



Creating  
an inclusive  
community  
together

# Summary of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031





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# Foreword

## ***Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031***

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

At its heart is a commitment to create an inclusive community.

The Strategy speaks to our national aspirations to enshrine and elevate the ideals of respect, inclusivity, and equality. This is why all governments – Australian, state, territory and local – are committed to delivering on its principles.

More than one in six Australians have a disability. More than one in six of the people who share our homes and workplaces, our streets and cities, our lives and hearts. They are our brothers and sisters, parents and children, colleagues and co-workers, partners and friends.

Our responsibility as governments, leaders and citizens is to build a society in which people with disability can participate as equal members with equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The success of this Strategy rests in a whole-of-community response, inclusive of business, the non-government and services sectors and individuals. Only by working together can we ensure all aspects of Australian life are inclusive and accessible.

The findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability will further advance the on-going development of the Strategy as a blueprint for a more inclusive and just society.

The Strategy acknowledges and respects the diversity of people with disability. It recognises the importance of tailoring actions to take into account this diversity.

Through extensive consultations and engagement, people with disability and the disability sector have shared their experiences and generously given their time to ensure the new Strategy is practical, effective and targeted.

The stronger policy focus on housing, safety, employment and community attitudes is the direct result of what people with disability nominated was important to them.

Above all, the Strategy is focused on interrelated outcome areas with tangible, achievable policy priorities. Rigorous measuring, evaluation and reporting of outcomes are inbuilt.

The Strategy builds on the significant work of the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 to establish a national approach to improving the lives of people with disability. The National Disability Insurance Scheme was the stellar achievement of this process.

The new Strategy is an aspirational road map pointing the way ahead. It represents our national commitment to enabling every Australian to meet their potential, to achieve, to have a fair go and to have real choices.

In *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*, we affirm the values of respect, inclusion and equality and espouse them as fundamental to our national identity.

# Vision and Purpose

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

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## Vision


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

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

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## Purpose

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

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

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

## Employment and Financial Security

**Outcome:** People with disability have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives

*Employment and financial security are central to improving outcomes for people with disability. This includes providing jobs and career opportunities, and having adequate income for people to meet their needs.*

### Policy Priorities

1. Increase employment of people with disability.
2. Improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.
3. Strengthen financial independence of people with disability.

## Inclusive Homes and Communities

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

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

### Policy Priorities

1. Increase the availability of affordable housing.
2. Housing is accessible and people with disability have a choice and control about where they live, who they live with, and who comes into their home.
3. People with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life.
4. The built and natural environment is accessible.
5. Transport systems are accessible for the whole community.
6. Information and communication systems are accessible, reliable and responsive.

## Safety, Rights and Justice

**Outcome:** The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected, and people with disability feel safe and enjoy equality before the law

*People with disability have the same rights as people without disability. Community acceptance of these rights is essential to maximising economic participation, social inclusion, safety and equality. Australia's Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes discrimination on the basis of disability unlawful. Despite this, people with disability continue to experience discrimination in their daily lives.*

### Policy Priorities

1. People with disability are safe and feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Policies, processes and programs provide better responses to people with disability who have experienced trauma.
3. Policies, processes and programs for people with disability promote gender equality and prevent violence against groups at heightened risk, including women and their children.
4. The rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and protected.
5. People with disability have equal access to justice.
6. The criminal justice system responds effectively to the complex needs and vulnerabilities of people with disability.



## Personal and Community Support

**Outcome:** People with disability have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities

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

### **Policy Priorities**

1. People with disability are able to access supports that meet their needs.
2. The National Disability Insurance Scheme provides eligible people with permanent and significant disability with access to reasonable and necessary disability supports.
3. The role of informal support is acknowledged and supported.
4. People with disability are supported to access assistive technology.



## Education and Learning

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

*Access to formal and informal education provides pathways to employment, financial independence, and enriched lives. Greater support to prepare children with disability for school, and to work with young people with disability throughout their education is required to improve attainment of secondary and tertiary qualifications.*

### **Policy Priorities**

1. Children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care.
2. Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability.
3. Improve pathways and accessibility to further education and training for people with disability.
4. People with disability have increased opportunities to participate in accessible and inclusive lifelong learning.

## Health and Wellbeing

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

*Good health and wellbeing, including mental health, are critical determinants of a person's quality of life. This is especially the case for people with disability. Greater support is needed to lift the health and wellbeing of people with disability including before, during and after disasters and public emergencies.*

### **Policy Priorities**

1. All health service providers have the capabilities to meet the needs of people with disability.
2. Prevention and early intervention health services are timely, comprehensive, appropriate and effective to support better overall health and wellbeing.
3. Mental health supports and services are appropriate, effective and accessible for people with disability.
4. Disaster preparedness, risk management plans and public emergency responses are inclusive of people with disability, and support their physical and mental health, and wellbeing.



## Community Attitudes

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

*Building positive community attitudes towards people with disability is central to achieving an inclusive society and improving all outcomes for people with disability. Addressing stigma, unconscious bias and lack of understanding of disability will contribute to positive daily experiences and recognition of the contribution that people with disability can make to society.*

### **Policy Priorities**

1. Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability.
2. Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability.
3. Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles.
4. Improved community attitudes to positively impact on Policy Priorities under the Strategy.



# Implementation— Delivering on the Outcome Areas

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

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## Intersectionality and Diversity

Intersectionality 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. Throughout the life of the Strategy, action taken to deliver on Policy Priorities will be implemented with an intersectional and diversity lens. This will ensure intersectional discrimination is proactively addressed and marginal groups are able to access tailored resources, services and supports.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Australian, state, territory and local governments, along with businesses, the community and non-government sector, all play a role in inclusion and support of people with disability.

All levels of government continue to play a role in providing mainstream and targeted services, supports and infrastructure systems to people with disability. Listing key government roles and responsibilities helps everyone to understand which level of government is responsible for the systems that may be used by people with disability.

In many cases, more than one level of government has some responsibility for a support or service system. However, in most cases one level of government has primary responsibility for delivery of a system. The table below gives some examples:

Australian Government	State and territory governments	Local governments	Responsibility is shared
NDIS* (administration)	Public hospitals	Accessible buildings	NDIS* (funding and shared governance) Mental health supports
Income support payments	Public, social and community housing	Municipal services	Disability advocacy services
Employment services	Public primary and secondary schools	Local parks and recreational facilities	Community infrastructure

An outline of key government roles and responsibilities is available on the Strategy's website. People who do not have access to the internet can contact the National Disability Information Gateway telephone helpline on 1800 643 787.

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



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## Guiding Principles

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

Therefore, the following Guiding Principles are based on Article 3 of the UN CRPD. Governments have agreed to use these Guiding Principles when developing policies, programs, services and systems. It is vital that business, the non-government sector and the broader community also consider how they can apply these principles.

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

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## Targeted Action Plans

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

The first five Targeted Action Plans focus on employment, community attitudes, early childhood, safety, and emergency management.

New Targeted Action Plans will be informed through engagement with people with disability.



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## Associated Plans

Associated Plans provide a more coordinated, long term approach to how governments work to improve outcomes for people with disability. All Associated Plans will clearly identify how they contribute to achieving the outcomes of the Strategy and will be published on the Strategy's website.

Associated Plans are focused on improving aspects of Australian life (e.g. the arts sector) or for a specific segment of the community (e.g. people with intellectual disability), and generally run for three to ten years.

Associated Plans will include the Strategy brand set out below.



Business and community organisations that want to show their commitment to the Strategy can use the logos below.



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## Outcomes Framework

The Outcomes Framework tracks the changes in outcomes that are happening over time for people with disability and helps drive action by ensuring visibility of whether outcomes are improving. This includes measuring the contribution key areas such as healthcare, education, employment and housing are making.

The annual Outcomes Framework reports and dashboard will show what progress is being made against each Policy Priority set out in the Strategy. Where available, data will be disaggregated. As data improves, the Outcomes Framework will be updated.

The Outcomes Framework is available on the Strategy's website.

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## Improving the Data

Governments are committed to working together and sharing data to support evidence-based change. Improving data will support the Outcomes Framework, evaluations and policy development. A comprehensive data strategy will be developed in 2022.

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## Reporting under the Strategy

All governments are committed to deliver comprehensive and visible reporting to improve accountability under the Strategy.

Reporting under the Strategy will complement the reporting under state and territory government and local government disability plans.

The following reports will be produced:

- **Targeted Action Plans Report** – This annual report will cover implementation progress, successes, and overall status. It will be coordinated by the Australian Government.
- **Outcomes Framework (Dashboard)** – This annual update will feature high-level data against the outcomes of the Strategy. It will be prepared by a third party data specialist.
- **Implementation Report** – This report produced every two years will include progress against disability initiatives at all levels of government. It will include consultations with people with disability, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and the broader community.
- **Evaluation reports** – The two Major Evaluation Reports will be produced in 2025 and 2029. The reports will be informed by an independent review into how well the Strategy is delivering improvements for people with disability. People with disability, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and key stakeholders will be consulted when preparing the report before it is provided to governments for endorsement.

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## Evaluating what we do

Policy, program and system evaluations are critical to understanding what is working well or needs improvement for people with disability. Evaluations will be able to show how policies, services and programs have contributed to the outcomes under the Strategy.

Governments will publicly list planned evaluations, publish evaluation findings, and refer to the Strategy's Evaluation Good Practice Guide Checklist when running evaluations.

By the end of 2022, a guide on how to involve people with disability in evaluation will have been developed by governments working together with people with disability.

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## Building the Evidence Base

Building the evidence base is a key part of the Strategy. The Strategy will support disability research and the translation of findings into actions that support the Strategy outcomes.

The National Disability Research Partnership (the Partnership) will be instrumental in building the evidence base. The Partnership promotes the use of evidence-informed policy and practice. The Partnership focuses on disability and mainstream services including education, health, housing and justice, and facilitates research.

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## The Governance Model

The Governance Model helps governments work together in a coordinated way to achieve the goals of the Strategy. This includes identifying and prioritising where actions should occur and it guides how governments will report on what progress has been made to improve the lives of people with disability. The Governance Model is available on the Strategy's website.

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## Engaging People with Disability

People with disability will play a central and active role in the Strategy over its life.

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

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## The Strategy's Roadmap

A simple overview of the key deliverables being produced under the Strategy is published in the Strategy's Roadmap on the Strategy's website. It shows when reports are due, and when consultations and other major activities will occur.

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## The Strategy's Website

All Strategy documents are available on the dedicated Strategy website, including the latest reports and announcements. The Strategy's website is at [www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads](http://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads).

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## Development of the Strategy

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

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

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## Role of the Australian Human Rights Commission and Advocacy

The Australian Human Rights Commission plays an important role in promoting and protecting the rights of people with disability. Disability advocacy also supports people with disability to safeguard their rights, experience equality and overcome barriers that can affect their ability to participate in the community.

