



Media Release | 3 December 2021

New Australian Disability Strategy Welcomed By Leading Disability Representative Organisations

Australia's peak disability representative organisations have lent their support to the new *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031* (the strategy) which was released today in Canberra by the Australian Government to coincide with the International Day Of People With Disability.

The new strategy – which replaces and builds on the previous *National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020* – is Australia's national disability policy framework and sets out a plan for governments and stakeholders across Australia to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia over the next ten years.

For the first time, the strategy's implementation and monitoring will be overseen by a government-appointed council comprising people with disability from the community and disability sector (these members are listed below).

The strategy – which has been endorsed at the highest level by the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association – was developed in consultation with community members and stakeholders across the disability sector over the last two years, including a range of disability representative organisations (please see below for the list organisations endorsing this media release).

These organisations welcome the new strategy and the new features it contains to drive action and change over the coming decade. The organisations all look forward to working with community members, governments, industries and other stakeholders to maximise its value and impact.

Women With Disabilities Australia CEO, Carolyn Frohmader: "*Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031* is the key mechanism to implement the rights of people with disability in Australia as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Australia is a signatory.

"As such, it sets the standards to which our country must hold itself to ensure the human rights, belonging, contribution, potential and diversity of all people with disability are recognised, respected and celebrated. And it's the foundation which underpins the development, implementation and evaluation of legislation, regulations, programs, services, initiatives and other activities which impact on the rights, health and wellbeing of people with disability. So it's of fundamental importance to the future of people with disability in Australia.

"We commend all partners and stakeholders – including governments – for the collaborative and transparent way the strategy has been developed to ensure it is truly representative of the voices of people with disability. The engagement process has been a great example of how policies can be designed with, not for, people with disability to deliver practical outcomes that people with disability want."



People With Disability Australia CEO Sebastian Zagarella: “We look forward to working with all relevant governments and stakeholders across Australia in relation to the implementation of the strategy, especially in regard to the role that disability representative organisations will have in terms of monitoring and evaluation.”

“Indeed, we anticipate that the strategy’s increased focus on measuring outcomes and its commitment to improving data will help drive and deliver important change across areas such as housing, justice, transport, health and education.”

First Peoples Disability Network Australia CEO Damian Griffis: “We welcome the appointment of an advisory council of which all members are people with disability, including representation for our First Nations community. This is a key element to our people having their voices heard. I look forward to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure clear alignment between Australia’s Disability Strategy and Closing the Gap so that First Nations people with disability are able to take up their rightful place in an inclusive Australian community.”

National Ethnic Disability Association Dwayne Cranfield: “We welcome the new strategy and the opportunity it represents to reinforce and articulate our rights and to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is fully integrated into all aspects of Australian policy and legislation.”

Children And Young People With Disability Australia CEO Mary Sayers: “The focus of Australia’s Disability Strategy on the rights of children and young people with disability is welcome, with a strong focus on participation in early childhood education and ensuring inclusive education for students with disability in their local school. Cross government action to ensure children and young people with are included from the start will have positive lifelong benefits.”

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations CEO Ross Joyce: “We look forward to supporting the implementation of an energetic strategy that will flex and adapt to the needs of Australia in the 21st century. We call on governments – national, state and territories – to work together to ensure the goals of the strategy are realised and that no Australians with disability get left behind in the decade ahead.”

Inclusion Australia CEO Catherine McAlpine: “As peak disability representative organisations, we support the new strategy as a dynamic document for ensuring the people and communities we serve have every opportunity to thrive in their own ways and on their own terms. We also support the provision of a clearer focus on the monitoring and evaluation of the goals that the strategy sets out.”

Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) CEO Mary Mallett: “Disability advocates welcome this robust new strategy that has been agreed to by all governments and which will be used by advocates as they work to support people with disability who are battling discrimination or abuse or experiencing harm.”

The members of the Advisory Council are:

Chair

- Dr Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission. (New South Wales)



Members

- Carolyn Frohmader, Executive Director of Women With Disabilities Australia (Tasmania)
- Jane Spring Director of Sydney University Sport & Fitness and of the Paraplegic Benefit Fund (New South Wales)
- Liz Reid AM, Executive Officer of YouthWorX NT (Northern Territory)
- Seriaiko Stephen, Board Director, First Peoples Disability Network Australia (Queensland)
- Natalie Wade Founder and Principal Lawyer, Equality Lawyers (South Australia)
- Cindy Liu, Founder and Co-chair of Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network's Youth Disability CaLD Collective (Victoria)

Special Adviser

- Kathy Hough, Chair of Council for Regional Disability Services in WA and Far North Community Services CEO (Western Australia)

The following organisations endorse this media release:

- People with Disability Australia (PWDA)
- Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
- Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
- First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)
- Inclusion Australia (IA)
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)

- Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Disability Council NSW
- Down Syndrome Australia
- Imagine More
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- Queensland Advocacy Incorporated
- Tasmanian Disability Education Reform Lobby
- Western Sydney Community Forum

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