



Help shape the National Disability Strategy beyond 2020

Introduction

Ten years ago the launch of the first *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (the Strategy) paved the way to improve the lives of people with disability.

One in five Australians have a disability. The current Strategy is about creating a more inclusive society that enables Australians with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

It is also the main way Australia implements the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).

At the end of 2020, the current Strategy will come to an end.

Governments across Australia are working together to design a new strategy for national disability policy for 2020 and beyond. We are reaching out to the over four million people with disability and their families and carers to tell us what is important and how governments and communities can reduce barriers and better meet their needs.

A new strategy will need to include the areas important to people with disability, their families and carers, and respond to changes that have occurred over the past 10 years.

People with disability contribute to society in many ways providing valuable skills, knowledge and experience. A new strategy could build on existing reforms to support

increased participation in education and the workplace, social activities and all other aspects of community life.

As a community that shares the benefits of an inclusive society, we all have a responsibility to remove barriers to inclusion and promote the right of people with disability to equal access and opportunity.

Our vision is for all Australians with disability to experience equal rights, access and opportunity.

Help shape the future of Australia's disability policy for 2020 and beyond.

This is your opportunity to help shape the future of disability policy, including a national disability strategy for beyond 2020.

The strategy is for all Australians and we encourage everyone to have their say on priorities and actions.

You are invited to participate in one or more of the following ways:

- Complete a survey
- Attend a community workshop
- Participate in an online forum

Visit engage.dss.gov.au to get involved.

The current National Disability Strategy focuses on six outcome areas

1 Inclusive and accessible communities:

the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing; digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life.

2 Rights protection, justice and legislation:

protections such as how the Disability Discrimination Act is used and how complaints are managed; safety from violence, abuse or neglect; advocacy and making sure people with disability are represented; access to justice systems.

3 Economic security:

jobs, business opportunities, financial independence, adequate income support for those not able to work; and housing.

4 Personal and community support:

inclusion and participation in the community; person-centred care and support provided by disability services and mainstream services; and informal care and support.

5 Learning and skills:

early childhood education and care, schools, further education, vocational education; transitions from education to employment; and life-long learning.

6 Health and wellbeing:

health services, health promotion and the interaction between health and disability systems; and wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

What we know

The first National Disability Strategy was developed after consultation in 2008-2009. You can read more about that consultation in '[Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and Their Families in Australia](#)'.

Since 2010, all levels of government have reported on their [progress](#).

In 2018, the Social Policy Research Centre of the University of New South Wales conducted an [independent review](#) into how the current Strategy works. This review showed that while some things are working well and progress has been made, there is still room for improvement.

There was also a 2019 Productivity Commission [Review of the National Disability Agreement](#), the agreement between the Commonwealth and states and territories on the provision of disability services. The recommendations of this review made some suggestions for strengthening the national disability strategy in the future.

Progress reports and reviews have shown:

- There is room for improvement;
- The disability environment has changed;
- Barriers still exist for people with disability; and
- People with disability have diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The current Strategy is a good start, but more can be done

The six outcome areas of the current Strategy are appropriate and a good start. They are broad and cover the things people with disability, their families and carers have said are important in their lives.

However, the reviews say more needs to be done to make sure the strategy is delivered well, and that all governments are held accountable for the delivery of results through their policies, programs, services and laws.

The reviews also suggest a growing need to ensure a national strategy has a strong focus on making sure all Australians with disability have equal rights and access to everyday services like education, justice, employment, health, housing and transport.

The [Productivity Commission Review](#) suggested an additional outcome area for family and carers of people with disability should be considered.

Changes to the disability environment

The reviews identified there has been a lot of change to disability policy and service delivery since the current Strategy started. It is important to think about these changes as part of discussions about disability policy and a new strategy.

The reviews also confirm that the most significant change is the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS is changing the way people with permanent and significant disability in Australia get support. At full scheme it is estimated it will help around 475,000 Australians with disability, noting that in 2015 there were 4.3 million people reporting some form of disability.

Most recently, the Government announced the establishment of a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. This is likely to identify more specific areas to be included in a future strategy.

Other major changes over the past 10 years include: reforms to aged care, a new integrated carer support service and changes to the way disability employment services operate.

Barriers still exist for people with disability

"Because I have a disability that impacts on my verbal communication, I can't get a job. I have two university degrees yet cannot get employment because I am considered 'difficult to understand'."

The progress reports and reviews suggest that barriers still exist that can stop people with disability from enjoying their full rights and fulfilling their potential as equal citizens. Often these are found in not being able to access everyday services, such as education, justice, employment, health, housing and transport. Barriers commonly include negative attitudes, discrimination, being at risk of violence, feelings of isolation or exclusion, lack of awareness of supports or services, wait times for specialist and other

health supports, and inaccessibility of buildings and vital infrastructure or services, such as public transport.

The reviews highlight that everyone in Australia has a responsibility to help break down these barriers to equal opportunity for people with disability.

When people are included and able to participate in all aspects of life, it improves health and wellbeing and creates stronger communities. The reviews point to the need to raise awareness of the valuable contributions of all citizens to society.


Reflecting the diversity of disability

The reviews emphasise that people with disability do not have a singular identity. Like the rest of the Australian population, people with disability come from a range of backgrounds, beliefs and communities.

A person's age, gender identity, sexual orientation and cultural background can influence their views and experiences, including how they are treated by others. Some population groups may experience several levels of interconnected barriers and additional discrimination.

The current Strategy applies universally to all people with disability and does not focus on particular groups, other than recognising the need for a culturally appropriate framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

There is an opportunity for the next strategy to recognise some groups of people with disability are more likely to experience disadvantage or be at higher risk of discrimination or violence.



Making sure a national disability strategy is effective

Building an inclusive Australia is everyone's business. All levels of government as well as business and communities have a responsibility to improve opportunities and inclusion for people with disability and make sure the next strategy is effective, relevant and responsive.

The reviews have made a number of recommendations related to making sure different national policies, agreements and legislation work together. This includes the

National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Agreement, as well as other reforms and agreements about people with disability and carers.

They have also emphasized the importance of establishing measurable goals and concrete targets so we can see how and where things are improving.

What we want to know

We want to talk to people about the things that will make their life better, and what a national strategy for disability might look like and could achieve beyond 2020.

We would like to know:

- What's important to people with disability, their families and carers now and for the next 10 years and what will make a difference in their lives.
- Whether there have been changes in community attitudes and the way people with disability are treated and feel part of the community.
- What barriers people with disability are facing.
- What the opportunities are to break down barriers.
- How the new strategy could better reflect the diverse experiences of Australians with disability, including the particular barriers experienced by different population groups.
- How carers of people with disability could be recognised in a new strategy.
- How we can make sure the next strategy improves outcomes for people with disability, including what communities, organisations, workplaces and governments can do to create a more inclusive Australian society.
- How best to measure and report whether results are improving and how things are changing for the better
- What can governments, business and communities do to make this happen.

Areas for consultation

We want to think about this from the perspective of:

Human rights and being equal

- Self-determination, and choice and control
- Rights protection, safety and justice
- Legislation
- Public awareness
- Advocacy

Inclusion in all community life

- Inclusive and accessible communities
- Accessible buildings, facilities, transport and services
- Accessible information
- Accessible recreation and tourism
- Community support and community attitudes
- Recognition and support for specific groups and demographics

Independence and wellbeing

- Financial security
- Employment and careers
- Lifelong learning and skills
- Personal support services
- Health and wellbeing

Emerging areas

- Technology
- Interaction with the NDIS
- An ageing population
- Social enterprise and cooperatives
- Entrepreneurship and microenterprise - opportunities for people to start their own business

Notes
