

NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY: BEYOND 2020 - WEBINAR REPORT



in partnership with

Webinar Panel Discussion: *National Disability Strategy - Beyond 2020*

This two-hour event was organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission and the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health, and hosted by The Social Deck via Zoom webinar on 24 September 2020.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Australia's first National Disability Strategy, 2010-2020, represents a commitment by the governments of Australia and all States and Territories to a national approach to supporting people with disability to maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens in Australian society.¹ The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 is also a framework for Australia to meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).² Development of the first National Disability Strategy (NDS) was informed by extensive consultation conducted by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, reported in *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*.³ The first NDS is structured around six broad outcome areas:

1. Inclusive and accessible communities
2. Rights protection, justice and legislation
3. Economic security
4. Personal and community support
5. Learning and skills
6. Health and wellbeing

The launch of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2013, and its progressive rollout across Australia from 2016 to 2020, was a major achievement and a major change to the disability policy landscape during the term of the first NDS. The importance of this advance is widely acknowledged. However, the NDIS is primarily a scheme that delivers individual funding packages to an estimated 500,000 Australians who have permanent and significant disability, representing around 11% of the approximately 4.4 million Australians with disability. More broadly, the aim of the first NDS was to improve the lives of all people with disability, their families and carers, and to provide leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to conduct a review of implementation of the first NDS to inform the development of a new NDS. Findings documented in the review report include a list of actions identified by stakeholders to help to more effectively achieve the goals of the NDS.⁴

1 Commonwealth of Australia (2011). 2010–2020 National Disability Strategy. An initiative of the Council of Australian Governments, Commonwealth of Australia.

2 United Nations. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available from: www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

3 Deane K (2009). *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*. National Disability Strategy Consultation Report prepared by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.

4 Davy L, Fisher KR, Wehbe A, Purcal C, Robinson S, Kayess R, Santos D (2019). Review of implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020: Final report. Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.

The Australian Government is leading the development of a new National Disability Strategy for beyond 2020. A first stage of consultations was held in 2019, with around 3,000 people with disability, their families and carers, advocacy organisations, peak bodies and service providers taking part. A second stage of consultations is now underway. In July 2020, DSS released the National Disability Strategy position paper⁵ and is welcoming feedback on governments' proposals for the next NDS, which include:

- the vision, outcome areas and guiding principles for the new Strategy
- a stronger focus on improving community attitudes
- clearly describing roles and responsibilities of governments and the community
- regular public reporting that shows whether the key outcomes for people with disability are improving
- developing targeted action plans to drive better implementation
- how people with disability can be engaged in the delivery and monitoring of the next Strategy.

Easy Read, Auslan and language translations of the position paper are available on the website: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/nds-stage2-consultation/>

The closing date for online submissions for the stage 2 consultations is 31 October 2020.

The new NDS provides an opportunity for all levels of government in Australia to create meaningful opportunities for people with disability, recognise and respect human rights, and ensure all Australians' needs are considered now and in the future. It is important that people with disability provide comment and input to ensure this occurs.

This Webinar Panel Discussion was timed to discuss the critical issues and what needs to be reflected in the new NDS. It had three objectives:

- To encourage people to make submissions on the National Disability Strategy Position Paper (July 2020).
- To promote the importance of research, evidence and data when formulating disability policy.
- To encourage all members of the community to take an interest in the broad range of policies affecting people with disability now and in the future.

WEBINAR STRUCTURE

The webinar was facilitated by Dr Ben Gauntlett, Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission. There were three live panels during which invited speakers responded to questions about the NDS posed by Dr Gauntlett. In addition, several speakers provided pre-recorded video contributions.

5 Australian Government Department of Social Services (2020). National Disability Strategy Position Paper. July 2020. Available from: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/nds-stage2-consultation/>

Collectively, the nature of expertise contributed by the speakers spanned lived experience of disability, work in Disabled Person's Organisations and disability advocacy organisations, and engagement in disability research and disability policy.

More than 800 people registered to attend the webinar. Participants were invited to contribute their views on a number of questions via Mentimeter (an online engagement tool) during the course of the webinar. A summary of the participants' responses is presented in the Appendix to this report. Captions were available via the Zoom webinar and a web link, and an Auslan interpreter was visible throughout the webinar.

A [recording](#) of the webinar, and a transcript of Dr Gauntlett's opening address can be accessed via the [AHRC website](#).

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn is Head of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Strengthening Rehabilitation Capacity in Health Systems, Co-Director of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence Disability and Health, and Disability and Inequity Stream Leader at the Centre for Disability Research and Policy at the University of Sydney. Her research focuses upon developing health and social policy and practice solutions to enable disabled individuals and their families to fully participate in our society.

Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald is New South Wales's first Ageing and Disability Commissioner, tasked with protecting adults with disability and older people. Commissioner Fitzgerald served on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse from 2013 to 2017. He has also spent time as Productivity Commissioner and Community and Disability Services Commissioner. As Productivity Commissioner, Commissioner Fitzgerald reviewed the National Disability Agreement, which was entered into in 2009 by the Australian and State and Territory Governments to promote cooperation, enhance accountability and clarify roles and responsibilities of governments.⁶

Professor Karen Fisher is a Professor at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Social Policy Research Centre. Her research interests are the organisation of social services in Australia and China; disability and mental health policy; inclusive research and evaluation; and social policy process. Professor Fisher was involved in a Review of the National Disability Strategy in 2019 for the UNSW Social Policy Research Centre.⁷

The **Hon Senator Anne Ruston** is the Minister for Families and Social Services, having held that position since 2019. Senator Ruston is from South Australia and has served as Senator for South Australia since 2012, having previously been an Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

Rosemary Kayess is a Senior Research Fellow at UNSW Social Policy Research Centre, Academic

6 Productivity Commission (2019). Review of the National Disability Agreement, Study Report. Canberra, Productivity Commission.

7 Davy L, Fisher KR, Wehbe A, Purcal C, Robinson S, Kayess R, Santos D (2019). Review of implementation of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020: Final report. Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.

Lead Engagement of UNSW's Disability Innovation Institute, and was awarded the 2019 Human Rights Medal by the Australian Human Rights Commission. She was elected to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018 and was appointed vice-chair in March 2019.

Paula Tesoriero is the Disability Rights Commissioner at the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and the Chair of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions Working Group for Persons with Disability. Paula also is a Paralympic gold medallist in track cycling.

Professor Anne Kavanagh is Co-Director and Lead Investigator of the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health, Academic Director at the Melbourne Disability Institute, University of Melbourne, and Chair in Disability and Health at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health. Her major research focus is on the health of people with disability. She focuses on how social determinants such as employment, housing, poverty and education influence the health of people with disability. Her work identifies potential policy solutions to reduce disability-related socio-economic and health disadvantage.

Edward Santow is the Human Rights Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission and has held that role since August 2016. Ed was previously the CEO of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. As Human Rights Commissioner, Ed has carriage of the Australian Human Rights Commission's Human Rights and Technology Project for which a Discussion Paper was released in December 2019 and includes a proposal (Proposal 25) for policy action to improve access to digital and other technologies for people with disability as a priority in the next National Disability Strategy.⁸

Mary Sayers is the CEO of Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), Australia's national peak body that represents children and young people with disability. CYDA's purpose is to advocate systemically at the national level for the rights and interests of all children and young people with disability living in Australia, as individuals, and as members of a family and their community. Among its many activities, CYDA convened the first National Young People with Disability Summit, September 29 - October 3. During 2020, Mary has chaired COVID-19 National Inclusive Education Roundtables, convened by the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education.

Damian Griffis is the CEO of First Peoples Disability Network and was the co-lead of the civil society delegation for Australia's Second and Third Periodic Reviews before the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Geneva in September 2019. Damian is a descendant of the Worimi people of the Manning Valley in NSW. In 2014, he won the Tony Fitzgerald (Community Individual) Memorial Award at the Australian Human Rights Awards.

8 Australian Human Rights Commission (2019). Human Rights and Technology. Discussion Paper. December 2019. Sydney, Australian Human Rights Commission.

KEY THEMES AND INSIGHTS

The key themes and insights below are drawn from the presentations of all the panellists and the responses provided by Webinar participants via the online engagement tool.

Reflections on the first National Disability Strategy:

The vision and outcome areas of the first NDS are broadly supported. The six outcome areas were informed by engagement with people with disability, are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), and remain of crucial importance. The first NDS changed the national discourse on disability and provided an advocacy platform. It has stood the test of time and is a sound foundation on which to build.

However, the first NDS has not been successful in bringing real improvements for people with disability. Too little has changed. Many people with disability still experience discrimination and barriers to inclusion and participation. There has been little reduction in inequalities between people with and without disability in many aspects of life.

The following were identified as issues that should receive more focus in the next NDS:

- Better employment outcomes for people with disability
- Combatting abuse, exploitation and neglect
- Housing access, safety, affordability, and design
- Transport
- Accessible digital information
- More inclusive design of products and services that rely on new technology
- Commitment to high quality, inclusive education
- Disability inclusion in emergency preparedness and response
- Attitudes towards disability: at personal, organisational and structural levels of society
- Breaking down systems and structures that segregate and promote ableism
- A strategy for First Nations People with disability within the broader NDS
- Explicit recognition of children and young people with disability
- Gender equity
- Diversity and intersectionality, including for people living in rural and remote areas
- Acknowledgement of carers and family members of people with disability

There must be co-design and co-production from the start. People with disability must have a strong voice and be in key leadership roles.

The NDS must be voiced and led by disabled people. People with disability must be in leadership and decision-making roles, and embedded within policy-making processes at every level of government. There is a need to amplify the voices of the full diversity of people with disability in the national discourse.

The NDS will only be effective if the Strategy and its implementation are co-designed by people with disability. Meaningful, inclusive processes must be in place from the outset. It will be essential to listen to people with disability and DPOs, to learn from their experiences and insights, and to harness their ideas and innovations in order to come up with practical, effective solutions. The

full range of people with disability must be involved, including people who need support with communication, children, people with less visible disability, and people with disability who are also members of other marginalised groups. People with disability must be involved right at the top, in governance roles, and at every level. People with disability must be facilitated to have a voice and get involved in their local area.

Respect is central to a truly inclusive society.

Respect is fundamental. As a society, we must move away from the long-held deficit approach, under which the rights of people with disability have been denied or diminished. A human rights approach must be wholeheartedly adopted and integrated throughout society, so that the humanity and human rights of people with disability are fully recognised, valued and upheld. The lived expertise of people with disability must be fully recognised and respected. Effective attitude change will require long-term commitment and must be community-based and led by people with disability. True inclusivity will achieve attitude change, and attitude change will foster inclusivity. Laws, systems and structures affect attitudes, and addressing these should be a focus. It is essential to break down systems that segregate people with disability.

To be effective, there must be engagement and commitment to action across all stakeholders.

It is essential to achieve strong cross-portfolio commitment and expertise. The NDS must be 'plugged in' to mainstream policy. Health, housing, transport, tax, justice, tourism, infrastructure, national parks and wildlife, and many other policy areas all impact the lives people with disability, as do mainstream women's, Indigenous, children and youth, and multicultural policies. The NDS must deliver clarity on roles and responsibilities for Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, service providers, not-for-profit organisations, and the community more broadly. Collaboration across sectors is critical. Success will rely on all parties working together and sharing a common message.

The wider community has a crucial role to play.

The next NDS should elevate the importance of broader community support, engagement and mobilisation to achieving the vision of an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal members of the community. Raising awareness of the NDS at a grassroots level is a starting point. The Strategy should be easy to understand, with communication strategies implemented to ensure that everyone is aware of the rights of people with disability. Changing community values and attitudes to embrace diversity and impairment is fundamental to addressing discrimination, and improving accessibility and equity for people with disability. Leadership at the local level by people with diverse lived experience will be an important way to achieve this. Increased visibility of people with disability participating in all areas of life, including in high-level public and private positions, will be a powerful means of changing attitudes and gaining the support of all Australians for achieving the vision of the NDS.

Monitoring, reporting and accountability are essential for an effective NDS.

To bring about real change, the next NDS must be supported by a rigorous system of independent oversight and reporting, including a strong outcomes framework that is reported on in a timely way to track progress.

Key ingredients for accountability include:

- An action plan, with concrete actions;
- Measurable goals and targets;
- An evaluation framework informed by a disability-inclusive research agenda and evidence base;
- Monitoring both outcomes and the impact of specific policies across key outcome areas;
- Robust data, including data on both mainstream and disability-specific services;
- Regular, public, transparent, high-profile reporting, e.g., annual report to parliament delivered by the Prime Minister or Premier;
- Ongoing government commitment to improving the evidence base to inform action (e.g., developing the National Disability Data Asset and funding the National Disability Research Partnership);
- Working in partnership with the research community.

The next NDS must ensure that intention is translated into action and outcomes.

Leadership, incentives and enforcement are all needed to ensure the NDS delivers on its vision. Both carrots and sticks will be necessary to translate intention into action. Independent oversight will be essential.

The NDS must draw upon innovations and community-based solutions. It must seek to build long-term partnerships between communities, governments and NGOs – short-term, project-based thinking will not deliver the changes needed.

Key ingredients for an effective NDS will include:

- A genuine commitment to co-design and co-production at every level, from the outset;
- A high-level focal point in government, high-level endorsement, and NDS champions within government departments;
- Clearly-articulated roles for all players, across all levels of government and non-government organisations;
- Concrete actions and funded commitments;
- Legislated, enforceable obligations;
- Standards accompanied by accreditation mechanisms;
- Mechanisms to hold services accountable for ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.

OPENING AND INTRODUCTION

Dr Ben Gauntlett welcomed participants and speakers, on behalf of the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health and the Australian Human Rights Commission. He then invited Mr Damian Griffis of First Peoples Disability Network to do an Acknowledgement of Country.

Mr Damian Griffis acknowledged the Traditional Owners on whose lands participants were gathered, and acknowledged Elders past, present and emerging. Mr Griffis was speaking from Awabakal and Worimi country, and noted that participants were joining from Gadigal country, Wurundjeri country, Ngambri and Ngunnawal country, Larrakia and Kurna country, and Noongar country, to name just a few. Mr Griffis also made special acknowledgement of two founding Elders, recently lost. Vale Lester Bostock and Aunty Gayle Rankine

Throughout the webinar, other speakers also acknowledged the Traditional Owners and paid their respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Dr Gauntlett gave the following Introductory Address:

Thank you Damian and thank you to everyone who has joined us for today's discussion. I'd like to also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to Elders past and present. We have more than 800 registered attendees, which is an excellent turnout.

Our event today has three objectives. First, to encourage people to make submissions on the National Disability Strategy Position Paper (July 2020). Second, to promote the importance of research, evidence and data when formulating disability policy. Third, to encourage all members of the community to take an interest in the broad range of policies affecting people with disability now and in the future. Not just the 4.4 million Australians who presently have a disability; not just the people with disability and their families and support networks; everyone. As the National Human Rights institution, the Australian Human Rights Commission is deeply interested to ensure we have a National Disability Strategy that is reflective of human rights considerations and acknowledges our community values of diversity and inclusion. To properly do this, we need all levels of government to be aware of the importance of objective evidence, data and accessible information for people with disability. Therefore, we are holding this event jointly with the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health, which is a cross university collaboration that aims to gather the evidence needed to guide social and health policy reform for people with disability in Australia.

We have sought to keep our panels and intervening videos short and with a lot of presenters to ensure a variety of views.

Today our first panel will look at what the previous National Disability Strategy will be remembered for and whether we should adopt a similar approach in the future. Our second panel will consider what is the role of National Disability Strategies in Australia and overseas. Finally, our third Panel will look at specific issues under the National Disability Strategy.

Ten years ago, when all levels of government were considering a National Disability Strategy following the Shut-Out report, the issues were different but the underlying concern of the rights, opportunity and well-being of people with disability was the same. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had just been signed and ratified by Australia, the National Disability Insurance Scheme was about to commence, and questions existed whether our laws protecting the human rights of people with disability were fit-for-purpose.

Ten years later, a considerable amount of effort has gone into reviewing the previous Strategy and consulting as to the new Strategy. This has led to the development of a Position Paper, which seeks to consider the good aspects of the previous Strategy and learn from some of the challenges faced.

The Position Paper seeks to follow (with minor amendment) the previous National Disability Strategy's approach concerning its vision and outcome areas. The "vision" suggested is, "[a]n inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal members of the community" and the "Outcome areas" being: first, economic security; second, inclusive and accessible communities; third, rights protection, justice and legislation; fourth, personal and community support; fifth, learning and skills; and, finally, health and wellbeing.

However, the Position Paper also seeks to make improvements in the new Strategy by relying upon guiding principles, an increased focus on community attitudes, strengthening accountability (including by clearly describing roles and responsibilities, monitoring outcomes and reporting), better promoting and communicating the Strategy (through Targeted Action Plans and an Engagement Plan) and focusing upon Workforce development.

I acknowledge it is a stressful time for people with disability in Australia. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused understandable unrest with many people with disability questioning how they are perceived in society. There are also significant concerns with reforms in the NDIS and the issues raised by the role of people with disability in the Disability Royal Commission. But the Strategy is, in a sense a critical piece of infrastructure, upon which other policies build off. We need to get it right and we need people with disability to be central to its implementation and assessment for the next decade. Please constructively comment. I hope today encourages you to do so.

PANEL ONE: A REFLECTION ON THE LAST NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

Kirsten Deane – Campaign Director, Every Australian Counts

Pre-recorded response to the question *‘What will the last National Disability Strategy be remembered for?’*

The first NDS was the first time that governments all around Australia came together and articulated a vision for people with disability in this country and promised to do their bit to help make that vision happen. When reading both the first NDS and the ‘Shut Out’ report it is striking how far we still have to go. Many people with disability still experience the kind of discrimination and barriers that are described in the ‘Shut Out’ report, and the gap in life outcomes between people with disability and those without disability is still too large. I hope that this next NDS starts to change that picture.

Dr Gauntlett welcomed and introduced the three panellists. The following questions were asked in turn of each panellist:

The Vision and Outcome Areas suggested in the Position Paper are very similar to the previous National Disability Strategy. What are your views on adopting a similar approach in the next disability strategy?

List 3 things you think the next National Disability Strategy needs to focus on or achieve in the next 10 years.

What was best thing that occurred under previous NDS?

Their responses are summarised below.

Professor Gwynnyth Llewellyn – Co-Director CRE-DH, University of Sydney

The first NDS has brought Australia to a new way of thinking about people with disability, centred on a human rights imperative, a social imperative, and an economic imperative, to ensure the full inclusion of people with disability as active participants in every aspect of Australian life. Research evidence shows that little progress has been made over the past ten years in reducing inequalities in many areas of life, such as labour force participation and exposure to violence. Consultation in 2019 to help shape the new NDS found that less than half of the participants knew of the existence of a National Disability Strategy. Without robust mechanisms to measure the Strategy’s aims, it is not possible to monitor whether progress has been made. Evidence is needed to realign policies and initiate new actions, to broadcast good news and to reward effort. However, the vision and outcome areas of the previous NDS remain relevant, and to change course could reduce the momentum we now have, underpinned by the building blocks of the first NDS.

Three things the next NDS should focus on:

- Children and young people: they are remarkably absent from the first NDS. They are not just ‘mini-adults’. The particularities of childhood and young adulthood need to be recognised. Children and young people with disability will be the judges of the success of the next NDS.

- Disability inclusion. Australia enforces disability inclusion in other countries, in the context of Australian aid efforts, but not at home. Disability inclusive processes should be mandated. Involving people with disability from the ‘get go’ is vital.
- Disability inclusion in emergency preparedness and response. Engagement with the emergency management sector is necessary. In times of emergency, communities must come together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone, including people with disability. We can draw on lessons learnt in 2020 from the bushfires and COVID-19.

The best thing that occurred under the previous NDS: It has changed the discourse about disability in Australia. Having the document itself is valuable, even though not everyone is aware that it exists. As a researcher, people are no longer surprised that you want to talk about disability equality and inclusiveness. The NDS has provided the platform from which to advocate the need for a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, and the basis for the Productivity Commission to continue to say ‘we need to do better’.

Robert Fitzgerald – NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner

The vision of the first NDS remains basically sound. It is a document that is largely supported by people with disability around the nation. However, despite great expectations, not much has changed. As highlighted by the Productivity Commission review,⁹ the effectiveness of the first NDS suffered because of a lack of timely public reporting and evaluation of initiatives. To bring about real change, the next NDS must be supported by a rigorous system of independent oversight and reporting, including a strong outcomes framework that is reported on in a timely way. We need to use a number of different levers and efforts to make it work.

One of the statutory functions of the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission is to review the performance of the NSW Government in implementing its obligations under the NDS, and a position paper on this is about to be released.¹⁰

In relation to the outcome areas, key issues that should be addressed more directly in the next NDS are: safeguarding people with disability and calling out abuse, exploitation and neglect; acknowledging the role of and providing support for carers and family members of people with disability, as a key means of reducing the level of abuse and neglect experienced by people with disability; and housing access, safety, affordability, and design. Learnings from COVID-19 over recent months include that we all matter as human beings and as citizens, not just as consumers or users of services. Therefore, the vision statement should include the word ‘citizens’. Also, the importance of broader community inclusion, engagement and mobilisation should be elevated in the new NDS.

9 Productivity Commission (2019). Review of the National Disability Agreement, Study Report. Canberra, Productivity Commission.

10 Ageing and Disability Commission (2020). Position Paper: Establishing a Standing Review to Monitor, Assess and Report on the implementation of the National Disability Strategy in NSW. September 2020.



Three things the next NDS should focus on:

- **Housing.** It is extraordinary that the current National Housing Agreement does not mention disability. Accessible, affordable, appropriate housing design is critical for people with disability, especially in the context of the increasing level of disability associated with ageing and Australia's ageing population.
- **Community connectedness.** It is essential to create safe environments where people live, and communities themselves need to be part of the solution. The concept of community inclusion goes well beyond the notion that people with disability live without discrimination.
- **Co-design by people with disability of the new NDS and its implementation.** Without meaningful co-design and oversight by people with disability, the strategy will not make any difference.

The best thing that occurred under the previous NDS: The first NDS was informed by intelligent discussion 10 years ago. It has stood the test of time and provides a sound foundation to move forward – this is something not often seen in public policy, and is a credit to those people with disability who were engaged in its development. The actual outcomes have been poor, as documented by the measures reported on the Productivity Commission dashboard. However, there is strength in the process that was, and the process that can be for this new NDS.

Professor Karen Fisher – Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW

It is desirable to keep the outcome areas of the first NDS. These were informed by engagement with people with disability as documented in the 'Shut Out' report, and are consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD). They resonate with people, and what people want in their lives. Consultation for the review of implementation of the first NDS indicated that stakeholders agree with the outcomes themselves, but have been disappointed by the implementation of those outcomes: it had not made a real difference to people's lives. The

consultations identified cross-cutting ‘gaps’ that should be addressed in the new NDS around gender equality and participation, and diversity and intersectionality, including for people living in rural and remote areas. Issues that are not specifically mentioned in the first NDS are housing, universal design, transport, and accessible digital information – implementing and enforcing policies in these areas is central to achieving the NDS outcomes.

More effective implementation of outcomes under the new NDS will require the inclusive policy involvement of people with disability and clear responsibilities for government at both central and local levels; people must be facilitated to have a voice and get involved in their local area. The NDIS was a major achievement under the first NDS, but it is important to recognise that the 90% of people with disability who will not ever have an NDIS plan rely on other parts of the NDS. One of the achievements of the first NDS was the Disability Inclusion Planning Guide¹¹ that was developed for local governments, which provides a way to articulate how people can be involved. This is key for the next NDS.

Three things the next NDS should focus on:

Attitudes are vital: how people are viewed in the community; if people are not respected and valued, that is a barrier to all other outcomes. Government led initiatives are needed to change attitudes at three levels:¹²

- Personal level (e.g., the ‘Employable me’ initiative);
- Organisation level (e.g., the responsibilities of employers and co-workers in work-places);
- Legal structures, including better mechanisms to access enforcement.

The best thing that occurred under the previous NDS: The NDIS has been the outstanding achievement during the life of the first NDS, although it has a long way to go to satisfy all needs and to be fair and equitable. For the new NDS, there must be opportunities for people with disability to be involved right at the top, in governance roles, to make sure we get it right.

11 Australian Local Government Association (2016). Disability Inclusion Planning–A Guide for Local Government.

12 Fisher K R and Purcal C (2017). Policies to change attitudes to people with disabilities. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* 19(2): 161-174.

PANEL TWO: WHAT IS NEEDED UNDER THE NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY?

Heidi LaPagia – Project Officer, Women With Disabilities Australia

Pre-recorded response to the question '*What is the role of the National Disability Strategy in Australia?*'

Speaking as a young woman with autism and chronic illness, the NDS needs to do more to support the rights of all people with disability under the CRPD and to tackle the widespread ableism that impedes and separates people with disabilities from the wider community. There must be greater attention to the intersection between disability and other aspects of people's identities such as class, race and gender. In line with Article 6 of the CRPD, an effective NDS would recognise and respond to gender inequalities experienced by women and girls with disability. The reformed NDS should have a gender lens throughout. It should articulate specific ways to tackle gender inequalities and to end the widespread discrimination, abuse and violence that so many women and girls with disability experience.

Dr Gauntlett provided the following introductory remarks:

The present National Disability Strategy refers to the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (CRPD). The Position Paper also refers to the CRPD. Other countries or regions like New Zealand, Ireland and the European Union have National Disability Strategies. A critical issue to the efficacy of the revised Strategy is the extent to which non-government organisations or entities are encouraged to undertake certain conduct (see Position Paper, question 5) and the extent to which community values are picked up in the revised Strategy (see Position Paper, question 3). It is proposed that the new Strategy will develop a new approach to implementation, being (1) guiding principles for policy implementation and program design, (2) Targeted Action Plans (see Position Paper, question 7) and (3) an Engagement Plan (see Position Paper, question 8) and have public reporting of performance. However, it is not clear what monitoring framework will be put in place. By contrast to Australia, there is in New Zealand a National Disability Strategy 2016-2026; a Disability Action Plan 2019-2023 and an independent monitoring mechanism (featuring the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman and Civil Society).

Dr Gauntlett welcomed and introduced the three panellists. In doing so, he acknowledged Senator Ruston's much-appreciated efforts in ensuring the formation of the Advisory Committee for the COVID-19 response for people with disability, and the consultations she undertook during the early stages of the pandemic with people with disability and their representative organisations.

The following questions were asked in turn of each panellist:

What is the role of a National Disability Strategy in Australia (or elsewhere)?

What are some of the biggest challenges facing a National Disability Strategy?

Senator Anne Ruston – Minister for Families and Social Services

The next NDS will provide a framework for decision and policy makers, and ensure disability strategy is mainstreamed across government. We need to make sure the NDS is ‘plugged in’ to mainstream policy. It must shine a light, raise awareness of the importance of an inclusive society, and provide overarching guidance to every Australian. It must get people to think about what we do that is discriminatory, and how to get rid of unconscious bias towards people with disability and the discrimination and inequalities that exist across our society. Mainstreaming means everyone understands that there is no difference in rights of people with disability and people without disability. The new NDS will provide national leadership. There must be a clearer understanding of the interface between the Commonwealth and States and Territories. Involvement of people with disability and advocacy organisations will be crucial, to find out what people with disability actually want.

There will need to be attention to the interface between the NDIS and the NDS. Only about 10% of people with disability will have an NDIS plan. There must be a focus on NDIS excellence, but it is also crucial to understand how the NDS meshes with the NDIS to ensure the needs of all people with disability are met by more mainstream responses and policies that relate to equity. There should be a particular focus on delivering good employment outcomes for people with disability, recognising that the longstanding under-representation of people with disability in the labour force has been exacerbated by COVID-19.

A key challenge will be how to design a strategy that recognises the diversity of people with disability and the different responses required – not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ strategy. Another big challenge is how to achieve consistency of adoption across states and territories. Also, the strategy must achieve outcomes, and to do this there must be effective engagement of the broader community – governments cannot do this by themselves. Engaging a very broad range of people to enable translation of intention into action, including to ensure it is data-informed and evidence-based, will be the great success of the next NDS if we get it right. Finally, the strategy must have a strong outcomes framework to measure performance and determine whether outcomes are really being delivered for people with disability: what you can’t measure you can’t manage.

Rosemary Kayess – Committee Member for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

We have committed internationally, through ratification of the CRPD, to an inclusive, diverse community where people with disability enjoy and can exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have a vision of an equitable, sustainable and resilient community that respects and values people with disability. A community in which impairment is recognised as just one aspect of human diversity and as inherent to human dignity, and is not seen as ‘other’ or ‘different’. Respect is fundamental, and we must move away from the long-held deficit approach, under which the rights of people with disability have been denied or diminished based on their impairment, and generally being based around issues of severity, type or diagnosis. It is the role of the NDS to ‘unpack’ this vision we have for Australia, so we can transform Australia’s law, policy and practice needed to achieve the vision. The CRPD provides a roadmap. The NDS should be underpinned by CRPD principles and standards, and identify key measures that will be taken across government and portfolios to provide a nationally consistent plan to implement the CRPD principles and standards. It is essential to have concrete actions and to measure goals and targets within a

robust monitoring, evaluation and accountability framework informed by a rigorous, disability-inclusive research agenda and evidence base. Australia must come to grips with understanding that disability is just part of our humanity. We need to understand the experience of people with disability to achieve our vision of an inclusive society.

A key challenge will be leveraging strong cross-portfolio commitment and expertise. The current NDS places government responsibility primarily with the Department of Social Services, which has tended to engender a narrowly service-focused response to issues. Yet health, housing, transport, tax, justice, tourism, infrastructure, national parks and wildlife, and many other policy areas all impact the lives people with disability, as do mainstream women's, Indigenous, children and youth, and multicultural policies. There must be strong visible commitment at the highest level of government, nationally and in states and territories, with an overarching focal point that has cross-portfolio influence. Robust reporting must be public and transparent, for instance in the form of a report to parliament every year delivered by the Prime Minister or Premier.

A big challenge is to have a strong, embedded, standing engagement mechanism under Art. 4.3 of the CRPD to ensure the critical expertise and information held by people with disability and DPOs informs the NDS and its implementation. It is widely recognised that having an understanding of the experiences of end users is critical to the successful implementation of anything. People with disability must have a high level voice in the process, and be embedded in all the work government does related to the Strategy. Government must recognise people with disability as whole people and contributing members of society.

Paula Tesoriero – NZ Disability Rights Commissioner, New Zealand Human Rights Commission

The role of a National Disability Strategy is equivalent to that of the CRPD itself. It is to articulate a vision or a roadmap to progress the lives of people with disability to live freely and fully as equal citizens. As such, it must be voiced and led by disabled people. It is an opportunity to model Art. 4.3 of CRPD about full participation.¹³ It should serve as a means to implement the CRPD in the unique cultural and social context of the nation, done in the voices of the communities of that nation. There should be a particular focus on Indigenous disabled people, and recognition of intersectionality and multiple identities. The Strategy 'puts a stake in the ground', acknowledges existing disparities, and acts as a government focal point for the CRPD. It informs priority work programs and the allocation of resources, provides a mandate for advocates, and helps agencies make good decisions informed by evidence, and ensure that people with disability are included in all strategies. It highlights that every policy is a disability policy. Importantly, the Strategy needs an accompanying action plan, and robust data, research, and an evidence plan to provide the framework for accountability. It must be possible to see demonstrable progress.

The general challenge, but also an opportunity, is thinking about how ambitious the strategy should be. It should be ambitious. Engagement with people with disability is key. People with disability need to feel confident that the strategy will lead to change and there will be a way to hold people to account.

13 CRPD Article 4.3: In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.

New Zealand's first Strategy predated the CRPD. It was a good step forward, but lacked resource to implement, a monitoring framework, an action plan, and governance by people with disability. The result was slow, intermittent progress, as reflected in reports delivered by New Zealand's CRPD Independent Monitoring Mechanism.¹⁴ New Zealand's current Strategy has an accompanying action plan and has been championed at the highest level. The action plan was co-designed by people with disability and incorporates the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. It is a living document and a range of organisations own the actions in it. There is collective responsibility for delivery and independent mechanisms for monitoring and accountability. Importantly, the Strategy is voiced in the voices of people with disability, and the 8 key outcomes reflect what the world for people with disability will look like when each of these outcomes is achieved.



14 Making disability rights real. Whakatūturu ngā tika hauātanga. Second Report of the Independent Monitoring Mechanism of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Aotearoa | New Zealand. July 2012 – December 2013. Available from: <http://www.dpa.org.nz/making-disability-rights-real>

PANEL THREE: ISSUES FOR THE NEW NATIONAL DISABILITY STRATEGY

Brandon Tomlin – a person with disability who lives independently

Pre-recorded response to the question *‘Why does accessible communication and engagement with people with disability matter in the National Disability Strategy?’*

Brandon’s response to this question was simple and powerful: communication is a human right.

Dr Gauntlett provided the following introductory remarks:

The Position Paper refers to the use of Targeted Action Plans (Position Paper, question 7), which focus on making improvements in specific areas within a defined time period, and Engagement Plans that ensure people with disability, and the disability community, are involved in the delivery and monitoring of the next Strategy (Position Paper, question 8). There is also a clear need of Workforce development identified.

There is also a clear focus upon data and public reporting and strengthened implementation frameworks.

Dr Gauntlett welcomed and introduced the four panellists. The following questions were asked in turn of each panellist:

What critical issues need to be considered in the new National Disability Strategy? And, perhaps as importantly, how?

How can we work together to ensure the National Disability Strategy is understood and followed across all sectors – government, non-government and the community?

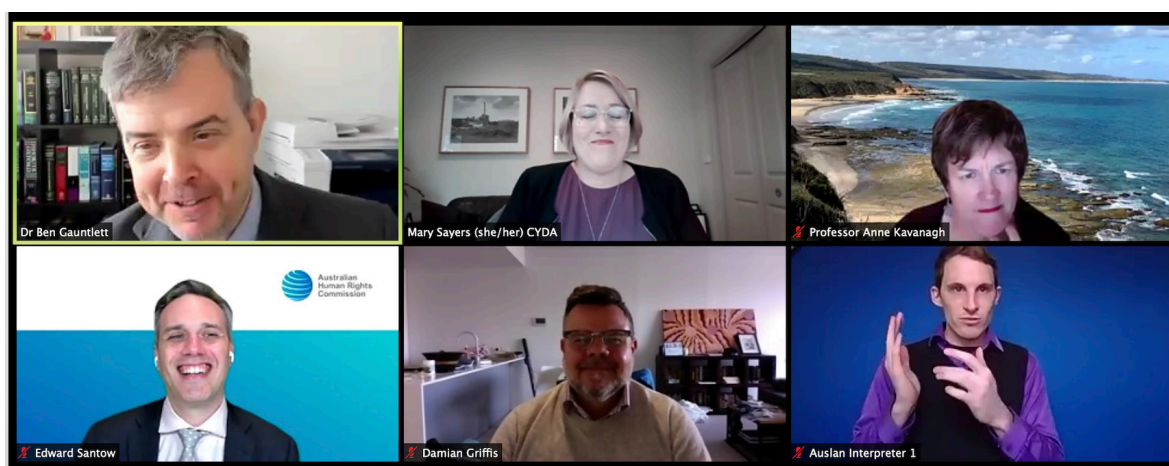
Professor Anne Kavanagh – Co-Director CRE-DH, University of Melbourne

As demonstrated by recent experience with COVID-19, solutions do not sit within single government departments. Fault lines between departments have seen people with disability fall through the gaps.

Employment is a critical issue to tackle head-on in the next National Disability Strategy, especially to ensure that already marginalised people are not further disadvantaged in the wake of the pandemic. Data show that people with disability are less likely to be employed, and experience disadvantage in a range of employment-related outcomes. Employment is not just a human right, but also a resource for health. Quantitative research shows that improving employment reduces disparities in mental health. Community attitudes, including discriminatory attitudes and low expectations, have an important influence on employment outcomes for people with disability. The transition from education to employment is critical; segregated education and bullying can impact negatively on this transition. Beyond focusing on individuals and skill development, the next NDS should consider what governments can do to improve employment outcomes for people with disability, including creating appropriate job opportunities and providing stimulus packages. Quantitative monitoring should be integral to the new Strategy. There is a need not just to monitor outcomes, but also to monitor the impact of specific policies. Extensive work of relevance to this

has been done by the CRE-DH, including the Disability and Wellbeing Monitoring Framework,¹⁵ developed with input from people with disability, which governments and the disability sector should look at. Collaboration across sectors is critical, and the Strategy will not work unless this is achieved. The example of COVID-19 has illustrated this, and has drawn attention to the fact that people with disability hold knowledge needed to solve key problems. It will be essential to listen to people with disability in the post-COVID recovery period, to learn from their experiences and insights, and to harness ideas and innovations and come up with practical solutions.

Current work to establish a National Disability Data Asset shows that there is government commitment to transparency and accountability, and once it is available this will be a valuable source of linked data for monitoring the impact of initiatives and policies. The commitment from the Department of Social Services to the National Disability Research Partnership is also very positive. We can be hopeful that these mechanisms will work alongside and strengthen the effectiveness of the next NDS.



Edward Santow – Human Rights Commissioner, AHRC

Increasingly, human rights depend on being able to access and use technology, including in fundamental areas like accessing government services, education and employment. The next NDS should put new technologies front and centre. Access to technology is a critical gateway, and an enabling human right, facilitating the enjoyment of a whole range of other human rights. Better, more inclusive design of products and services that rely on new technology is needed, and governments should lead the way.

The NDS sets out a vision, but this is not an end in itself and must be followed up by positive, practical action to make the vision real. This informs the approach taken in the AHRC’s Human Rights

¹⁵ Fortune N, Badland H, Clifton S, Emerson E, Rachele J, Stancliffe RJ, Zhou Q, Llewellyn G (2020). The Disability and Wellbeing Monitoring Framework and Indicators: Technical report. Melbourne, Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health. Available at: <https://credh.org.au/reports-and-submissions/>

and Technology discussion paper.¹⁶ Proposed changes in that document include improvements to the NDIS and making the NBN more affordable for people with disability, and also development of a new digital communication technology standard under the Disability Discrimination Act, which would give clear guidance to developers of information and communication technology to make sure these products and services are accessible to people with disability.

Both carrots and sticks are needed in order to change people's behaviour. Governments can provide incentives to make it more appealing to design and implement technologies that are truly inclusive, and the law provides a backstop, with enforcement of minimum standards. To quote Frank Brennan from the National Human Rights Consultation Report, a human right that is not enforced is just a good idea.

Mary Sayers – CEO of Children and Young People with Disability Australia

When the next NDS ends a baby born with disability in 2021 will be 10 years old. For children and young people with disability, what happens in the next 10 years will have lifelong impacts on friendships, peer networks, educational outcomes, post-school transitions, and the ability to live independently with whom they want and to be welcomed and involved in the community as they wish. It is imperative to get the next NDS right – we have the evidence and know what needs to be done. Young people with disability need to experience childhood, adolescence and adulthood just like everyone else – family, home environment, transition to school, education alongside peers, taking risks and having rites of passage, just like their peers. These are just a few areas the next NDS needs to include. We need a commitment from all stakeholders that the NDIS does not promote medicalised, therapy and special models that try to 'fix' children. Rather, that it helps children and young people have full inclusion in the community in mainstream settings and services, and considers their developmental needs. All jurisdictions must make a strong commitment to ensuring inclusive education, as defined by the CRPD, that is high quality and not segregated. There should be a national inclusive education plan, legislative reform, and monitoring and accountability to prevent the discrimination that results from low expectations, segregation, exclusion, gatekeeping and restrictive practices. We need better data to monitor how mainstream and disability-specific services are improving outcomes. Most importantly, the next NDS must facilitate the voice of children and young people with disability.¹⁷ The next NDS is crucial. We cannot afford to wait.

To ensure the effectiveness of the next NDS it will be important to respect the roles that different stakeholders play. Disability advocacy organisations play a critical role in amplifying the voices of members, and must be seen as part of the solution. It is notable that there has been no formalised consultative structure for people aged under 25 in NDIS policy development. For the next NDS, children and young people with disability need to be involved from the start in co-design and co-creation. We will need carrots and sticks, including independent oversight for protecting children and young people from abuse.

16 Australian Human Rights Commission (2019). Human Rights and Technology. Discussion Paper. December 2019. Sydney, Australian Human Rights Commission.

17 As an example, the inaugural National Youth Disability Summit, to be held 29 September to 3 October 2020, is designed, owned and delivered by young people with disability. For details see <https://www.cydayouth.events/>

Damian Griffis – CEO of First Peoples Disability Network

First Nations People with disability often face multiple barriers to meaningful participation within their own communities and within the wider community. We need to recognise that many First Nations People with disability live in poverty, sometimes experiencing denial of the most fundamental human rights and needs such as access to shelter, food, and health. We need innovation, community-based solutions, and long-term partnerships between communities, governments and NGOs, not short-term, project-based thinking. None of these issues are insurmountable. We should apply the same commitment and mobilisation that has been seen in addressing COVID-19 in Indigenous communities, which has been so successful: we must have our own strategy within the broader NDS. As a nation, we should be measured by how well we meet the needs of our most vulnerable. The next NDS must be a heart-based document; how as a nation we truly, meaningfully and innovatively realise the human rights of First Nations People with disability, and all Australians with disability.

An accountability mechanism similar to the Closing the Gap structure should be considered. At least one day each year the Prime Minister is required to report to parliament on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The next NDS could put something similar in place, a high-profile mechanism to review the situation for people with disability annually in relation to key areas such as education, employment, transport and housing.

WRAP-UP AND CLOSING REMARKS

Associate Professor Hannah Badland – Chief Investigator CRE-DH, RMIT University

Associate Professor Badland thanked the AHRC and the CRE-DH for hosting the webinar, thanked all the panellists for sharing their expertise and thoughts, and specially thanked Senator Ruston for her ongoing active contributions to disability policy and issues.

The next NDS is a critical opportunity for shaping realistic policy approaches that can better optimise outcomes for people with disability. It has the potential to strengthen the measuring and monitoring of disability-related outcomes and to create links across sectors and portfolios. Embedding an outcomes framework that is regularly reported on will enable us to better understand trajectories and inequities, and identify the range of policy levers to improve outcomes of people with disability. Adopting an agile approach may become more important in future, particularly in light of the legacy of the COVID-19 policy responses.

There will also be opportunities for the strategy to link with and capitalise on existing tools and resources. The CRE-DH Disability and Wellbeing Monitoring Framework includes person-level and area-level indicators that can be actioned across Australia and that have been mapped to the CRPD and the WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

As many of the speakers have said, the success of the next NDS will lie in the importance of an underlying framework that incorporates the lived experience of a diverse range of people with disability, and formulating a broad range of policies including the delivery of systems that safeguard. The panellists have recognised the benefits of building on the good efforts already achieved through the previous Strategy, but more needs to be done and in a timely way.

Dr Ben Gauntlett – Disability Discrimination Commissioner, AHRC

Dr Gauntlett acknowledged the assistance of the CRE-DH in organising the webinar and their assistance more generally to the AHRC towards ensuring that we have good disability policy for all Australians. Dr Gauntlett also acknowledged the work of The Social Deck and the Auslan Interpreters. What we want, and need, is for all people to engage with the National Disability Strategy, and the Position Paper that has been released by DSS, and ask whether these policies and procedures are fit for purpose. The ultimate role of the AHRC is to shine the brightest light into the darkest places. Almost one year ago, the CRPD Committee released its concluding observations relating to Australia.¹⁸ Some of those observations could be seen to relate to everyone, such as the need to apply housing standards and universal design principles. Others, like issues related to forced sterilisation, being recognised as equal before the law, or indefinite detention on the basis of mental health or cognitive disability, are concerns that Australia can, and should, and does need to deal with. Good policy means there will not be as many dark places.

We need to get the policy right to ensure people with disability can live the lives of their choosing. To do so, the mantra 'Nothing about us without us' needs to be respected, now and in the future, at all levels of decision making. Dr Gauntlett thanked everyone for attending, and urged people to participate in the consultation process for the next NDS.

¹⁸ United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2019). Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Australia. 15 October 2019. CRPD/C/AUS/CO/2-3.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRE-DH	Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CYDA	Children and Young People with Disability Australia
DSS	Australian Government Department of Social Services
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
NDDA	National Disability Data Asset
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NDS	National Disability Strategy
NBN	National Broadband Network
NSW	New South Wales
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PC	Productivity Commission
UN	United Nations
UNSW	University of New South Wales
WHO	World Health Organization

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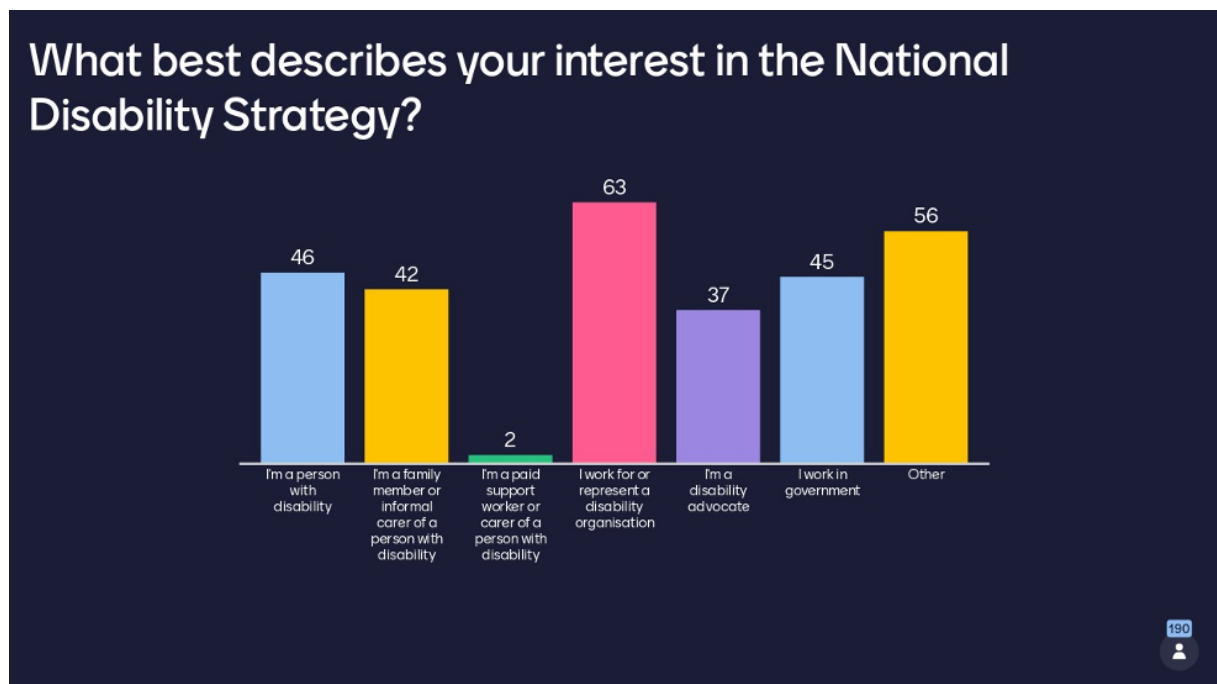
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APPENDIX



Participant responses to Mentimeter questions

During the course of the webinar, participants were invited to contribute their views in response to four questions via Mentimeter, an online engagement tool. A summary of responses to each of the questions is presented below.



“People will do things if there is a consequence and that changes attitudes. There were arguments about ramps until they were mandated”

How do community values or attitudes impact on achieving the outcomes of the National Disability Strategy?

Responses indicated overwhelming agreement that community values and attitudes are fundamentally important to achieving the outcomes of the National Disability Strategy.

Key themes from the 161 responses included:

- Ableism and deficit-focused, medical approaches to disability are still prevalent in Australia, manifest at all levels of society, and are embedded in structures, systems and laws.
- Negative attitudes are a major barrier for people with disability in their lives and are also a real barrier to implementing effective policy and achieving meaningful change.
- Attitudes of community broadly are important, but particularly attitudes held by people in specific roles, e.g., school principals, employers, health service providers, policy makers, and political leaders.
- Community engagement and community partnership is essential to the success of the next NDS, and positive attitudes towards people with disability will be a crucial facilitator.
- A human rights approach must be wholeheartedly adopted and integrated throughout our society, so that the humanity and human rights of people with disability are fully recognised, valued and upheld.

- Effective attitude change will require long-term commitment and must be community based and led by people with disability. Short term initiatives, such as advertising campaigns, will not be effective.
- People with disability must lead and be integrally involved in actions to bring about attitude change. The lived expertise of people with disability must be fully recognised and respected. Co-design and co-production are essential. The full range of people with disability must be involved, including people who need support with communication, children, people with less visible disability, and people with disability who are also members of other marginalised groups.
- True inclusivity will achieve attitude change, and attitude change will foster inclusivity. Laws, systems and structures affect attitudes, and addressing these should be a focus. It is essential to break down systems that segregate people with disability (e.g., segregated schooling, housing and employment).

See selected quotes from Mentimeter responses in Box 1.

Box 1: Selected quotes from Mentimeter responses to the question ‘How do community values or attitudes impact on achieving the outcomes of the National Disability Strategy?’

“People with disability need to be considered as fully human and their rights of personhood and citizenship acknowledged and supported. Without this, high level policy will achieve nothing”

“Leadership at the local level by people with diverse lived experience to tackle community inclusion and community education through deeper community development; not more advertising campaigns”

“Local governments need to engage cultural communities on a family and community level as attitudes towards disability differ with culture”

“Experience informs attitudes. Dismantle segregation”

“Most important is the need for professionals of all types to understand that people with disability are the experts of their own disability”

“Attitudes impact on government’s willingness to invest in and implement policy change and actual initiatives”

“We need to continue to shift the narrative about who people with disability are”

“Changing community values and attitudes to embrace diversity and impairment is fundamental to addressing discrimination, improving accessibility and equity for people with disability”

“Employer attitudes are stuck in the 50s towards PwD”

“Leadership, incentives and enforcement are all needed”

“Attitudes are the pinnacle of importance to achieving quality outcomes; get more young people talking”

“The grassroots daily interactions make or break the inclusion and belonging of individuals in their community”

“People need to see people with disability in all areas of life, including in high-level public and private positions, and participating in the community, to gain the support of all Australians”

“Australians are generally open and on board but need people in the sector to lead and inform them and give them confidence”

“Need NDS to address ableism – including breaking down systems and structures that facilitate negative community attitudes – end segregation, reform guardianship and mental health laws, etc”

“Making the community more accessible must come first. Having people with disability engaging actively in the community will demonstrate their value and grow respect for their contribution”

“Attitudes inform culture. Culture is measured by metrics like AHRC complaints. Employment levels. Access to transport, etc. It is this we should measure. Not attitudes”

“Support from the whole of community is essential to its success. Raising the awareness of the NDS at a grassroots level is a starting point”

How can we work together to ensure the National Disability Strategy is understood and followed across all sectors – government, non-government and the community?

Responses to this question spanned a broad range of factors needed to ensure that the Strategy is understood and followed by all.

Key themes from the 146 responses included:

- People with disability must be integrally involved in design and implementation of the Strategy.
- People with disability must be in leadership and decision-making roles, and embedded within policy-making processes at every level of government.
- There should be a high-level focal point in government, high-level endorsement, and NDS champions within government departments.
- The Strategy should set out clearly-articulated roles for all players, across all levels of government and non-government organisations.
- There must be concrete actions and funded commitments; funding and implementation structures should be attached to the Strategy.
- There should be accountability mechanisms, including ongoing monitoring of outcomes throughout the life of the Strategy, public reporting of progress, and oversight by an independent body.
- Education, awareness raising and marketing – the Strategy should be easy to understand, with communication strategies implemented to ensure it is understood by everyone and that everyone is aware of the rights of people with disability.
- There should be legislated, enforceable obligations, standards accompanied by accreditation mechanisms, and mechanisms to hold mainstream services accountable for ensuring accessibility and inclusivity.
- The Strategy should articulate a vision: what we want Australia to be like for people with disability in 10 years.
- There is a need to amplify the voice of people with disability in national discourse, and the full diversity of people with disability must have a voice.
- There should be clear examples of what good practice looks like.

See selected quotes from Mentimeter responses in Box 2.

Box 2: Selected quotes from Mentimeter responses to the question ‘How can we work together to ensure the National Disability Strategy is understood and followed across all sectors – government, non-government and the community?’

“Funding”

“Co-design, consultation and campaigning (media to promote the NDS)”

“People have talked about the stick (outcomes, public reporting) but I’d like to talk about the carrot. NDS needs to create incentives for government services (health, education, employment) and the community to realise NDS aspirations”

“Develop a robust framework that draws on and relies on these sectors. The research community is critical to include in this partnership”

“Need LAWS to hold people accountable”

“The Human Rights Commission or other independent external body to do rigorous oversight and be adequately resourced”

“Promote the positives and put PWD in leadership positions”

“Clear and measurable outcomes”

“Disability awareness training right at the top of government and organisation structures. Keep it practical. What do people need to know how to do to be really inclusive”

“Involve people with lived experience at all levels. Also as the communicators to all sectors of community”

“The SA government’s Disability Inclusion Act 2018 is a great example of ‘forcing’ better community inclusion approaches. We require this style of legislation and standards across the country”

“PM needs to endorse, engage and create NDS as a high status priority”

“Office of Disability Inclusion focused on NDS implementation, monitoring and evaluating. AND formal engagement mechanism with people with disability, their organisations”

“Legislated representation of people with disability in all sectors in all decision making. Recognise that people with disability are the experts in their own lives”

“The strategy needs to have a robust set of supporting measures and indicators that can be used by all levels of government”

“It is important that the NDS does not prescribe the actions taken in the local community, local government is well positioned for this, they just need resourcing”

“Clarity of roles and responsibilities – Commonwealth, State, Territory and local governments, not for profit, health, education, etc. All parties working together and sharing a common message”