



2010–2020

National Disability Strategy

Summary Document

An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments

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This document was designed and printed by an Australian Disability Enterprise.

Foreword

All governments are committed to a national approach to supporting people with disability to maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens in Australian society.

The development of this National Disability Strategy is the first time in Australia's history that all governments have committed to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and to providing leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes.

This commitment recognises the need for greater collaboration and coordination by all governments, industry and communities to address the challenges faced by people with disability. A new approach is needed to guide policies and program development by all levels of government and actions by the whole community, now and into the future.

This Strategy builds on the significant work undertaken to date by all governments. The National Disability Agreement, signed by Commonwealth, state and territory governments in 2008, was an important first step towards a new, cooperative approach by Australian governments to supporting Australians with disability. By ratifying in 2008 the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Australia joined other countries in a global effort to promote the equal and active participation of all people with disability.

The National Disability Strategy will complement these and other actions, looking beyond the specialist disability sector and Australia's international obligations. It will focus our efforts towards achieving a society that is inclusive and enabling, providing equality and the opportunity for each person to fulfil their potential.

The National Disability Strategy is endorsed by:

The Hon. Julia Gillard MP, Prime Minister of Australia
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP, Premier of New South Wales
The Hon. Ted Baillieu MP, Premier of Victoria
The Hon. Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland
The Hon. Colin Barnett MLA, Premier of Western Australia
The Hon. Mike Rann MP, Premier of South Australia
The Hon. Lara Giddings MP, Premier of Tasmania
The Hon. Paul Henderson MLA, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory
Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory
Councillor Genia McCaffery, President Australian Local Government Association

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Inclusive and accessible communities

There are many barriers which must be broken down in the community before people with disability are full, active participating members of the community. Some are physical, some are social and some are attitudinal. We have to work on them all.

Outcome: People with disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

Policy Directions

- Increased participation of people with disability, their families and carers in the social, cultural, recreational and sporting life of the community.
- Improved accessibility of the built and natural environment through planning and regulatory systems, maximising the participation and inclusion of every member of the community.
- Improved provision of accessible and well designed housing with choice for people with disability about where they live.
- A public, private and community transport system that is accessible for the whole community.
- Communication and information systems to be accessible, reliable and responsive to the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.

Areas for future action

- 1.1 Improve access and increase participation of people with disability in sporting, recreational, social, religious and cultural activities whether as participants, spectators, organisers, staff or volunteers.
- 1.2 Support the development of strong social networks for people with disability.
- 1.3 Monitor adherence to and evaluate the effectiveness of the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010* and *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* and improve the accessibility of reports.
- 1.4 Promote the development of Disability Access Facilitation Plans by airlines and airport operators to improve communication between operators and passengers with disability.
- 1.5 All levels of government develop approaches to increase the provision of universal design in public and private housing in both new builds and modification of existing stock.
- 1.6 Improve community awareness of the benefits of universal design.
- 1.7 Promote universal design principles in procurement.
- 1.8 All governments adopt the mandated conformance levels for web accessibility as a baseline requirement to ensure more people with disability have access to online information and services.
- 1.9 Use the National Broadband Network as an enabling technology platform to deliver innovative services, communication and support for people with disability, their families and carers.

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Rights protection, justice and legislation

Australia is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and has a legislative framework protecting individual rights. But rights do not exist in a vacuum and only have meaning if they are able to be exercised in the real world. There are many barriers to overcome before the rights enshrined in the UN Convention are able to be realised in practice.

Outcome: People with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.

Policy Directions

- Increased awareness and acceptance of the rights of people with disability.
- Remove societal barriers preventing people with disability participating as equal citizens.
- People with disability to have access to justice.
- People with disability to be safe from violence, exploitation and neglect.
- More effective responses from the criminal justice system to people with disability who have complex needs and heightened vulnerabilities.

Areas for future action

- 2.1 Promote awareness and acceptance of the rights of people with disability.
- 2.2 Monitor and ensure compliance with international human rights obligations.
- 2.3 Develop strategies to reduce violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability.
- 2.4 Review restrictive legislation and practices from a human rights perspective.
- 2.5 Examine recommendations arising from the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration on migration treatment of disability, *Enabling Australia*.
- 2.6 Improve the reach and effectiveness of all complaint mechanisms.
- 2.7 Provide greater support for people with disability with heightened vulnerabilities to participate in legal processes on an equal basis with others.
- 2.8 Ensure people with disability have every opportunity to be active participants in the civic life of the community—as jurors, board members and elected representatives.
- 2.9 Support people with disability with heightened vulnerabilities in any contacts with the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on early identification, diversion and support.
- 2.10 Ensure that people with disability leaving custodial facilities have improved access to support in order to reduce recidivism. This may include income and accommodation support and education, pre-employment, training and employment services.
- 2.11 Support independent advocacy to protect the rights of people with disability.
- 2.12 Ensure supported decision-making safeguards for those people who need them are in place, including accountability of guardianship and substitute decision-makers.

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Economic security

People with disability and their carers have lower workforce participation rates and difficulty securing affordable, appropriate housing. Meaningful employment and adequate housing are not only important for economic security but also for physical and mental wellbeing, independence, and identity. Income support systems should also allow people to live with dignity. We need to remove barriers which prevent people with disability and their families from economic participation and secure housing.

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

Policy Directions

- Increased access to employment opportunities as a key to improve economic security and personal wellbeing for people with disability, their families and carers.
- Income support and tax systems to provide an adequate standard of living for people with disability, their families and carers, while fostering personal financial independence and employment.
- Improved access to housing options that are affordable and provide security of tenure.

Areas for future action

- 3.1 Improve employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability.
- 3.2 Reduce barriers and disincentives for the employment of people with disability.
- 3.3 Encourage innovative approaches to employment of people with disability such as social enterprises, or initiatives to assist people with disability establish their own small business.
- 3.4 Improve employment, recruitment and retention of people with disability in all levels of public sector employment, and in funded organisations.
- 3.5 Develop innovative approaches to future financial planning including private provision for people with disability, their families and carers.
- 3.6 Develop innovative options to improve affordability and security of housing across all forms of tenure.
- 3.7 At the review points of the National Affordable Housing Agreement and related National Partnership agreements, parties agree to consider including strategies consistent with the Strategy, to ensure they address the housing needs of people with disability.
- 3.8 Consider the implications for economic security for people with disability, their families and carers arising from investigation into a national long-term care and support scheme.

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Personal and community support

People with disability should have equal access to those services that are available to the whole community. For those people with disability who need specialist disability services to reach their goals or live their lives, we want to ensure they have access to flexible, quality services and supports that are responsive to their particular needs. We want people to get what they need, when they need it, so they can get out and about. We want people to get what they need to live an ordinary life.

Outcome: People with disability, their families and carers have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

Policy Directions

- A sustainable disability support system which is person-centred and self-directed, and which maximises opportunities for independence and participation in the economic, social and cultural life of the community.
- The disability support system to be responsive to the particular needs and circumstances of people with complex and high needs for support.
- Universal personal and community support services are made available to meet the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.
- The role of families and carers to be acknowledged and supported.

Areas for future action

- 4.1 Continue reform begun under the National Disability Agreement.
- 4.2 Consider new approaches to long-term disability care and support, including responses to the Productivity Commission Inquiry, which is due to provide its final report to Government on 31 July 2011.
- 4.3 Adopt sustainable funding models and service approaches that give information, choice and control to people with disability and that are flexible, innovative and effective.
- 4.4 Support the development of assistive technologies and more access to aids and equipment for people with disability.
- 4.5 Continue development of innovative and flexible support models for people with high and complex needs, including supported accommodation and community and family living approaches.
- 4.6 Improve access to timely, comprehensive and effective early intervention for people with disability.
- 4.7 Collaborate with providers of universal personal and community support services to improve access for people with disability.
- 4.8 Promote and sustain community support networks which provide information and support to families and carers.

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Learning and skills

An inclusive education system responsive to all abilities and learning styles will benefit all Australians, not simply those with disability. We need to make sure that the educational outcomes of people with disability catch up to those for people without disability, and ensure people with disability have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Outcome: People with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high quality education system that is responsive to their needs. People with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

Policy Directions

- Strengthen the capacity of all education providers to deliver inclusive, high quality educational programs for people with all abilities from early childhood to adulthood.
- Focus on reducing the disparity in educational outcomes for people with disability and others.
- Ensure that Government reforms and initiatives for early childhood, education, training and skill development are responsive to the needs of people with disability.
- Improve pathways for students with disability from school to further education, employment and life-long learning.

Areas for future action

- 5.1 Reduce barriers and simplify access for people with disability to a high quality inclusive education system including early learning, child care, school and further education.
- 5.2 At the review points of the National Education Agreement, the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership and other learning and skills-related National Partnerships, parties agree to consider including strategies, consistent with the Strategy, and performance indicators to ensure they address the needs of students with disability.
- 5.3 Develop innovative learning strategies and supports for students with disability which are accessible, reliable and responsive to strengthen their aspirations and enable them to reach their full potential.
- 5.4 Investigate options for reporting on educational outcomes of students with disability.
- 5.5 Identify and establish best practice for transition planning and support through all stages of learning and from education to employment.
- 5.6 Respond to the recommendations of the review of the Disability Standards for Education.
- 5.7 Ensure the Early Years Learning Framework, Australian Curriculum and national assessment processes incorporate the needs of students with disability within an inclusive education framework.
- 5.8 Promote leadership development for people with disability.

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Health and wellbeing

Good health and wellbeing is important for everyone. We want people with disability to have health outcomes as good as the rest of the community, to ensure they are able to enjoy long, healthy and productive lives. We want to make sure the health system can help achieve that goal.

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

Policy Directions

- All health service providers (including hospitals, general practices, specialist services, allied health, dental health, mental health and population health programs and ambulance services) have the capability to meet the needs of people with disability.
- Timely, comprehensive and effective prevention and early intervention health services for people with disability.
- Universal health reforms and initiatives to address the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.
- Factors fundamental to wellbeing and health status such as choice and control, social participation and relationships, to be supported in government policy and program design.

Areas for future action

- 6.1 Increase the representation of people with disability on universal health advisory bodies.
- 6.2 At the review points of the National Healthcare Agreement, other national health agreements and health-related National Partnership agreements, parties agree to consider including strategies consistent with the Strategy, and performance indicators to ensure they address the health needs of people with disability in all age groups.
- 6.3 Ensure a strong interface between disability services, Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals with strong links to local communities and health professionals.
- 6.4 Strengthen health care planning, training and the capacity of universal health care providers to diagnose and treat the health and co-morbid conditions of people with disability.
- 6.5 Strengthen the continuity, coordination and range of primary, multidisciplinary and sub-acute care available to meet the health needs of people with disability.
- 6.6 Address issues specific to people with disability as part of the national expansion of key public health strategies such as dental programs, nutrition and physical activity programs, mental health, drug and alcohol and sexual and reproductive health programs, so that they explicitly meet the needs of people with disability.
- 6.7 Ensure informal and supported decision makers are part of preventative, diagnostic and treatment programs where necessary and appropriate, always ensuring the rights of the individual are respected and protected.
- 6.8 Further develop the evidence base for the social and environmental determinants of health and ensure it informs the development and implementation of programs and policies.

