

## **Outcomes Framework National Disability Strategy and NDIS DGI Submission**

**Date: Originally submitted via the hub portal on Friday 18 December**

**Note: Submission apparently not received via the portal.**

**Re-submitted via email on Monday 21 December.**

The Digital Gap Initiative (DGI) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

## **PART A About you**

### **About the Digital Gap Initiative (DGI)**

The Digital Gap Initiative (Ltd) (DGI) is a Not-for-profit (NFP) registered as a Charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC).

DGI is wholly run on a voluntary basis by members of the community who contribute their time, abilities, and energy to working towards a vision of an accessible and inclusive society in Australia and the world.

To this end, DGI's strategic focus is on advocating for legal and regulatory reforms, national and international standards, public policies, programs, social strategies, and new social impact thinking as systemic pathways to affirming digital accessibility as a fundamental and normative principle in our digital age.

Advocating for the principles enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is declared as a core object in DGI's Constitution.

### **Contact**

Gisele Mesnage – Founder and Coordinator

Phone 02 9799 5388

Email [info@digitalgap.org](mailto:info@digitalgap.org)

Address for correspondence 233/137 Victoria St, Ashfield, NSW 2131, Australia

### **About me**

Name: Gisele Mesnage

Email: [gisele@digitalgap.org](mailto:gisele@digitalgap.org)

Are you responding as an individual or as a representative of an organisation? I am representing an organisation

Name of organisation: Digital Gap Initiative (DGI)

Consent to publish submission : Yes

Which of the following statements best describes you

I am a person with disability

I am a disability advocate and work as a volunteer for a disability advocacy association

In which state or territory do you currently live: New South Wales

Which type of geographic location do you live in: A Capital city

Are you from a culturally or linguistically diverse background: Yes

## **PART B Improving outcomes for people with disability**

### **Question 1**

What matters most to measure and report on as we seek to achieve inclusive and accessible communities for people with disability?

#### **DGI Answer to Question 1**

In the view of the Digital Gap Initiative (DGI), there is currently a lack of measuring and reporting on how digital accessibility barriers impact the outcome of **inclusive and accessible communities for people with disability**. For example, the [Australian Digital Inclusion Index](#) since 2014 has collected some data on the inclusion of people with disability. But this has largely been measured against affordability and individual internet skills factors, as opposed to the barriers to inclusion presented by accessibility factors of the technological kind. Yet technologies that do not comply with such accessibility standards as the [WCAG 2.1](#) or the [AS EN 301 549 Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services \(2016 ...recently updated 2020\)](#) or the [ATAG](#) and other such technical documents constitute barriers to employment, education and to inclusion in the community. This is particularly manifest in this era of the “new normal” where reliance on technology has become central in every sphere of human society.

Today there is a nexus between access to the physical surrounds and access to the digital features of the environment. For example, when speaking of access to a building, accessible lift controls, accessible security systems and accessible directories need to be considered alongside physical access ramps or disability toilets etc.

### **Question 2**

What is most important to measure and report on as we seek to achieve economic security for people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 2**

Again, here it would be important to measure and report on the technological barriers that are preventing people with disability from securing and maintaining jobs, pursuing business entrepreneurship, academic careers or other pathways to economic security.

## **Question 3**

What is most important to measure and report on as we seek to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes for people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 3**

Digital accessibility also plays a role in health and wellbeing outcomes. This may include in a direct way such as in ensuring accessible telehealth services and health information generally, or indirectly by unlocking the accessibility barriers that lead to isolation and mental health issues .

## **Question 4**

What is most important to measure and report on as we seek to achieve rights, protection, justice, and legislation outcomes for people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 4**

This is a core factor of DGI's work. There is a lack of legal protection in the digital accessibility sphere. Even the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) does not directly cover the right to digital accessibility. Australian Consumer Law is also weak on this question. DGI believes there is a need to make digital accessibility normative across our legal framework to ensure the inclusion of people with disability in this digital era.

## **Question 5**

What is most important to measure and report on as we seek to achieve learning and skills outcomes for people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 5**

There are several factors relating to digital accessibility relevant to this question:

- Ensuring the accessibility of e-learning platforms and e-learning tools and documentation.
- Ensuring teachers are aware of the different needs of people with disability in the delivery of e-learning.
- Upskilling of ICT designers in the field of digital accessibility.
- Upskilling in digital accessibility of people working across a range of disciplines.
- Assistive technology (AT) training programs for trainers and users.

## **Question 6**

What is most important to measure and report on as we seek to achieve personal and community support outcomes for people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 6**

IN this outcome too digital accessibility plays a role. For example, in making sure that platforms for hiring support workers are fully accessible. Also, for self-managed NDIS participants, there are no accessible budget tracking tools on the market.

## **Question 7**

The National Disability Strategy and NDIS Outcomes Frameworks will track progress over time to determine whether the lives of people with disability are improving. Reporting against outcomes will help to inform where to prioritise and target investments.

**How often would you like to see progress against the outcomes for people with disability in the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme reported?**

## **DGI Answer to Question 7**

DGI suggests that annual reporting would be good practice.

# **PART C Additional information**

## **Question 8**

Is there anything else that you think should be considered when we are monitoring and measuring the impact of activities on people with disability?

## **DGI Answer to Question 8**

Overall, the importance of digital accessibility across all the outcomes needs to have a much higher profile. In a world where digital technology is evermore part of everyday life, ensuring that digital products and services are accessible is critical. Also ensuring that digital accessibility is part of the formation across ICT and all other disciplines. That people with disability have access to the technology they need. This means not only assistive technologies (AT) but also accessible mainstream technologies.

In this respect, manufacturers and distributors of accessible mainstream technologies should receive tax and other incentives and should have access to the NDIS market, by making accessible mainstream technologies available to NDIS participants.

Also, the government should provide funds and grants to companies to for accessible audits, user testing and remedial work to ensure websites, apps and software are designed with accessibility in mind.

**The government must ensure digital accessibility skilling is part of ICT training and also training in other disciplines and must also institute accreditation for digital accessibility skilling.**

**Our legal framework must be expanded to ensure digital accessibility is normative.**

**The government must convene round table consultations to evolve these ideas for digital inclusion.**

Thank you.

