



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Terms of Reference

Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council

Endorsed by the Disability Reform Ministerial Council April 2026

**Australia's
Disability
Strategy**
2021-2031

Creating
an inclusive
community
together

Component	Description
Committee Classification	Non-Statutory
Name of Committee	Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council established on 3 December 2021.
Purpose	The purpose of Australia's Disability Strategy (the Strategy) Advisory Council is to provide high-level independent advice to the Australian, state and territory Disability Ministers and governments (including local governments) on the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Strategy, as outlined in the Council Work Plan.
Role and Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will provide independent advice on the implementation of the Strategy to the Australian government and state and territory governments but will not have a formal decision-making role. • The Council's consideration shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disability policy priorities, including building positive community attitudes, strengthening monitoring and reporting, and improving engagement with people with disability ○ Strategy Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) ○ Strategy Associated Plans ○ The Strategy's Outcomes Framework ○ Periodic Strategy progress/implementation reports, and ○ Other significant reviews, reports or reforms impacting the disability community (such as the Disability Royal Commission), as appropriate. • The Council may discuss and raise emerging issues from the broader disability community. These will be captured in the Council's communique. The communique is published to the Council's website and distributed to a number of governance groups for information. • The Council may prepare submissions on individual issues and share with the relevant government/s for their consideration, via the Council's Secretariat. • The Council's advice is drafted by the Secretariat on behalf of the Council, and members provide feedback and recommendations, and the advice is approved by the Chair once finalised. • The Council may be requested from time to time to participate in community events or activities to support awareness raising of the Strategy within the broader community.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council may be engaged by governments as an input for reporting on Australia’s obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. • In undertaking its role, the Council may identify and engage with a range of stakeholders to inform its work. Where possible, the Council will ensure that the voices, views, and experiences of people with disability are prioritised in its work. • The Council recognises the critical importance of ensuring its work is undertaken within an intersectional human rights approach, consistent with the approach set out in ADS and international human rights obligations, so that initiatives endeavour to create a more equal society for people with disability. In this context, the Council may from time to time also seek views from the Disability Discrimination Commissioner on the Australian Human Rights Commission and on key initiatives as part of their work, where appropriate. • Prior to providing advice concerning an individual state or territory government, the Council will discuss the issue with the relevant state or territory Disability Minister and disability advisory council (if one is in place). This will ensure jurisdictional knowledge on an issue is incorporated in the Council’s advice to governments.
Role of Chair and Board/Committee in selection processes	The Chair may be requested to provide input into the selection process for Council members.
Composition of Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of all Council members will be undertaken by the Minister, with relevant criteria set out below. • In respect of the Chair and Core members, the Minister may determine the most appropriate process for considering potential members, taking into account appropriate transparency and probity concerns, and the need for the Council to have an appropriate mix of professional backgrounds and skills. • Special Advisors will participate in Council meetings and contribute to Council’s advice to Ministers and governments. The appointment of Special Advisors may be delegated to relevant officials. • The Council has up to 12 members comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a Chair ○ up to five Core Members ○ up to two Special Advisors, and ○ up to four representative members from state and territory disability advisory councils, on a rotational basis (Rotation

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	<p>1: NSW, NT, SA, and VIC, Rotation 2: QLD, TAS, ACT, and WA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of the Council will include representatives from the disability community and must meet the below criteria. The criteria listed outline a number of cohorts relevant to people with lived experience of disability. It is acknowledged that a single Council member may represent one or more of these cohorts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Chair: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be a person with disability who may represent one or more of the following cohorts: women with disability; First Nations people with disability; Culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability; Young people with disability; LGBTQI+ people with disability; People with remote or thin market expertise. ○ Core members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core members are recognised to possess a wide range of skills, expertise and experience; a sound understanding of disability-related issues; and in their application as a Core member are required to demonstrate their understanding of the social and human rights models of disability. - Must be a person with disability who may represent one or more of the following cohorts: women with disability; First Nations people with disability; Culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability; Young people with disability; LGBTQI+ people with disability; People with remote or thin market expertise. - Core members are also recognised for their interest and championing of individual issues faced by the disability community including conflict resolution, trauma informed practice and cultural safety. ○ State and territory representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nominated by state or territory ministers responsible for disability issues, state and territory representatives should be members of their state or territory Disability Advisory Council or equivalent, if in place, at the time of appointment and must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be people with disability; and/or • have personal, lived experience, of challenges faced by the disability community. ○ Special Advisors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected due to their government experience and/or background in the disability sector, Special Advisors support the work of the Council by advising on

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	<p>government relations and relevant policy, enabling the Council to better shape and target its advice to governments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They will have lived experience or expertise in matters relating to the disability community. - Special Advisors are selected to support Council members by advising on how the Council can engage effectively with government, relevant sectoral bodies and/or service providers. This may include building members' understanding of government practices and processes and identifying opportunities to engage and influence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a candidate is a Commonwealth, state, territory or local government public servant with policymaking or funding responsibilities, they may not be eligible to become a Council member, whether the Chair, a Core member, Special Advisor or state and territory representative. The department will provide recommendations to the Minister on potential conflict-of-interest matters. • All Council members must reside in Australia. • The Australian Government acknowledges that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council members are recognised to possess a wide range of skills, expertise and experience; a sound understanding of disability-related issues; and in their application as a Council member are required to demonstrate their understanding of the social and human rights models of disability.
Term of Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will operate for the term of the Strategy, i.e. 2021-2031. A person appointed as a Council member holds the position for a term specified as below. • The Chair holds a term of 3 years, with a possible extension up to 12 months. • Core members hold a term of 3 years, with a possible extension up to 12 months. • State and territory representative members hold a term of 18 months, with a possible extension up to 6 months to support transition to new members. • Special Advisors hold a maximum term of 2 years, with a possible extension up to a further 2 years. • The membership term is set out in the Acknowledgment of Appointment, signed by the member. When an opportunity for

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	<p>extension is available, within the maximum terms set out above, the Minister is responsible for approving the extension.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information regarding terms of appointment are covered in each member's Engagement Deed.
Representatives	A Council member is not entitled to appoint a representative proxy or alternate.
Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quorum is a minimum of 50% of all sitting members plus the Chair. • The Chair and/or the Secretariat should be advised of a member's inability to attend a meeting as soon as is practical. • Any vacancy on the Council will not affect its power to function.
Deliverables and Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will provide independent advice on the implementation of the Strategy to Commonwealth and state and territory governments but will not have a formal decision-making role. • Advice will generally be in writing and may be accompanied by relevant documents as attachments. All advice will be approved by the Chair on behalf of the Council, though the Council may also be asked for endorsement, and may contain recommendations to Commonwealth, state and territory or local governments, Australian, state and territory Disability Ministers and submissions to other disability initiatives. • Advice is drafted by the Secretariat on behalf of the Council, and members provide feedback and recommendations. • The Council will report to all Disability Ministers on the outcomes of the Council's work at least once a year. This may include consideration of Council's advice. If needed and as appropriate, additional meetings with ministers will be arranged by the Chair through the Secretariat. • The Council may be required to contribute to reporting processes under the ADS reporting framework including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two yearly Implementation Reports ○ Major Evaluation Reports ○ Annual TAPs Reports.
Timeframes & Operation of Committee, provision of Deliverables, completion of Milestones	<p><u>Timeframes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The governance model for the Strategy comprises three components: information and advice, decision making and coordination. The Council will support the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy within the 2021-2031 timeframe.

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	<p data-bbox="507 288 667 322"><u>Operations</u></p> <ul data-bbox="507 342 1497 1032" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 342 1497 450">• The Council holds meetings as necessary for the efficient performance of its functions. They are to be held at times and places determined by the Secretariat, in agreement with the Chair. <li data-bbox="507 472 1497 539">• The Chair must convene at least three meetings per calendar year. <li data-bbox="507 562 1497 741">• Additional meetings of the Council, or a sub-group of the Council, may be held outside of the scheduled meetings. This includes the provision of out of session advice as well as workshops or briefings to assist with providing formal or informal advice to the government following consultation with the Chair. <li data-bbox="507 763 1497 875">• Council meetings will usually be held virtually (via video or teleconference) with no more than one face-to-face meeting per year (unless required). <li data-bbox="507 898 1497 1032">• Council members are expected to attend all meetings of the Council. Where members are unable to attend, they should provide reasonable notice of their absence as soon as possible to the Chair and Secretariat. <p data-bbox="507 1055 751 1088"><u>Role of the Chair</u></p> <p data-bbox="507 1108 1481 1176">The Chair has a key role in ensuring the Council effectively fulfills its purpose. The Chair will be responsible for:</p> <ol data-bbox="555 1198 1497 2013" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="555 1198 1497 1265">a) being the primary point of contact between the Council and the Secretariat; <li data-bbox="555 1288 1497 1355">b) providing advice to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council on the implementation of the Strategy; <li data-bbox="555 1377 1497 1411">c) representing the Council at public events; <li data-bbox="555 1433 1497 1467">d) ensuring the Council adheres to the Terms of Reference; <li data-bbox="555 1489 1497 1556">e) preparing the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Secretariat; <li data-bbox="555 1579 1497 1646">f) convening Council meetings, including the number, time and place; <li data-bbox="555 1668 1497 1780">g) ensuring that adequate time is allowed for the discussion of agenda items and opportunity is available for the contribution of all members; and <li data-bbox="555 1803 1497 1870">h) verifying the accuracy of minutes prior to publication and distribution. <li data-bbox="555 1892 1497 2013">i) The Chair is to preside at all meetings at which they are present. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Chair will nominate a Council member to preside. This nomination can be provided in advance, or on the meeting day. If the Chair is

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	<p>unable to nominate a Core member due to their absence, the Department can request a Core member to preside as Chair, in order for the meeting to occur.</p> <p>j) The Chair can also nominate a member to attend on their behalf in representing the Council at public engagements, should the Chair be unable to attend.</p> <p>k) The Chair is also a point of contact with state and territory disability minister advisory councils.</p> <p><u>Sub-groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where required, with the Chair’s approval, the Council may establish sub-groups dedicated to particular tasks to assist with the performance of the Council’s role. • Up to two sub-groups may be in operation at one time. These may include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time-limited thematic advisory groups. ○ Advisory groups to address any significant reviews or reports impacting the disability community, such as the review of the Strategy, the Disability Royal Commission or NDIS Review. ○ Advisory groups to align with the Strategy’s Targeted Action Plans. • Sub-group members will be determined by the Chair in agreement with Council members and the Minister. The terms of reference for sub-groups will be agreed by the Chair and formally recorded in the Council meeting communiques. Sub- groups are accountable to, and will report to, the Council. • Sub-groups are to be made up of Council members, with the Chair’s agreement. As members are already appointed to the Council, they do not require Ministerial agreement. <p><u>Duration of meetings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Council meetings are typically scheduled for two hours. Out of session workshops are scheduled for one hour. <p><u>Decision making</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is to work within a model of consensus decision making. A question or resolution proposed or arising at a meeting is determined by a consensus between members and is approved by the Chair. <p><u>Guest speakers, non-members and observers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the Chair’s prior approval, individuals and/or organisation representatives and/or other key stakeholders may be invited

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	<p>to attend a Council meeting to provide specific knowledge, expertise, and/or advice on particular issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict of Interest Declarations and Deed of Confidentiality forms will be issued for invited guests, where appropriate. Any non-members who are present at a Council meeting may be required to absent themselves during certain agenda items where a conflict of interest may arise. <p><u>Papers and records</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat will work with the Chair to set Council agendas. • The Council, assisted by the Secretariat, must keep the minutes of Council meetings and keep records of decisions made out of session. • Communiques will be developed for each formal meeting and will be published on the ADS webpages and shared with Australian, state, territory governments and representative bodies of local government for information.
Reporting and Evaluation of Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is to report on the objectives of its tasks in such a way as to enable the outcome to be evaluated. • Evaluation criteria may include, whether the outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meets the needs of the target audience, - is utilised by the target audience, - results in change, and - is supported by key stakeholders. • Ongoing review of processes to track performance, behaviours and effectiveness of boards/committees and councils.
Reporting	<p><u>Annual Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will provide Disability Ministers, through the relevant Commonwealth Minister, with an Annual Report on the outcomes of the Council's work from the previous year by 30 March the following year. • The Council will report on its Annual Work Plan and activities in such a way as to enable outcomes of its work to be assessed by Disability Ministers. The Report or a summary will be published on the Council's pages on the Strategy Hub after consultation and agreement by all Disability Ministers.

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	<p><u>Public reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has an online presence with dedicated web pages currently on the Strategy Hub on the Disability Gateway, which includes Council member names, photos and biographies. • An outline of non-confidential matters discussed at each Council meeting will be agreed by Council Chair and Secretariat. This outline will be published as a Communique as soon as possible following the meeting and made available in accessible formats on the Council's web pages as soon as practical. • The advice of the Council, as well as relevant submissions or feedback, may also be published on the Council's web pages following consideration by the Chair and in consultation with the Minister.
Secretariat Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will be supported by a Secretariat from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing from within the Australia's Disability Strategy Branch. • The Secretariat will assist the Council by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ liaising with the Chair to schedule meetings, establish and circulate agendas and papers, and follow up on agreed actions; ○ providing advice to Council members on procedures, practices and policy. ○ providing administrative, research and clerical support, including assisting the Council to maintain records of meetings and decisions. ○ preparing drafts of reports, Council papers, minutes and other documents as reasonably requested by the Chair. ○ consulting internally and externally to support the Council's role and purpose, including the engagement of any agreed external expertise, and managing Council correspondence and communication. ○ maintaining the Council's online presence, including the publication of key documents and the use of accessible formats. ○ managing the resources of the Council to enable their effective and efficient function. ○ maintaining a Declaration of Interests register. ○ ensuring all members are kept informed of issues and information relevant to the work of the Council.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ arranging venues and catering for meetings (including travel and transport). ○ verifying and arranging payment of appropriate sitting fees, associated travel costs and reimbursement of eligible expenses. ○ providing any other assistance as reasonably required by the Council; and ○ undertaking its work in a timely and accessible manner, in support of Council members and agreed timeframes for meetings and other deliverables. The Secretariat will aim to circulate papers or relevant materials for at least seven days prior to a meeting or a deadline for feedback or comment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact details for the Secretariat are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ADSAdvisoryCouncil@health.gov.au ○ 1800 334 505
Business between Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Chair may write and sign letters and conduct business between meetings on behalf of the Council. The Secretariat must be provided with copies of all correspondence to and from the Chair in relation to the work of the Council. ● Members are expected to advise the Chair and the Secretariat when they have completed agreed actions arising from previous meetings ● Any material that is considered to be of particular importance and requiring immediate action will be circulated by email.
Conflict of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Members of the Council must comply with the Conflict-of-Interest Declaration and Undertaking entered into upon their appointment. Council members will be required to inform the Secretariat of any conflicts of interest that may arise from their appointment to the Council. ● Under the Conflict-of-Interest Declaration and Undertaking, Council members have (among other things) an ongoing obligation to disclose all interests, pecuniary or otherwise, that may affect the impartial performance of their functions. ● Council members should make this disclosure to the Chair and Secretariat of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest during their tenure and in relation to discussions at individual meetings of the Council or any sub-group that is established. ● The Secretariat will maintain an up-to-date register of any conflicts of interest. The Secretariat will conduct a conflict-of-interest review

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	<p>on an annual basis to determine potential preclusions from representation on the Council.</p>
Remuneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the member's Engagement Deed, fees for Council members who are not employed by the Commonwealth, or a State or Territory Government will be paid by the Australian Government, using the rates set out in the most recent Remuneration Tribunal Determination in respect of part time public offices, and as amended from time to time, as a guide. • For Council members who are employed by the Commonwealth or a State or Territory Government while they remain a Council member, there will be no remuneration for their appointment as a Council member. • Requests for funding for support requirements and/or reasonable adjustments for Council members must be made to the Secretariat in writing prior to the expense and will be provided by the Australian Government as needed and if not paid for by another funding source. • The Secretariat will provide advice on remuneration and travel to members in the Strategy Advisory Council Member Guidelines and undertake periodic update of this guide, as required.
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the member's Engagement Deed, Council members travelling on official committee business are regarded as being on official government business and may receive travel allowance and reimbursement for additional expenses, including in accordance with the <i>Remuneration Tribunal (Official Travel) Determination 2025</i>, if applicable. • Where the committee member receives a travel allowance or reimbursement of travelling expenses from any other source for the same travel, the Department will not make a payment of travel allowance or expenses to the member. • Provided the official business is for a committee referenced in the relevant Remuneration Tribunal Determination, official travel time (as defined in the relevant tribunal determination) can be claimed if the travel is necessary and connected to the work of the committee. Please note official travel time cannot be claimed in respect of time spent travelling between an office holder's home and principal place of work. • Committee members attending an event where meals are provided will not receive the component of the travel allowance in respect of those meals. • Requests for travel costs for support requirements and/or reasonable adjustments for Council member travel must be made to the Secretariat in writing prior to the expense and will be

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	<p>provided by the Australian Government on an as needed and if not paid for by another funding source.</p>
<p>Review of Terms of Reference</p>	<p>A review of the Terms of Reference is to be undertaken annually. The Department will work together with the Chair and, if required, make any amendments to the Terms of Reference to ensure they remain consistent with the functions of the Council and Australia's Disability Strategy.</p> <p>Disability Ministers can also initiate changes to the Terms of Reference. Ahead of any change occurring, there will be discussions with the Chair.</p> <p>The outcomes of the annual review of the Terms of Reference will be provided to Disability Ministers for endorsement. Between annual reviews, the Chair is empowered to approve administrative changes to the Terms of Reference to ensure they remain current and appropriate.</p> <p>As part of its review of the Terms of Reference, the Council will assess whether its membership adequately reflects people with disability in Australia, including intersectional representation consistent with sector practice. This recognises that a person or group of people can be affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage due to their race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, class, religion, age, social origin and other identity markers.</p> <p>The Minister will be advised potential changes in membership composition, are recommended by the department, seeking agreement to make changes to the membership of the Council in response to this advice.</p> <p>The review will also seek the views of the Chair to consider the level of support provided to the Council in order for it to fulfill its purpose and role.</p>

Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council is supported by a Secretariat in the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. For further information, please contact:

ADSAdvisoryCouncil@health.gov.au.