activities to its intended outcomes, showing how and why the program is expected to achieve its goals.

Reasonable accommodations and adjustments – article 2 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines reasonable accommodation as 'necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to make sure persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.'

Remuneration – is when people are paid for their work.

Self-determination – refers to a person's right to control and make decisions about their own life. But it can also mean different things to different groups of people.

Stakeholder – is someone who has an interest in or is affected by a plan, project, or decision. This can include people who help make it happen, benefit from it, or are impacted by its results.

Stigma – is a negative belief people share about certain traits. It usually isn't true and can mean people with these traits are treated unfairly.

Social model of disability – recognising attitudes, practices and structures can be disabling and function as barriers preventing people from fulfilling their potential and exercising their rights as equal members of the community. The social model seeks to change society to accommodate people with disability.

Supported decision-making – processes and approaches that assist people to decide, by giving them the tools they need to make the decision for themselves, including accessible information. Supported decision making does not mean deciding for or on behalf of another person.

Tender – the process of asking organisations to formally submit an offer to provide a good or service.

Theory of change – is a clear and logical explanation of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a specific context.

Trauma-informed – is when frameworks and strategies make sure that the practices, policies and culture understand, recognise and respond to the effects of trauma and minimise, as far as possible, the risk that people may be re-traumatised.

Universal design – Disability Inclusion Bill 2024 definition: universal design means the design of an environment that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of the nature of their attributes, including their age, size, ability or disability.

Acronyms

ADS Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

Cth Commonwealth

DDA Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

DRO Disability Representative Organisation

DHDA Department of Health Disability and Ageing

LGBTIQA+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual. The + stands for all other identities not encompassed in the short acronym.

MSC Most Significant Change

NDIS National Disability Insurance Scheme

NDRP National Disability Research Partnership

UN United Nations

UN CRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

WCAG Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

Endnotes

1   https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads

2   https://evaluation.treasury.gov.au/about/commonwealth-evaluation-policy

3   https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities

4   https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/evaluation

5   https://www.wa.gov.au/system/files/2025-03/state_disability_strategy_year_3_process_evaluation_
    summary_sheet.pdf

6   https://www.dss.gov.au/improving-digital-skills-older-australians/resource/evaluation-be-connected

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