

AUSTRALIA'S DISABILITY STRATEGY 2021-2031

ADVISORY COUNCIL

COMMUNIQUÉ

Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) Advisory Council (Advisory Council) met virtually on 26 August 2025.

The Chair of the Advisory Council, Ms Jane Spring AM, welcomed members to the virtual meeting.

The Chair noted that the four state/territory representative members of the Advisory Council (Kelly Cox for New South Wales, Sarah Skopellos for the Northern Territory, Sisaleo Philavong for South Australia, and Chris Varney for Victoria) would conclude their terms on 1 September 2025. Outgoing members were thanked for their contributions and the Chair informed members that the process had begun to seek new state/territory representatives from the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia.

The Advisory Council agreed on its informal advice to inform enhancements to ADS Engagement Plan, including the need to identify the correct communication channels (allowing two-way communication), appropriate methods of engagement, and the importance of government accountability and feedback processes.

The Advisory Council discussed a presentation from the Attorney-General's Department on the *Disability Discrimination Act* Review. Key input from the Advisory Council included support for enforceable positive duty to prevent discrimination, clarification of "unjustifiable hardship" provisions, and the need for a culturally safe, no-cost complaints process.

Members also raised concerns about the burden on individuals to enforce rights and accessibility gaps in venues and services. Council will continue to advocate for bold reforms in the DDA Review and agreed to develop a formal submission for the review.

The Advisory Council noted:

- An update on how Council's earlier advice informed the Targeted Action Plan (TAP) Report, due for publication by end of 2025.
- An update on Disability Royal Commission (DRC) Reporting. Council welcomed the proposed website format with the inclusion of

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clearer consultation status and submission links and called for visible leadership in implementation.

- Information on ADS Disability Data Measure (DDM) Project. In this presentation, Council raised concerns about how disability would be measured, preferring a focus on barriers rather than medical conditions, wanting people with lived experience involved, and asking for more community consultation and learning from past research.
- Updates from states and territories.
- The Chair's participation at the [UN COSP18 session on Rethinking Financing for Disability Rights](#); the National Disability Research Partnership event: *Mobilising disability research and evidence for policy impact*, and upcoming [AES25 conference on inclusive evaluation](#).

The next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for 28 November 2025.