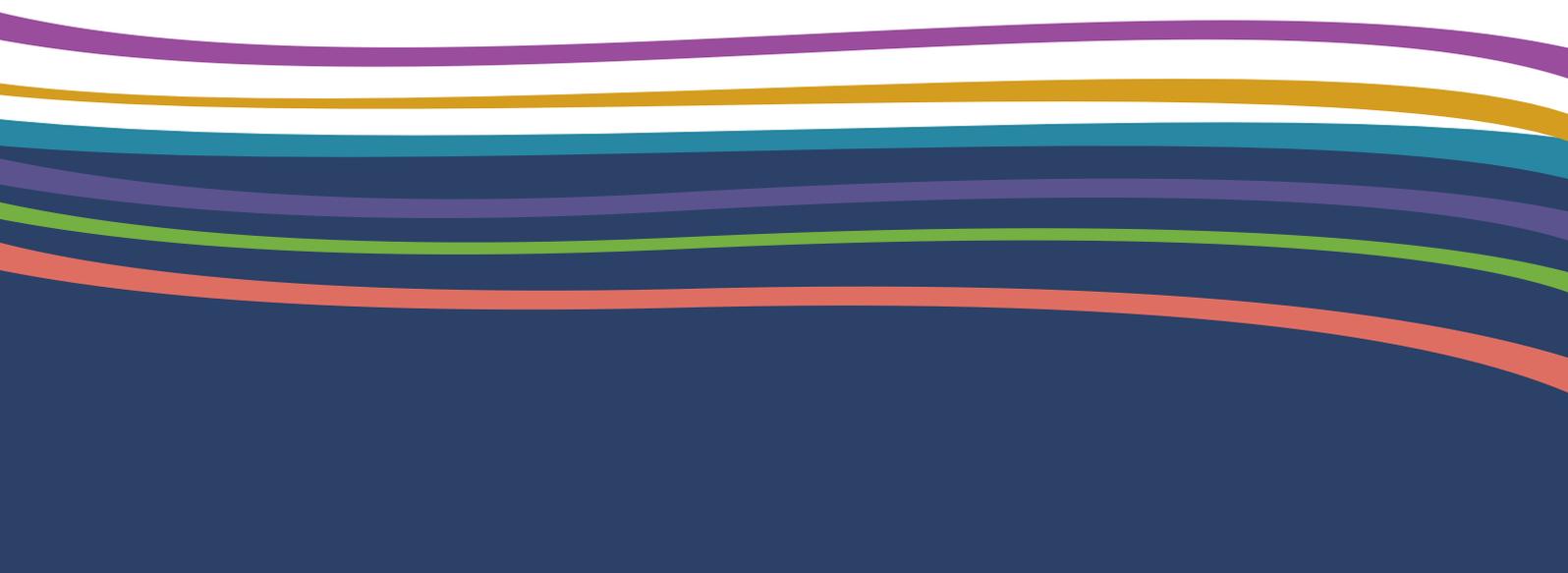


2010–2020
National Disability Strategy

Report to the Council of
Australian Governments
2012

Laying the Groundwork 2011–2014





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FOREWORD

In July 2008 the Australian Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention). The Convention aims to:

promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Inherent in Australia's commitment is an obligation to continually improve the lived experience of people with disability. For government, that not only means improving outcomes through the specialist disability service system but also ensuring that mainstream services, programs and infrastructure are responsive to their needs. A change in community attitudes is required.

On 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* (the Strategy).

The Strategy outlines a ten year national policy framework to drive improvement across mainstream policies, programs, services and infrastructure as well as the specialist disability services system, so that people with disability can participate as equal citizens.

The Strategy will help ensure that the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention are incorporated into policies and programs to improve access and outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers.

The Strategy provides a shared agenda to help achieve the vision of an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to achieve their full potential as citizens. (National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, p.15)

Since the Strategy was released the focus has been twofold.

First, all governments acted immediately to lay the groundwork to be built upon over the life of the Strategy. For example, as part of the National Disability Strategy, the Australian Government asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a public inquiry into a long-term disability care and support scheme for people with disability. The Council of Australian Governments subsequently agreed to the need for major reform of disability services through a National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Australian Government is working closely with state and territory governments on the development of the scheme.

On 30 April 2012, the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP announced that the Australian Government would deliver \$1 billion over four years to launch a National Disability Insurance Scheme. New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory have agreed to host National Disability Insurance Scheme launch sites and will also contribute funding to the launch of a National Disability Insurance Scheme in their jurisdiction. From July 2013, the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme will start improving the quality of support for thousands of people with disability and their carers in the launch sites.

The Productivity Commission also identified the need for a National Injury Insurance Scheme that would seek to ensure consistency in catastrophic injury insurance arrangements across state and territory governments, and provide certainty of adequate lifetime care and support to those catastrophically injured in an accident.

Secondly, governments have developed a cohesive and strategic framework for implementing the Strategy and evaluating successes and shortcomings over its ten year horizon. This document is the first report of the Standing Council of Community and Disability Services on the National Disability Strategy. It outlines the approach to implementing actions over the life of the Strategy and includes the first implementation plan, *Laying the Groundwork 2011–2014*, as well as the evaluation framework for the Strategy.

Laying the Groundwork 2011–2014 details actions to be taken in policies and programs across all areas of government. These actions represent the first round commitment to transform the experience of people with disability by improving the design and delivery of services and programs to achieve more inclusive communities. They will lay the groundwork for future actions across all six outcome areas of the Strategy:

- inclusive and accessible communities
- rights protection, justice and legislation
- economic security
- personal and community support
- learning and skills
- health and wellbeing.

Governments will continue to promote the Strategy and take advantage of emerging opportunities to extend its influence across all public, private and community sector activities.

The ultimate goal is a more inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to achieve their full potential as citizens.

Endorsed by the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services on 21/12/2012:

The Hon Cassy O'Connor MP, Minister for Human Services and Community Development, TAS (Chair)

The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Minister for Disability Reform, Commonwealth

Senator the Hon Jan McLucas, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Commonwealth

The Hon Andrew Constance MP, Minister for Disability Services, NSW

The Hon Mary Wooldridge MP, Minister for Community Services, VIC

The Hon Tracy Davis MP, Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, QLD

The Hon Ian Hunter MLC, Minister for Disabilities, SA

The Hon Helen Morton MLC, Minister for Disability Services, WA

The Hon David Tollner MLA, Minister for Health, NT

Ms Joy Burch MLA, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, ACT

Mayor Felicity-ann Lewis, Australian Local Government Association

1. BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ADDRESSING DISABILITY

The National Disability Strategy was developed following extensive consultation with people with disability, their families, carers and representative organisations, community groups, disability and other organisations, service providers and all levels of government.

The consultations culminated in the report *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia (2009)*. *Shut Out* informed the policy outcome areas in the Strategy. It also delivered a clear message to governments that they must respond to the needs of people with disability with more comprehensive and coordinated planning at all levels of government and across all portfolios.

Policy actions will focus on improvements in areas where there is evidence of inadequacies or inequalities for people with disability. To ensure that people with disability achieve the same outcomes as the wider population when participating in everyday life, different or enhanced responses may be necessary. (National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, p. 27)

The Strategy sets out a ten year national policy framework to:

- guide government activity across six key outcome areas
- drive reform in mainstream and specialist disability service systems to improve outcomes for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

The Strategy's aim and purpose is to:

- establish a high-level policy framework to give coherence to, and guide government activity across mainstream and disability-specific areas of public policy
- drive improved performance of mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people with disability
- give visibility to issues and ensure they are included in the development and implementation of all public policy that affects people with disability
- provide national leadership toward greater inclusion of people with disability.

The Strategy is structured around six broad outcome areas based on feedback from the 2009 community consultations (*Shut Out*, 2009). They are also aligned to principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The six outcome areas are:

- **Inclusive and accessible communities**—the physical environment including public transport, parks, buildings and housing, digital information and communications technologies, and civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life
- **Rights protection, justice and legislation**—statutory protections such as anti-discrimination measures, complaints mechanisms, advocacy, and the electoral and justice systems

- **Economic security**—jobs, business opportunities, financial independence, adequate income support for those not able to work, and housing
- **Personal and community support**—inclusion and participation in the community, person-centred care and support provided by specialist disability services and mainstream services, and informal care and support
- **Learning and skills**—early childhood education and care, schools, further education, vocational education, transitions from education to employment, and lifelong learning
- **Health and wellbeing**—health services, health promotion and the interaction between health and disability systems, wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

Within each outcome area a range of policy directions have been identified to guide actions over the life of the Strategy. The policy directions contain fifty-three areas for future action. These actions are at various stages of development and will be progressed during the life of the Strategy.

As these actions are completed or updated additional priorities may be identified or existing ones revised. Appendix 1 of this document highlights the work that governments are doing or have committed to doing during 2011–2014. The Strategy is a living document and will be updated and reviewed as each implementation plan is developed.

Implementation plans

The Strategy will be guided by three implementation plans developed over its ten year life span. This approach allows governments to embed objectives early in the development of new policies and initiatives while also ensuring that the Strategy remains relevant and responsive to the expressed needs of people with disability over time. It also outlines areas of national cooperation to give effect to Strategy objectives. People with disability will be consulted throughout each phase of implementation.

The first implementation plan—*Laying the Groundwork: 2011–2014*—sets the foundations for influencing all areas of policy and service delivery.

In addition to progressing ongoing commitments, the second and third plans will reflect future opportunities to improve service delivery and outcomes for people with disability.

The Development Officials Working Group will support the Community and Disability Services ministers responsible for driving the implementation of the Strategy. This working group comprises senior policy representatives from departments with responsibility for disability services, and central agencies such as premiers' and chief ministers' departments, from each jurisdiction. The Australian Local Government Association is also represented.

The following outlines the implementation and reporting framework and the steps governments will take to meet Strategy objectives over the next ten years.

Laying the Groundwork 2011–2014

This is the first implementation plan. It lays the groundwork for delivering and reporting on the Strategy over the next ten years. It includes six main actions (as detailed in Chapter 2) to influence all areas of policy and service delivery.

As well as this national implementation plan, each state and territory government will have its own disability plan to drive improved outcomes through mainstream policies, programs, services and infrastructure. At the end of this implementation plan in 2014, a progress report on achievements will be provided to the Council of Australian Governments.

Driving Action 2015–2018

This will be the second implementation plan. It will outline new priority actions as well as ongoing commitments. Development of this plan will draw on the results of the 2014 progress report to the Council of Australian Governments in addition to considering input from consultations with people with disability and their representative organisations. The plan will consolidate actions that are driving improved outcomes and identify where more effort is needed.

Measuring Progress 2019–2020

This is the third and final implementation plan. It will identify new and emerging priority outcomes to be implemented in the final years of the Strategy. Again, this plan will be informed by ongoing consultation with people with disability and their representative organisations and the results of the 2016 and 2018 progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments. The plan will present the opportunity to ensure we are on track to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.

Each implementation plan will be underscored by the need for a change of attitude about disability by governments and the broader community; a change of attitude that promotes dignity and human rights, and supports participation in all aspects of community life. Attitudinal change is required to achieve lasting social change and to improve outcomes for people with disability beyond the life of the Strategy.

Chapter 4 outlines how monitoring and reporting will be undertaken over the life of the Strategy.

Under the Strategy, a high-level report will be submitted to the Council of Australian Governments in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020. These will track national progress against each outcome.

The progress reports will use draft national trend indicator data (including any changes to improve the draft indicators). They will also include:

- feedback from Community and Disability Services Ministers on achievements under the Strategy
- feedback from people with disability, their families and carers and their representative organisations on the implementation of the plans
- specific reports from the disability champion ministers
- review of progress of current actions.

Each progress report will be used to develop new implementation plans and inform future actions.

Chapter 5 sets out the approach to evaluating the Strategy, which will occur in 2021 using a combination of elements and drawing on progress reports.

The development of this National Disability Strategy is the first time in Australia's history that all governments have committed to a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and to providing leadership for a community-wide shift in attitudes. (National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, p. 3)

2. LAYING THE GROUNDWORK 2011–2014: THE FIRST IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The first implementation plan—*Laying the Groundwork: 2011–2014*—includes six main actions aimed at driving change across each of the Strategy’s policy outcomes and directions.

These are designed to influence and enable improvements across all support systems to reduce or eliminate barriers for people with disability and ensure their needs are embedded within all mainstream services. The plan ensures that the efforts of all governments will contribute to achieving the policy directions, outcomes and vision.

The six main actions are:

1. influencing the mainstream support system through periodic reviews of Council of Australian Governments national agreements and partnerships—including specific strategies and performance indicators to address outcomes as appropriate
2. focusing on outcomes through the appointment of disability champion ministers
3. improving the evidence base
4. developing, reviewing and implementing state and territory government disability plans and/or initiatives
5. involving people with disability in the development and implementation of government policies and programs, not just disability-specific policies and programs
6. embedding change through areas of national cooperation.

Reviews of national agreements and national partnerships

A key objective of the Strategy is to improve outcomes for people with disability through mainstream focus, effort and innovation in service design and delivery. All governments will engage with communities to optimise the reach of this objective over the life of the Strategy and beyond.

National agreements and national partnerships, agreed through the Council of Australian Governments, are central to achieving government service delivery improvements and reforms. They contain objectives, outcomes, outputs and performance indicators, and clarify the roles and responsibilities that guide the Australian, state and territory governments in the funding and delivery of services across relevant sectors.

National partnerships also establish the financial arrangements for specific projects and support and reward state and territory governments that deliver on nationally significant reforms. Both national agreements and national partnerships are both subject to periodic review to ensure they remain relevant and effective in meeting objectives.

The Council of Australian Governments’ Reform Council is the principal body for reporting on the performance of governments against the outcomes agreed in national agreements. These outcomes and indicators will therefore be the subject of analysis and report to the Council.

An important long-term initiative of the National Disability Strategy is that all governments have agreed to use the review points of these agreements and partnerships to assess their consistency with the Strategy. Governments should consider the inclusion of additional strategies and performance indicators to ensure they address the needs of people with disability and embed disability issues into the day-to-day policy and program consideration of government agencies and departments. All Australian ministers with responsibility for relevant agreements and partnerships have been advised of these new requirements.

Areas for future action 3.7, 5.2 and 6.2 of the Strategy mention specific national agreements:

Area for future action 3.7. At the review points of the National Affordable Housing Agreement and related national partnership agreements, parties agree to consider including strategies consistent with the Strategy, to ensure they address the housing needs of people with disability.

Area for future action 5.2. At the review points of the National Education Agreement, the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, Smarter Schools—Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership and other learning and skills-related national partnerships, parties agree to consider including strategies, consistent with the Strategy, and performance indicators to ensure they address the needs of students with disability.

Area for future action 6.2. At the review points of the National Healthcare Agreement, other national health agreements and health-related national partnership agreements, parties agree to consider including strategies consistent with the Strategy and performance indicators to ensure they address the health needs of people with disability in all age groups.

These review processes will take into account feedback and input, both formal and informal, received over the life of the agreements.

The table below provides an outline of the National Disability Strategy secretariat's work plan in relation to the review of national agreements and national partnerships.

Table 1: Reviews of national agreements and national partnerships

What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who has responsibility	Who will contribute
1. Identification of review points	February 2012	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Relevant Australian Government agencies
2. Assist in identifying strategies and performance indicators for people with disability	February 2012–June 2014	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	State and territory disability officials, disability champion ministers
3. Report to disability ministers on changes to agreements and partnerships	February 2012–June 2014	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Relevant Australian Government agencies
4. Contribute to report to Council of Australian Governments on progress	Mid-2014	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Relevant Australian Government agencies

Disability champion ministers

Community and Disability Services ministers are responsible for driving the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. Ministers from mainstream portfolios such as Housing, Health, Early Childhood Education, Education, Justice and Transport have been invited to take a strong national leadership role to support implementation of the Strategy. They have also been invited to act as champions for disability issues within their particular sphere of influence and responsibility.

During 2011, the Chair of the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services invited the Chair of each Standing Council to nominate ministers willing to take on the role of disability champion. The role includes identifying and monitoring actions to ensure that mainstream service systems and regulatory frameworks become part of the solution to overcoming barriers. Disability champion ministers will also look to identify and promote the important contribution that non-government organisations, businesses and the wider community can make.

In addition to champion minister nominations from Standing Councils, the Australian Local Government Association has also provided a nomination for a disability champion from Local Government.

Disability champion appointments will be established and the role refined during 2012 and 2013.

Activities undertaken by disability champion ministers include:

- within portfolio areas, identifying and promoting the interests and needs of Australians with disability and promoting their engagement and participation
- promoting the important contribution that can be made within mainstream portfolio areas to improve the lives of people with disability, their families and carers, and to achieve social inclusion
- taking all opportunities to promote the Strategy's policy directions and areas for future action relating to portfolio areas in relevant ministerial councils and committees
- seeking opportunities through upcoming reviews of national partnerships and agreements to have the interests and needs of people with disability adequately addressed in ministerial areas of influence
- improving portfolio performance in delivering outcomes across government and developing performance indicators that reflect the interests and needs of people with disability
- liaising with other disability champion ministers to share approaches that influence mainstream policies and programs.

The contribution of disability champion ministers to the biennial reports for the Council of Australian Governments will take the form of a high-level summary of their activities. These should highlight significant outcomes and achievements for people with disability under the relevant policy outcome areas.

The table below provides an outline of the National Disability Strategy work plan in relation to disability champion ministers.

Table 2: Disability Champion Ministers			
What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who is responsible	Who will contribute
1. Disability champion ministers identified	2012-2013	All jurisdictions	All jurisdictions
2. Contribute to report to Council of Australian Governments on progress	2013–2014	Disability champion ministers	Relevant jurisdiction

Improving the evidence base

Standard disability identifier

In 2011 the National Community Service Information Management Group (a working group to Disability and Community Services ministers) approved funding for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop a standard disability identifier to use in mainstream administrative data connections, such as health, justice, education, Indigenous reform and housing.

Such an identifier will help to identify persons with disability at the point of service provision and measure the effectiveness of reforms through retrospective reporting within and across service domains. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is currently finalising an identifier module and several pilot implementations are planned for the 2012–2013 financial year.

National Disability Research and Development Agenda

The National Disability Research and Development Agenda, endorsed by disability ministers in November 2011, sets out national priorities, focus and direction for disability-related research. The Agenda recommends research and development directions and principles, details particular areas of inquiry for research, and identifies approaches to further the development of national disability research.

It seeks to focus the direction of disability research and development activity so that it will provide sound evidence for future policy and practice decisions that will lead to improved outcomes for Australians with disability.

As one of the first initiatives to be implemented under the Agenda, invitations were issued in May 2012 for research proposals that support the directions of the Agenda. Further information about the Agenda can be found on the Disability Policy and Research Working Group website at <http://www.dprwg.gov.au/research-development/national-disability-research-and-development-agenda>.

Enhancements to Disability Services National Minimum Dataset and Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

In December 2010 disability ministers agreed to redevelop the Disability Services National Minimum Dataset, subject to costings, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers to enhance the quality, relevance and scope of the data collected.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare manages the production of the Disability Services National Minimum Data Set, which comprises Commonwealth, state and territory data on disability services. The first stage of this project is the expansion of the Disability Services data dictionary, a resource to underpin the Disability National Minimum Data Set collection, and provide a reference on standardised, accepted terms and protocols used for data collection in the disability sector.

The Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers is an established part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics survey program. The primary objective of the survey is to collect information about people with disability; older people; and people who provide assistance to older people and people with disability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers throughout Australia from April to December 2009. Enhancements were achieved through a combination of improved sample design and increased sample size. The final sample of

people comprised 64 213 persons for the household component and 9 470 persons for the cared-accommodation component. Enhanced data was also collected on demography, unmet demand for disability services, carers, social inclusion and labour force participation.

To increase the frequency of national data on people with disability, governments have jointly funded the Australian Bureau of Statistics to undertake an additional Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers in 2012. The 2012 survey contains additional questions on access and barriers to selected health services; satisfaction with support services; feelings of safety; experiences of homelessness; and social, community and civic participation.

National Disability Agreement Performance Framework Review

The Council of Australian Governments initiated a review of all national agreement performance frameworks in February 2011. The review is overseen by the Heads of Treasuries Review and the Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council Recommendations Implementation Steering Group.

The Council of Australian Governments' Reform Council's two reports to date (2008–2009 and 2009–2010) have recommended improvements to the lack of data and timeliness of data needed for measuring the National Disability Agreement performance indicators and benchmarks. This review has been completed with revised performance indicators agreed by COAG on 25 July 2012. New performance benchmarks with targets are expected to be added to the Agreement by COAG in late 2012. The revised National Disability Agreement is available at: http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/national_agreements.aspx

The release of the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers will enable the use of more up to date and enhanced data for performance reporting under the National Disability Agreement.

Table 3: Improving the evidence base

What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who has responsibility	Who will contribute
1. Commission research audit and research proposals	End-2012	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Disability Policy and Research Working Group
2. Review of National Disability Agreement Performance Framework	2012	Council of Australian Governments	Australian State and Territory Disability Officials, Productivity Commission, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
3. National Disability Strategy –contribute to mainstream workshops/ conferences to share best practice	Ongoing	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Government officials, people with disability and their representative organisations

Table 3: Improving the evidence base

What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who has responsibility	Who will contribute
4. Review draft trend indicators and report on changes to disability ministers	February 2013	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	State and territory disability officials, people with disability and other stakeholders
5. Disability Services National Minimum Dataset stage 1 redevelopment complete	Mid-2013	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Australian, state and territory disability officials
6. Disability identifier work	Mid-2013	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Australian, state and territory disability officials
7. Improved 2012 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers results released	2014	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Australian, state and territory disability officials

Best practice workshops

A significant action under the first implementation plan *Laying the Groundwork: 2011–2014* will be for the Australian Government to share best practice on service delivery and policy reform. This will be an opportunity to showcase innovative practices particularly in areas such as culturally appropriate service delivery, interfaces between the disability and health service sectors, and pre and post-support for those in the criminal justice system.

State and territory government disability plans

As well as the national plan, each state and territory government has its own disability planning process to drive improved outcomes through mainstream policies, programs, services and infrastructure.

In addition to embracing national efforts across the Strategy's six outcome areas, state and territory governments have direct responsibility for delivering the majority of public services that are essential for all people—including people with disability—to participate in their communities. These services range from health, hospitals and education, to housing and transport, and they are found across all of the policy areas identified under the Strategy.

A whole-of-governments approach is needed to reduce fragmentation and improve the coordination of policy and programs. Complementary reforms across a number of areas will be more effective than addressing issues separately. (National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, p. 15)

Through their experience as planners and providers of essential public services, state and territory governments have established effective channels of consultation with service users, peak bodies and the wider community. This allows for high levels of community engagement and the opportunity to effect change directly in response to community needs.

Each jurisdiction has, or is currently developing, an individual plan to translate the Strategy's vision into tangible and achievable service improvements. These plans have been developed in response to the particular circumstances and priorities in each jurisdiction. Actions are locally based and aim to work in parallel with activities under the national implementation plan. State and territory governments will share information about these activities in the reports to the Council of Australian Governments.

The plans will be subject to each jurisdiction's separate governance and reporting processes. They will work in partnership with the Strategy's implementation plans to deliver improved outcomes. Summary information on state and territory government disability plans is outlined below.

Australian Capital Territory: *Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014* is the ACT Government's policy framework. A Strategic Governance Group oversees progress and reports to the Director General of Community Services. *Future Directions* is aligned with the National Disability Strategy.

New South Wales: NSW will develop a number of implementation plans to support the National Disability Strategy; the first will cover the period 2012–2014. The process is overseen by a high level whole-of-government committee.

Northern Territory: The Territory will develop a disability plan to support the implementation of the National Disability Strategy, for the period 2012–2014. A Northern Territory Government cross-agency group will be established to oversee the implementation process of the Strategy.

Queensland: Queensland is reviewing the State's framework to support the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. Queensland's commitment to the National Disability Strategy continues to be delivered through actions embedded in Queensland Government Disability Service Plans. These are a legislative requirement under Queensland's *Disability Services Act 2006* for all government departments and provide a coordinated approach to improving access to government services and responses to the needs of people with disability, their families and carers.

South Australia: The South Australian Government has committed to a tranche of recommendations which will reform specialist and mainstream service delivery in response to the South Australian Social Inclusion Board's disability reform report, *Strong voices*. These recommendations align with the National Disability Strategy. In addition, the South Australian Government has set several long-term aspirational targets to bring together government and community effort to address a range of housing and workforce participation issues experienced by people with disability.

Tasmania: Tasmania has begun the review process for a new disability plan, following the conclusion of the *Tasmanian Disability Framework for Action* in 2010. The new plan will align with the National Disability Strategy.

Victoria: The *Disability Act 2006 (Vic)* requires that a state disability plan is prepared as at 1 January 2013. This will be a four-year plan and will incorporate Victoria's agreed responsibilities under the National Disability Strategy.

Western Australia: *Count Me In: Disability Future Directions* has a mainstream focus and is consistent with the National Disability Strategy. It was launched in December 2009.

Table 4: State and territory disability plans

What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who is responsible	Who will contribute
1. State and territory plans released <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QLD • NSW • Victoria • SA • WA • NT • Tasmania • ACT 	2013–2016 2012–2014 2013–2016 2012–2020 2009–2025 2012–2014 2013–2017 2010–2014	State and territory disability ministers	People with disability and their representative organisations
2. Share information on reforms for the report to the Council of Australian Governments on progress	Mid–2014	State and territory disability ministers	

Local government

The Australian Local Government Association will promote the National Disability Strategy to its state and territory associations, which liaise and work with their respective governments on the Strategy’s ongoing development and implementation. Local government associations will also work with councils to communicate and promote the Strategy in their communities.

Local government is involved at the local level in developing strategies for people with disability to participate in local community life, such as providing accessible community services, open spaces and recreation facilities and accessible bus stops, in partnership with other levels of government.

Many local councils have disability action plans. As a result of an initiative between Australian Local Government Association and the Human Rights Commission in 1995, a *Guide for local government* was produced to help them develop action plans and think through the implications of providing an environment which responds to the needs of people with disability. Councils work with their communities to eliminate indirect and unintentional discrimination and to promote state and national initiatives.

Embedding the voice of people with disability

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires governments to consult with and actively involve people with disabilities, including children, through their representative organisations.

In addition, people with disability have delivered a clear message to governments that they expect their views, experience and advice to be reflected in the development of policies and programs that affect their lives.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 4:

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.

Approximately one in five Australians identifies as having a permanent disability, however substantially more people will experience some form of disability at some point in their lives.

To enhance access and inclusion, all governments will work with people with disability, their families and carers when developing both mainstream and disability-specific policies and programs. This means that all services, not only specialist disability services, need to be developed and implemented with a citizen-centric disability focus and in consultation with people with disability and their representative organisations.

Embedding the voice of people with disability in the implementation of the Strategy will occur at three levels:

1. providing advice and feedback to governments on the development and progress of each implementation plan through representative organisations of people with disability and government advisory bodies
2. encouraging government agencies to adopt protocols that ensure people with disability and their representative organisations have the opportunity to contribute to policy and program development
3. ensuring the experiences of people with disability are reflected in the progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments and in the evaluation of the Strategy. This will be done through focus groups with people with disability and feedback from their representative organisations.

Advisory bodies

While the Strategy was being developed the Australian Government established the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. The Council meets at least three times a year to provide advice—including advice on the Strategy and its implementation—to the Minister for Disability Reform and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers. In addition, a National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group has been formed to specifically

focus on providing advice on the ongoing implementation of the National Disability Strategy. This group comprises equal numbers of Council members and representative organisations to ensure that the views of people with disability are heard. The group will work with the Australian Government on key implementation tasks such as reviewing the draft trend indicators and providing input to the progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments.

Each jurisdiction (except Northern Territory) has a disability advisory body appointed by the Disability Minister. The chairs meet with the Development Officials Working Group to provide advice on the Strategy.

Government agency protocols

Government business must include the voice of people with disability. All government agencies should increase their capacity to consult and engage with people with disability and their representative organisations on an ongoing basis as part of their approach to developing, designing and implementing policies, programs and services.

All Australian Government agencies will be asked to consider similar protocols to the one established by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations as described in the box below.

Protocol for Consulting with People with Disability – Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

People with disability will have the opportunity to better engage with government in the development of mainstream policies and programs through a new Protocol for Consulting with People with Disability. The protocol was developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO). As part of DEEWR's stakeholder engagement framework, the protocol provides a shared understanding of how all staff can better engage people with disability. While many people with disability will access specialist services, they are also a key user of mainstream services including education and employment. The protocol is one way of increasing engagement and ensuring that people with disability have the opportunity to contribute to the development of all DEEWR policies and programs.

Input to monitoring and evaluation

The views and experiences of people with disability and their representative organisations are central to the monitoring of the implementation plans and evaluation of the Strategy. Feedback will also be sought from other stakeholders including families, carers, advocacy and other organisations, service providers, academics and governments.

Input from people with disability will be sought through representative bodies such as the new National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group and each jurisdiction's disability advisory body.

Table 5: Monitoring and evaluation

What will be achieved	When it will occur	Who is responsible	Who will contribute
1. Establishment of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group	September 2012	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Selected council members and representative organisations
2. Focus groups with people with disability and feedback from their representative organisations	Part of the evaluation	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	People with disability and their representative organisations
3. Meetings of National People with Disabilities and Carer Council	Three meetings per year	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	National People with Disabilities and Carer Council members
4. Meetings of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group	Three meetings per year	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	Selected council members and other disability representatives
5. Meetings of disability officials and chairs of jurisdiction disability advisory bodies	One meeting per year	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	State and territory disability officials and disability advisory body chairs
6. Disability ministers national forum	Every two years from 2014	Development Officials Working Group	People with disability, representative organisations and other stakeholders, and disability ministers

Embedding change through national areas of cooperation

In addition to individual state and territory government disability plans, there are many actions underway at the national level, either in partnership with jurisdictions or Australian Government initiatives that have national reach.

The Strategy sets out six policy outcomes supported by key policy directions. It identifies fifty-three areas for future action across these policy outcomes and directions.

Appendix 1 outlines the current and proposed national areas of cooperation that represent governments' initial commitment to improving the lives of people with disability.

During the life of the first implementation plan, *Laying the Groundwork 2011–2014*, work will be undertaken to identify gaps in achieving the Strategy's policy outcomes and directions. This work will also involve identifying possible new priorities for consideration.

The progress reports provided to the Council of Australian Governments will include an assessment of whether the current and proposed national areas of cooperation are achieving their outcomes and measures of success.

All relevant Australian Government agencies will contribute towards the implementation of the Strategy and will provide input to progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments on how their policies and services align to the objectives of the Strategy. Similarly, state and territory governments will share information in the progress reports about activities that have contributed to the National Disability Strategy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians with disability

The level of disability experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is believed to be significantly higher than that of the general population. In 2005, the Commonwealth Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision concluded that the proportion of the Indigenous population reporting a disability or long-term health condition was 37 per cent or 102 900 people. The proportions were similar in remote and non-remote areas. This measure of disability did not specifically include people with a psychosocial disability.

Compared to other Australians, Indigenous Australians are almost twice as likely to experience disability, and all governments are working to ensure that the aims of the National Disability Strategy are reflected in future iterations of the National Indigenous Reform Agreement. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare recently found that among Indigenous Australians aged 45–54 years, the rate of need for assistance with the core activities of daily living is almost three times that of non-Indigenous Australians. (*Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability: wellbeing, participation and support*, May 2011).

Despite these figures, many Indigenous people with disability report difficulties in accessing appropriate services to meet their needs. This occurs for a range of reasons including availability of culturally appropriate services and the fact that many Indigenous people do not identify as having a disability. In many ways 'disability' is a new conversation in many Indigenous communities. Many traditional Indigenous languages do not contain a comparable word for 'disability'. Within Indigenous communities, disability tends to be discussed from an impairment perspective. For example, 'Aunty has trouble getting around' or 'my brother doesn't hear properly'. This way of describing disability is not done in an offensive way but more as a reference to the way in which that person interacts with their family and community. In addition, many Indigenous people with disability see 'disability' as a negative label and are reluctant to use it, particularly if they already experience discrimination based on their cultural background.

There is a higher incidence of complex needs and issues which span health, disability and other issues amongst Indigenous Australians. These include poor health care, poor nutrition and exposure to violence and psychological trauma (e.g. arising from removal from family

and community). Other factors include substance abuse, and the breakdown of traditional community structures in some areas. Aboriginal people with disability are also significantly over-represented on a population group basis among homeless people, in the criminal and juvenile justice system and in the care and protection system, both as parents and children.

The Strategy highlights these multiple layers of disadvantage. Many of these layers are being tackled as part of the work being undertaken by all Australian governments to Close the Gap on Indigenous Disadvantage.

Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage has seen all governments working together on seven action areas or building blocks, which were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in 2008:

- early childhood
- schooling
- health
- economic participation
- healthy homes
- safe communities
- governance and leadership.

It is important that the Closing the Gap initiatives and mainstream programs take into account the needs of Indigenous people with disability. New initiatives specifically targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are included in the national areas for cooperation (Appendix 1). They include providing leadership programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability advocates, consideration of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability in the implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme and other initiatives under Closing the Gap.

In planning for the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in sites in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, jurisdictions are considering principles in the development of supports and strategies for Indigenous people with disability within the Scheme focusing on:

- appropriate engagement of Indigenous people in the design and management of local supports
- developing awareness of existence and impact of disability in Indigenous communities
- future employment opportunities in a National Disability Insurance Scheme for Indigenous people
- innovation in terms of technology, support arrangements and aids and equipment
- appropriate representation of Indigenous people within Scheme governance to ensure Indigenous people with disability are active partners in shaping National Disability Insurance Scheme policies and supports.

3. GOVERNANCE

Governance arrangements

Responsibility for implementation of the National Disability Strategy sits with the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services. Reporting to the Council of Australian Governments over the Strategy's life span is also a responsibility of the Standing Council. The Development Officials Working Group will provide support to the Standing Council.

Chapter 4 outlines how monitoring and reporting will be undertaken.

Overseeing implementation is the role of a dedicated unit within the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The unit will also manage the Development Officials Working Group Secretariat. The unit can be contacted at nationaldisabilityst@fahcsia.gov.au or at the following address:

National Disability Strategy Government Engagement
Disability and Carers Policy Branch
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 7576
Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

The Australian Government has also established an inter-departmental committee to implement the Strategy. All relevant Australian Government agencies are responsible for implementing the Strategy and will be asked to provide input to the progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments on how their policies and services align with the Strategy.

Stakeholder engagement

Improving outcomes for people with disability through the new comprehensive and inclusive approach to policies, services and programs outlined in the Strategy requires a whole-of-government and community commitment. Governments will cooperate to achieve change across all relevant policies, programs and services. The community sector and individuals also have a role in advancing and promoting the Strategy using their networks and organisations.

Just as the development of the Strategy was informed by consultations with people with disability—reported in *Shut Out*—a commitment has been made to continue engagement with people with disability and their representative organisations during its implementation. Governments will work collaboratively with people with disability and their representative organisations, their families and carers, communities, unions, businesses, service providers, advocacy and other organisations in the development of programs, policies and systems that affect people with disability.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has an important role in ensuring the Strategy upholds the human rights of people with disability. The Commission performs a wide range of functions to assist individuals and organisations to understand their rights and meet their legal responsibilities. It conducts public inquiries, negotiates disability guidelines and standards, supports organisations to develop disability action plans and runs community education programs.

4. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The National Disability Strategy sets out a ten year national policy framework for improving the lives of Australians with disability, their families and carers. Progress needs to be clearly and regularly communicated to people with disability, their families and carers, governments and the wider community. The Strategy will be revised and updated over its ten year life span in response to progress reviews.

The Australian, state and territory governments have adopted a bold vision for the Strategy:

An inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

Achievements may not be immediately measurable because of the vision's long-term focus. A key initiative is the introduction of a periodic high-level report using population trend data to track national progress. These reports will be prepared every two years for the Council of Australian Governments commencing in 2014, and will be publicly available.

Trend indicators

The two-yearly progress reports will monitor progress against the six policy outcomes using independent reporting and analysis of data on trend indicators.

The draft trend indicators presented in the Strategy were based on national data that was available at that time. (Refer to Figure 1 for a list of draft trend indicators and proposed data sources). As improvements have since been made to data, governments now have an opportunity to review the draft trend indicators and identify possible new ones.

Governments will be seeking advice on the draft trend indicators from stakeholders in the disability community and from data agencies. People with disability will be engaged in this review through each jurisdiction's disability advisory body and peak bodies and the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group.

Options for the final set of trend indicators will be considered by governments in February 2013. The results of a review of the National Disability Agreement performance framework, which was completed in July 2012, will be taken into consideration.

Additional monitoring tools

The two-yearly progress reports will also include:

- other evidence of change, such as reporting from the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services about key achievements as well as reporting from disability champion ministers and, where appropriate, other portfolio ministers
- outcomes of any reviews of national agreements and national partnerships
- state and territory government information on their disability plans
- Australian Government agencies' policies and programs that are working towards achieving the Strategy's vision

- the views of people with disability, their families and carers and their representative organisations on progress—this may be through reports from jurisdictional disability advisory body and the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group and may include case studies of how the Strategy is making a difference.

In addition, each area for future action includes measures of success. Agencies responsible for these actions will be asked to provide information on these measures, as well as an update on the status of each area for action. Where available, the results of individual program evaluations will also be included.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Monitoring of the Strategy will contribute to the Australian Government's reporting requirements under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Strategy will play an important role in protecting, promoting and fulfilling the human rights of people with disability. It will ensure that the principles underpinning the Convention are incorporated into policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers.

In December 2010 Australia's initial report under the Convention was lodged with the United Nations. After a report is lodged, States Parties appear before the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to answer questions about the report. The date for Australia's initial appearance has not yet been set. Subsequent reports must be submitted at least every four years. Australia's reporting will draw on data from the Strategy's reporting and evaluation process.

Figure 1

Draft trend indicators*	Data sources
Inclusive and accessible communities	
Proportion of people with disability reporting difficulty using public transport	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Proportion of people with disability participating in common cultural and recreational activities	Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey or Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Rights protection, justice and legislation	
Feelings of safety in different situations by disability category	Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey
Proportion of people with disability participating in civic life	Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey
Proportion of complaints under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (or subsequent legislation that may replace it), by sub-category	Australian Human Rights Commission
Economic security	
Proportion of people with disability participating in the labour force Proportion of people with disability in both private and public sector employment	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Difference between the average income of people with disability and the average income for all Australians	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Proportion of people with disability experiencing housing stress	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Personal and community support	
Proportion of the potential population accessing disability services	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Disability Services National Minimum Data Set (Disability Services National Minimum Dataset)

Proportion of the potential population expressing unmet demand for disability support services	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Proportion of carers of people with disability accessing support services to assist in their caring role	Disability Services National Minimum Dataset
Proportion of Indigenous people receiving disability services	Disability Services National Minimum Dataset
Learning and skills	
<p>Educational achievement of people with disability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. proportion of people with disability in mainstream schools 2. proportion of people aged 19–25 with disability who have attained at least Year 12 or equivalent qualification 3. proportion of people with disability with post-school qualifications 	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Health and wellbeing	
Proportion of people with disability who report their health status as good or better	Australian Bureau of Statistics General Social Survey or Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Access to general practitioners, dental and other primary healthcare professionals for people with disability	Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
Risk factors for preventable disease in people with disability	Australian Bureau of Statistics National Health Survey

*Draft trend indicators will be reviewed in 2013.

5. EVALUATION PLAN

Periodic evaluation of the National Disability Strategy will investigate its effectiveness as a national policy framework that:

1. aims to guide activity across six key outcome areas
2. drives future reform in mainstream and specialist disability service systems to improve outcomes for Australians with disability, their families and carers.

Over the coming years, the Strategy will be evaluated progressively using the information gathered in the two-yearly progress reports. This approach to evaluation will allow governments to learn from past experience and if needed review and amend the approach taken. For instance, in the lead-up to each implementation stage governments can consider what has or has not worked and design the next implementation stage accordingly. Evaluation elements are summarised in Figure 2.

A final evaluation report will be prepared at the end of the ten year period and will be made available to the public. The final evaluation will use the evidence gathered through the two-yearly progress reports and will draw on the findings from evaluations of related government initiatives. It will also assess the Strategy's performance in terms of the vision, the six policy outcomes (see Figure 3), and the purpose of the Strategy (National Disability Strategy, p. 9) which is to:

- establish a high-level policy framework to give coherence to, and guide government activity across, mainstream and disability-specific areas of public policy
- drive improved performance of mainstream services in delivering outcomes for people with disability
- give visibility to disability issues and ensure they are included in the development and implementation of all public policy that affects people with disability
- provide national leadership toward greater inclusion of people with disability.

The key high-level evaluation questions are:

- has there been a change in outcomes as measured by the trend indicators?
- did the Strategy help focus the community and government on improving the lives of people with disability and, if so, how did it contribute (as measured by the formative evaluations)?

Stakeholder involvement

The views and experiences of people with disability and their representative organisations are central to the evaluation, together with input from other key stakeholders including families and carers, advocacy and other organisations, academics, and governments.

Feedback from people with disability will be sought through representative bodies such as each jurisdiction's disability advisory body and the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council.

Moreover, evaluation may also draw upon findings of non-government reports on Australia's progress in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, such as the shadow reports that are customarily prepared by non-government organisations and lodged with the United Nations to supplement the reports of States Parties.

Figure 2

Year	Evaluation elements
2012	1. Publish plan for first implementation phase 2011–2014
2013	2. Commence review of first implementation phase 2011–2014 3. Possible year for Australia’s first appearance before the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about the first Australian report
2014	4. First two-yearly progress report (includes trend indicator data, summary of key achievements and other information) 5. Report on review of first implementation phase 2011–2014 6. Scheduled year for the second Australian report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
2015	7. Publish plan for second implementation phase 2015–2018
2016	8. Second two-yearly progress report (includes trend indicator data, summary of key achievements and other information) 9. Possible year for Australia’s second appearance before United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about second Australian report
2017	10. Commence review of second implementation period 2015–2018
2018	11. Third two-yearly progress report (includes trend indicator data, summary of key achievements and other information) 12. Report on review of second implementation phase 2015–2018 13. Scheduled year for the third Australian report under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
2019	14. Publish plan for third implementation phase 2019–2020
2020	15. Commence review of third implementation phase 2019–2020 16. Fourth two-yearly progress report (includes analysis of trend indicator data, summary of key achievements and disability champion ministers’ reports) 17. Possible year for Australia’s third appearance before United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities about third Australian report
2021	18. Final evaluation report (including report on review of third implementation phase)

Vision: An inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens

Structure of Strategy and implementation		Guide government activity	Drive improved performance	Give visibility to disability issues	Provide national leadership							
Purpose of the National Disability Strategy:		Inclusive and accessible communities	Rights protection, justice and legislation	Economic security	Personal and community support							
Outcome statements and policy directions (outputs) for the six outcome areas:				Learning and skills	Health and wellbeing							
Inputs/activities:		Current commitments, areas for future action and key actions (identified in each implementation period)										
Implementation framework 2010–2020		Implementation phase 1: 2011–2014		Implementation phase 2: 2015–2018								
Timeline		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021–2022
Two-yearly reporting to Council of Australian Governments – timing			First year report		2014 report		2016 report		2018 report		2020 report	Final evaluation
Two-yearly reporting to Council of Australian Governments – key elements (formative evaluation)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on measurement of trend indicators (which track to the six outcome areas and policy directions). Summaries of key achievements from each jurisdiction/minister and, where appropriate, feedback from disability champion ministers and other ministers. Input from people with disability and other stakeholders: feedback, case studies etc. Summaries of related policy and program evaluations. Outcomes from reviews of relevant Council of Australian Governments national agreements and national partnership agreements 										
Reviews of implementation periods (formative evaluation)		Review and public release cycles:	Commence review of phase 1	Report on review of phase 1	Commence review of phase 2	Report on review of phase 2	Commence review of phase 3 and report in final evaluation					
Approximate timing of contributions to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reporting		Appear before United Nations Committee re: 1 st Australian report	2 nd Australian report under United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	3 rd Australian report under United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Appear before United Nations Committee re: 2 nd Australian report	3 rd Australian report under United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Appear before United Nations Committee re: 3 rd Australian report					
Final evaluation report (summative evaluation)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To address key evaluation questions on vision, outcomes and purpose of Strategy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> has there been a difference in outcomes for people with disability (as measured by trend indicators)? did the Strategy contribute to these changes and, if so, how (as measured by formative evaluations)? Will use numerous sources such as stakeholder feedback, case studies, findings of summative evaluations, other policy and program evaluations and case studies. Prepared from 2020 for release post-2020. 										

Ongoing engagement between stakeholders: people with disability, their families and carers, organisations, experts and governments

6. CONCLUSION: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The National Disability Strategy is a tangible expression of the agreement made by all Australian governments to take responsibility for Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It reflects the commitment made by governments to work together to improve mainstream and specialist policies, programs and infrastructure, so that people with disability can participate in all aspects of Australian life as equal citizens.

This first report to the Council of Australian Governments outlines the action that governments have taken, or will take, to deliver on the Strategy, including information on the fifty-three areas for future action identified as priorities in 2009.

The Strategy is a ten year national policy framework. Accordingly, the three-phased approach to its implementation and the related evaluation framework aim to provide scope for ongoing and continuous reflection on how effective the Strategy has been in promoting, driving and embedding a mainstream and inclusive response to disability across all elements of peoples' lives.

This reflection, informed by ongoing stakeholder engagement, will feed into the development of two further implementation plans in *Driving Action 2015–2018* and *Measuring Progress 2019–2020*.

Over the ten year life span of the Strategy, governments will be looking for evidence that the profile of people with disability and their needs has been raised across governments, business and the community. Every two years disability ministers will track the success of the Strategy and report on progress to the Council of Australian Governments.

The Strategy's vision for the future is clear and simple. Steadily and purposefully it aims to deliver an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

By 2020, we envisage an Australian society that acknowledges the benefits people with disability bring to all elements of everyday life. This new attitude means that disability issues will be considered automatically in the development and delivery of all mainstream policies and services.

Appendix 1. National Areas of Cooperation

The following section of this report details the specific action that both the Australian and state and territory governments have introduced or will progress to give effect to the objectives of the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*. These actions are based on the fifty-three priority areas for future action identified by stakeholders during extensive stakeholder consultations undertaken in 2009 and reported in *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia (2009)*.

The actions that have been detailed are only the starting point in the implementation of the Strategy. They are actions that were identified as priorities at the beginning of the ten year Strategy and that governments have been able to put in place immediately or which, with some further development, can be achieved in the short to medium term.

The National Disability Strategy is a high-level ten year national policy framework that has been designed to accommodate and respond to emerging and changing priorities over time. As a vehicle for driving improved performance of mainstream services, it is anticipated that there will be a perceptible upward shift in what is expected in government and non-government service delivery in terms of a universal service standard for people with disability. This incremental improvement will give rise to continual reassessment of priority action areas for future years.

The National Disability Strategy's reporting and evaluation framework and its commitment to ongoing engagement with people with disability and their representative organisations provide the mechanisms to ensure government policies and funding priorities align with emerging priorities and expectations of people with disability and their communities.

The flexible design of the Strategy also enables government, non-government and business sectors, industry and the wider community to continually explore opportunities to improve the life experiences and outcomes for people with disability, their families and carers. For example, there is considerable potential for new and developing technologies to be applied in ways that will improve access and inclusion of people with disability in both physical and 'virtual' environments, facilitating greater participation in economic, social and cultural life. Future implementation plans for the Strategy might include priority areas for action associated with these developments.

The priority action areas in the following section of the report focus on actions that governments can reasonably achieve in 2011–2014. Nevertheless, all levels of government will remain open to new opportunities to build on and expand their policy and program responses to the Strategy.

Outcome 1. Inclusive and accessible communities—*People with disability live in accessible and well designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.*

Five policy directions under this outcome:

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



People with disability have a right to a community that is designed to include everybody.

Whether that means building more physically accessible public infrastructure and housing, the communication of information in accessible formats or changing societal attitudes so that people with disability feel included, change in this area is necessary.

The Strategy provides a cohesive vision for advancing the interests of people with disability, their families and carers across the whole community. (National Disability Strategy, p. 13)

Greater awareness of the issues facing people with disability among planners and policy makers will play an important role in advancing the response of mainstream policies.

This should be seen as a means to achieving the more important role of changing the general community's perception and understanding of the rights of people with disability and the contribution they make to society.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010 General Social Survey found that people with restriction in core activities:

- *were considerably more likely than people without disability to experience difficulty getting to places they need to go*
- *had lower levels of participation in community activities such as going out to a movie, a café, a sporting event, the theatre, parks or museums*
- *were much less likely than people without disability to use computers and access the internet, despite the increasing importance of the internet as a source of information and mediator of participation across a range of social and community activities*
- *experience greater social isolation due to lower levels of daily contact with family and friends, as well as difficulties in accessing support services.*

Source: National Disability Strategy 2010–2020 evidence base, November 2011, pp. 14–17.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy-discussion-paper-easy-english-version/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020-evidence-base>

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs:

South Australia – Transport standards and premises standards

The ongoing program for upgrade of public transport infrastructure enables more people with disabilities to access public transport services to increase participation and develop strong

social networks. Come and Try days for people with disability to become more familiar with public transport in a non-pressured environment will be scheduled following a successful pilot that took place in 2011. Customer information, including the Adelaide Metro website, is being upgraded for release in consultation with people with disability through advisory groups and in collaboration with peak disability support groups.

The development of a new access and inclusion plan will ensure review of documentation and audit processes for adherence to the *Disability (Access to Premises—Buildings) Standards 2010* and *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002*.

South Australia—Universal design

In South Australia, universal design principles will be adopted for all new government projects, including at the local government level. This will promote greater access to community facilities and public spaces for people with disability.

South Australia—Urban planners, housing, disability and ageing sectors working with local government, Flinders University, technology providers and people with disability

As part of the construction of the Stage 1 Woodville West Urban Development project, eight high-tech or ‘Smart Living’ apartments will be built specifically for people with disability. These apartments will use cutting-edge technology to give people who would usually require 24-hour support the opportunity to live independently in the community.

Disability Services will use these apartments to demonstrate how people living with disability, with high support needs, can be supported to live in their own apartment at the same or less cost than shared supported community accommodation. This will be achieved through the use of a variety of technologies installed in the apartments to assist the person living with a disability to exercise control over their life, access onsite 24/7 concierge service and facilitate access to their local community. The apartments will be wired to accommodate a range of controls which might be found in modern homes.

The apartments will be a major step forward in housing for people with disability, offering the opportunity to refine and develop leading-edge technology and maximise people’s choices and control over their environment and lifestyle. People with disability will be able to participate in the evaluation of the project providing valuable feedback for future developments.

Northern Territory—Transport for students with special needs

The Northern Territory Government’s Department of Lands and Planning, in partnership with the Department of Education and Training, provides transport assistance to and from school for eligible preschool, primary and secondary students with special needs. Special needs transport is for students who are mobility impaired due to a disability or medical condition that prevents independent travel. Students who have been approved for special needs transport by the Department of Education and Training are picked up from their nominated location, by either a taxi or a special needs bus (depending on the arrangements made with Public Transport Division) and taken to and from school. The buses are crewed by a driver and a transit carer. The safety of students using the transport service is achieved through a collaborative effort of parents and carers, schools, the Student Services Division, transport service providers, drivers, transit carers and the Public Transport Division.

Western Australia – Liveable homes initiative

This initiative is about making accessible and safer to use homes for seniors, people with temporary injuries, families with young children and people with disabilities.

Western Australia – Beach and water access

Working in partnership with a range of stakeholders including local governments and surf lifesaving organisations, this Disability Services Commission lead initiative resulted in a number of local governments introducing beach matting and beach wheelchairs, ensuring everyone has equal access to Western Australian beaches.

Western Australia – Count me in local government inclusion grants

One-off inclusion grants of up to \$50 000 have been made available to local governments to facilitate greater inclusion and participation opportunities for people with disability, their families and carers.

Queensland – Increasing access to information

Disability Online is the single entry point to government information providing Queenslanders with disability; their families, carers and friends; and the community access to a wide range of disability-related information, regardless of the government department responsible for providing the service. The pages include easy to understand information, in a way that makes sense and is simple to navigate. Current topics include transport; legal information and rights; getting out in the community; education, employment and training; and accessing support. The website provides up-to-date, relevant and engaging information about topics that matter to people and stories that highlight the experiences of people with disability in Queensland to complement topic-based information.

Victoria – Arts industry Disability Action Plan training

In 2011, the Victorian Government piloted a new model for disability action plan training to deliver industry specific arts Disability Action Plan training (aDAPt) to twenty-eight Victorian recurrently funded arts organisations and arts industry peak associations. Arts industry specific training resources including a DVD with arts industry representatives promoting successful access and inclusion initiatives have also been developed as part of this project.

Victoria – Strengthening the participation of people with disability in sports and recreation

Beginning in 2011, the Victorian Government in partnership with VicHealth developed disability inclusion standards, an outcomes framework and disability inclusion resources for the VicHealth *Everyone Wins* toolkit, to be used by state sporting associations and local clubs.

Australian Capital Territory – The DISH@Oatley

In October 2011, Disability ACT co-located its Information Service, Community Development Officer and Housing Options Facilitator with community organisations to the DISH@Oatley (Disability Information Support Hub). This hub of services will deliver disability information, support, planning and community development from one site, enabling early intervention services to be targeted across the ACT more strategically and therefore bolster their reach and effectiveness. It is also intended to develop mechanisms to support the cooperation between agencies and to support an integrated service system. This is in line with a commitment under the *Policy Framework for Children and Young People with Disability and their Families and Future Directions: Towards Challenge 2014*.

Australian Capital Territory—Universal design

The ACT Community Services Directorate is working with the ACT Economic Development and Environment and Sustainable Development Directorates to implement Universal Housing Design Standards. The ACT Government has been consulting with the building industry about developing universal design guidelines for the residential industry in the ACT. All public housing recently constructed has been built to either adaptable standards or universal design principles.

Australian Capital Territory—Accessible transport

As of 30 September 2011, ACTION was on track to meet its *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport* targets for accessible buses with 45.6 per cent of the fleet being accessible to people using wheelchairs. A study of bus services to low density suburbs (the Coverage Service) was funded as part of the 2010–2011 *Transport for Canberra* budget package. The study identifies areas of transport disadvantage; that is, places where there is a lower supply of public transport and more socially disadvantaged people. This information will be used to inform the planning of future bus services.

Tasmania – Arts and Disability Grant Program

The Tasmanian Government, in its support of Arts Tasmania continues to fund the Arts and Disability Grant Program that aims to breakdown the social barriers to enable emerging and established artists with disability to reach their full potential.

Tasmania – Arts and Disability Community Engagement Strategy

Arts Tasmania completed stage one of the *Arts and Disability Community Engagement Strategy*. The objective of the strategy is to establish a capacity building networking forum that overcomes isolation, negative stigma of disability, promotes partnerships towards quality arts and disability practice, and assists in contributing towards quality arts and disability outcomes.

Areas for future action

Area for future action 1.1. Improve access and increase participation of people with disability in sporting, recreational, social, religious and cultural activities whether as participants, spectators, organisers, staff or volunteers.

Action 1.1.1. Implementation of the National Arts and Disability Strategy

Why is this important?

All people with disability have a right to participate in cultural activities but often face barriers to that participation.

What will it do?

The *National Arts and Disability Strategy* provides a long-term vision that people with disability can participate fully in the arts and cultural life of Australia and that the artistic aspirations and achievements of people with disability are a valued and visible part of Australian culture.

The *National Arts and Disability Strategy* can be found online at:

http://www.cmc.gov.au/working_groups/national_arts_and_disability_strategy

The *National Arts and Disability Strategy* was developed following a 2007 election commitment to New Directions for the Arts, and was endorsed by the Australian, state and territory governments in October 2009.

It is aligned with the Australian Government's social inclusion priority area of improving outcomes for people with disability or mental illness and their carers, by reducing discrimination, creating employment opportunities and building community support.

The *National Arts and Disability Strategy* is a whole-of-government approach to supporting social inclusion in the arts and related industries. It seeks to address the physical and financial barriers to full and active citizenship faced by people with disability.

It encourages all governments to adopt strategies to address the following four focus areas:

- improve access and participation to arts and cultural activities by people with disability, both as audiences and participants
- address barriers which prevent emerging artists and cultural workers with disability to develop their careers
- develop audiences for work created by artists with disability and disability arts organisations
- empower people with disability to have a stronger voice in policy planning and to develop strategies to improve collaboration across the sector and governments.

In August 2011 cultural ministers from all jurisdictions agreed that the *National Arts and Disability Strategy* would continue to be a priority and noted progress made to date. A full jurisdiction report outlining progress made by each state and territory can be found online at the web address provided above.

Responsibility

All cultural ministers have responsibility for implementation.

How will it be done?

An implementation working group, comprising state and territory arts ministry representatives from all jurisdictions, has been established to monitor progress and discuss national priorities and future activities. The working group reports to cultural ministers.

The working group has identified priority projects for action, including a national approach to research and data collection; raising awareness of arts and disability in the broader community, and improving information availability and sharing within and outside of the sector.

Stakeholder participation

The *National Arts and Disability Strategy* is the result of national public consultation which included 115 submissions made in response to a discussion paper released in late 2008. The process ensured that this strategy was strongly informed by the arts and disability sector.

An evaluation that will review the Strategy's effectiveness over the past three years will commence in 2012-13. The evaluation will be undertaken in consultation with the arts and disability sectors to ensure objectives are being met.

The Australian Government is providing funding to the national peak body for arts and disability, Arts Access Australia, with a view to supporting the *National Arts and Disability Strategy*. This has facilitated a valuable working relationship as well as supporting effective communication between all levels of government and the arts and disability sectors in developing sound policy.

Success indicator

Identified priority projects are implemented and activities undertaken that contribute to progress against the agreed goals under the four focus areas outlined in the *National Arts and Disability Strategy*.

Arts Access Australia

In July 2011 the Australian Government provided \$500 000 for Arts Access Australia, the peak national body for arts and disability, to undertake a range of initiatives to support the *National Arts and Disability Strategy*. Arts Access Australia works to increase opportunities and access for people with disability such as artists, arts workers, participants and audiences.

Australian Government funding will support the following Arts Access Australia initiatives:

- \$240 000 to develop the organisation's capacity and strategic position in the provision of resources, partnership development and public awareness initiatives
- \$200 000 for research involving broad consultation with the sector, to identify strategies to improve arts engagement by people with disability
- \$60 000 to administer the Cultivate pilot funding program which provides grants to artists with disability to develop their professional practice and support career pathways.

Initiatives supported with this funding are being well received across the arts and disability sector. Some of the highlights include the announcement of the first recipients of the pilot Cultivate program in December 2011. There was great demand for support under the pilot program, demonstrating a clear need for this type of funding.

In March 2012 Arts Access Australia launched an art prize for Australian artists with disability. Each year the prize will focus on a different art form. In 2012 the prize is being awarded to a visual artist.

Arts Access Australia has established a new mentoring pilot project that will work with people with disability. It has also partnered with four of its member organisations to conduct five separate research projects in different states. A major research project will focus on improving work participation in the arts sector for people with disability. Other projects focus on the accessibility of arts funding, governance and leadership opportunities for people with disability.

Action 1.1.2. Development of national inclusive playground design guidelines

Why is it important?

All children have a right to play. This right is not only recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child but it is also universally acknowledged that play is an important part of childhood development.

What will it do?

This initiative will improve the lives of children and young people by creating a level playing field for children with special needs so that children of all ages and abilities can use playgrounds side by side.

The creation of a set of national inclusive playground design guidelines will assist those building play spaces in Australia and ensure the rollout of inclusive playgrounds across Australia is supported with best practice standards for play spaces.

The Touched by Olivia Foundation has built and opened four all-inclusive playgrounds in Australia. Another fifteen are under development and a total of forty-two are planned. These playgrounds will ensure increased play opportunities are accessible to all regardless of their ability.

Responsibility

The National Inclusive Playground Design Guidelines are being coordinated through the Touched by Olivia Foundation.

How will it be done?

In May 2012, 27 of Australia's leading practitioners, academics and organisations met in Canberra to create a best practice document for building inclusive play spaces. The estimated costs associated with this work is \$200 000 of which the Australian Government contributed \$50 000 to facilitate a two-day national workshop with key stakeholder groups to discuss and progress the standardisation of guidelines.

One of the key objectives of this initiative is that every community will have an inclusive playground within ten years.

Stakeholder participation

The Touched by Olivia Foundation playground model involves facilitating partnerships with key national organisations, government and business and community groups for the deployment of inclusive play spaces. There are more than 27 industry associations and representatives involved in this initiative.

Success indicator

A key success indicator is for agreed guidelines to be developed to extend inclusive play spaces across Australia.

Action 1.1.3. Implementation of the Accessible Communities Initiative

Why is it important?

People with disability and their carers have the same rights as other Australians to play a part in their local community and access local facilities and public spaces. However, they often face physical barriers to this participation.

What will it do?

This initiative will make local buildings and public spaces more accessible for people with disability so they can fully participate in the community.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and all funded local governments have responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

Infrastructure grants of up to \$100 000 GST exclusive (total \$5 million GST exclusive) have been provided by the Australian Government to sixty-six local governments.

Each successful local government matched the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs funding amount via a local government contribution towards the intended project.

Projects range from swimming pool modifications such as ramps and pool hoists to accessible toilets and improved access to sporting arenas and stadiums, outdoor lifts at community centres and libraries, access paths to community facilities such as town halls, arts and function centres and parks, and upgrades to inclusive children's playgrounds.

Stakeholder participation

The Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Australian Local Government Association, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, and local government associations in states and territories were consulted in the development of this initiative. Local governments have provided feedback on the achievements of their individual projects. This information was used to inform the review of this initiative.

Success indicator

An internal review of the Accessible Communities initiative was undertaken between July and September 2012. Overall, the initiative has achieved its aim of improving access to public buildings and spaces for people with disabilities in their local communities. The initiative was well received by local governments and demonstrated that the completed projects provided an immediate benefit to the local community. The initiative was implemented effectively.

Action 1.1.4. Implementation of the Increasing Accessibility Library Initiative

Why is this important?

One of the significant barriers to inclusion and community participation for people with print disability is lack of access to information.

What will it do?

The library initiative uses enabling technology to provide people with print disability greater access to information currently available to the wider community through the public library system.

The initiative also encourages greater social inclusion and participation through engagement with the public library network and the many services they offer.

Public libraries play a central and valued role in strengthening communities, providing opportunities for all Australians to access resources, services and information.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government gave \$1 million to the Australian Library and Information Association (2010–2011 Federal Budget) under the initiative. This has resulted in 1259 playback devices (Daisy players and Navigators) being provided to selected public libraries across Australia for people with print disability.

Library content converted to digital format can be accessed using the playback devices, which can be borrowed from the library. Relevant library staff received training to help users to access the digital content.

Libraries are employing a range of approaches to ensure their users are aware of the devices and their significant benefits, including posters, printed t-shirts and directly approaching library users with print disability. They are committed to increasing awareness, with many libraries facilitating innovative ideas like book clubs and discussion groups.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Library and Information Association, the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and print disability organisations were consulted in the development of this initiative.

Success indicator

Over 1,299 playback devices have been delivered to more than 170 public libraries across the country and 1,345 library patrons have identified that they participated in the Library Initiative.

Of the 432 patrons surveyed regarding their participation in the Library Initiative:

- 98.8 per cent reported that the playback devices improved their access to print material
- 94.7 per cent were satisfied with the playback devices they utilised.

Action 1.1.5. Increased cinema access

Why is it important?

Cinema is a significant social, cultural and information medium in Australian society. However, people with disability are often not able to access cinemas, particularly if they are deaf, hearing impaired, blind or vision impaired.

What will it do?

The *Cinema Access Implementation Plan* will provide improved access to cinemas for deaf, hearing impaired, blind or vision impaired people by ensuring 242 screens will be accessible by the end of 2014. This work has begun and sixty-one accessible screens were operational at the end of 2011.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and cinema chains have responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will contribute \$500 000 (over four years) toward the estimated \$2.2 million cost of buying the necessary equipment. The balance of costs will be met by the cinema chains.

Under the plan the four main chains (Hoyts, Village Cinemas, Event Cinemas and Reading Cinemas) have agreed to fast track implementation of new audio description and closed captioning technology. Cinema patrons will be able to borrow CaptiView units (for closed captioning) or headsets (for audio description) when attending screening of accessible movies.

Stakeholder participation

Recognising the need to ensure people with disability are consulted the Australian Government supported the establishment of the Accessible Cinema Advisory Group. It includes representatives of the cinema chains, motion picture distributors, the disability and media advocacy sectors and the Australian Human Rights Commission, to monitor the progress of this initiative.

Success indicator

By the end of 2014 closed captions and audio description will be available in at least one screen in every one of the 132 cinema complexes run by the four major cinema chains. Closed captions and audio description will be available in:

- one screen for every complex with six or fewer screens
- two screens for every complex with seven to twelve screens
- three screens for every complex with thirteen or more screens.

This will equate to 242 accessible screens by the end of 2014.

The four cinema chains report to the Accessible Cinema Advisory Group on the progress of rollout.

Action 1.1.6. Increased opportunities to participate in mainstream sports

Why is it important?

Sport is significant in Australian society and contributes to social, cultural and health outcomes. People with disability have a significantly lower participation rate than people without disability. Increasing the participation of people with disability is an important part of achieving an inclusive Australia.

What will it do?

This initiative will provide increased opportunities for people with disability to participate in a range of sports.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, selected state and territory governments and sporting organisations have responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government, through the Australian Sports Commission, funds and supports national sporting organisations to increase opportunities for people with disability to participate in sport.

Approximately \$1 million of Australian Sports Commission participation funding is spent directly on initiatives to support people with disability. Many of these initiatives are part of a broader inclusive approach being adopted by many sports.

Examples of participation initiatives for people with disability in sport include:

- establishing specific or modified programs to attract people with disability, for example *Gym Ability*, *Sailability*
- educating clubs, coaches and officials to provide a more inclusive environment for people with disability
- setting targets for the number of people with disability included in mainstream activities
- partnering with disability service providers at local level to promote sporting opportunities to people with disability.

The Australian Sports Commission has developed *Sports Ability*, which is an inclusive games program aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activity for people with disabilities, particularly those with high support needs.

Sports Ability hubs have been established through providers such as universities and community organisations. These hubs use *Sports Ability* as a catalyst for greater inclusive goals and outcomes. Hubs exist in Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales, ACT, Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Sports Commission works in partnership with a range of organisations, primarily national sporting organisations and state and territory Departments of Sport and Recreation.

National sporting organisations have established advisory committees to assist people with disability in the direction and implementation of their programs. These advisory committees are varied and may include a person with disability, an experienced person working in the disability area or similar.

The Australian Sports Commission also seeks input from a range of other stakeholders into the development of various projects and products. For example, development of *Sports Ability* involved a reference group, and more than 1000 people with disability took part in the research project *Getting involved in sport: participation and non-participation of people with disability in sport and active recreation*.

Success indicator

Increased participation rates in the number of people with disability in mainstream organised sport will indicate the success of this action.

Action 1.1.7. Sports participation—enhancing capacity of sporting organisations to include people with disability

Why is it important?

People with disability are less likely to participate in sport than people without disability. It is recognised that sporting participation has health and social benefits for people with disability. It is also an important part of achieving an inclusive Australia.

What will it do?

This initiative will provide support to eight national disability sporting organisations to provide increased opportunities for people with disability to participate in sport.

Responsibility

The Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, through the Australian Sports Commission, has responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government has provided \$1.235 million for national disability sporting organisations, including: AUSRAPID, Athletes with disability, Blind Sports Australia, Deaf Sports Australia, Disabled Wintersports Australia, Riding for the Disabled, Special Olympics and Transplant Australia.

The Australian Sports Commission will continue to provide guidance and assistance to the national disability sporting organisations to build their capacity and capability to facilitate and deliver participation outcomes.

It will also continue to work with the national disability sporting organisations to achieve their strategic goals, improve their business practices and enhance their performance and sports development pathways.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Sports Commission (including the Australian Institute of Sport) is working in close partnership with each of the national disability sporting organisations.

Success indicator

An increase in the number of people with disability participating in organised sport is expected under this action.

Action 1.1.8. Support for international Paralympic events

Why is it important?

Sport is significant in Australian society and contributes to social, cultural and health outcomes. People with disability have a significantly lower participation rate than people without disability. Increasing the participation of people with disability is an important part of achieving an inclusive Australia.

What will it do?

This initiative will provide support to underpin the Australian Paralympic Committee's campaign to contest summer and winter Paralympic Games, as well as other international Paralympic events, and ensure Australia maintains its position at the forefront of international sport.

Responsibility

The Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, through the Australian Sports Commission, has responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government provided more than \$13.6 million in 2011–2012 in funding to the Australian Paralympic Committee for programs to support Paralympic success. This includes funding for sport programs, mainstreaming, talent search, classification, education and broadcasting.

This funding will also be used to provide Direct Athlete Support funding to Paralympic athletes:

- 2010–2011: more than \$2.5 million to 160 athletes
- 2011–2012: more than \$1.3 million to 160 athletes.

In 2011–2012 the Australian Government provided an extra \$600 000 to its Direct Athlete Support Scheme to enable the implementation of parity in athlete payments for able-bodied and Paralympic athletes.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Sports Commission (including the Australian Institute of Sport) is working in close partnership with the Australian Paralympic Committee, national sporting organisations and state and territory Institutes and Academies of Sport.

The Australian Paralympic Committee is the peak body in Australia. It is recognised by the International Paralympic Committee as the National Paralympic Committee for Australia.

The Committee helps Australians with disabilities participate in sport and compete at the Paralympic Games through partnerships with governments, business, sporting bodies and the community.

Success indicator

The Australian Paralympic Team finished the London 2012 Paralympic Games ranked equal fourth on gold medals (32) and fifth on the total number of medals won (85). Australia's 32 gold medals is the highest number of gold medals won at a Paralympic since the Sydney Games in 2000 (63 medals).

Action 1.1.9. Enhance support for high achieving athletes

Why is it important?

Sport is significant in Australian society and contributes to social, cultural and health outcomes. People with disability have a significantly lower participation rate than people without disability. Increasing the participation of people with disability is an important part of achieving an inclusive Australia. It is important to maximise Australia's potential to maintain its standing in Paralympic sport.

What will it do?

This initiative will provide enhanced support, equipment and resourcing for Australia's leading high performance athletes with disability.

Responsibility

The Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport, through the Australian Sports Commission, has responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government is increasing the number and duration of camps at the Australian Institute of Sport and increasing access (more scholarships) for high performance Paralympic athletes.

It is also driving specific research and equipment projects through collaborative research arrangements to provide practical and applied benefits for athletes with disability.

Paralympic coaches participating in coach development activities delivered by the Australian Institute of Sport will be assisted to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience.

The Australian Paralympic Committee will be assisted in the delivery of operational activities related to the 2012 Australian Paralympic Team.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Institute of Sport is working in close partnership with the Australian Paralympic Committee, the governing agency for Paralympic sport which has members with disability.

Success indicator

The Australian Paralympic Team finished the London 2012 Paralympic Games ranked equal fourth on gold medals (32) and fifth on the total number of medals won (85). Australia's 32 gold medals is the highest number of gold medals won at a Paralympic since the Sydney Games in 2000 (63 medals).

Area for future action 1.2. Support the development of strong social networks for people with disability.

Action 1.2.1. Improved access to media

Why is this important?

Access to electronic media such as television is important to all members of the community, including those with a hearing or vision impairment. Improving media access promotes social inclusion and is consistent with Australia's international obligations.

What will it do?

The Australian government is committed to improving access to electronic media for people with hearing and vision impairment.

Captioning

The *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Improved Access to Television Services) Act 2012* received Royal Assent on 28 June 2012. The Act implements the government's response to key recommendations from the Media Access Review final report, which was developed after extensive stakeholder consultation.

The Act creates a new Part 9D in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, which requires that broadcasters must comply with rules and standards relating to captioning of television programs for the deaf and hearing impaired which include:

- new captioning targets for commercial and national television broadcasters
- new captioning obligations and targets for subscription television broadcasters and narrowcasters
- a requirement that the Australian Communications and Media Authority develop standard(s) on captioning quality
- a requirement that broadcasters transmit emergency warnings in the form of text and speech, and caption those warnings where practicable
- new annual compliance reporting and record keeping requirements to support new captioning obligations
- making compliance with the captioning obligations under Part 9D a licence condition
- requiring the Australian Communications and Media Authority to conduct a statutory review of Part 9D in 2015 and give the Minister a report of the review before 30 June 2016.

Audio Description

The Australian Government commissioned the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to conduct a technical trial of audio description, which commenced on 5 August 2012. The broadcast component of the trial ended on 4 November 2012. The trial involved the broadcast of drama, documentary and other content with audio description on free to air digital ABC1 for 14 hours per week for 13 weeks between 5pm and midnight.

Audio description is generally intended to assist people with vision impairment and involves the presentation of the visual component of audio-visual content as additional verbal commentary that complements the underlying soundtrack. The trial is intended to generate a greater understanding of the technical and consumer issues associated with establishing and delivering audio description services in Australia. The Australian Broadcasting Commission will provide a report to the government on the audio description trial in late 2012.

Responsibility

The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

In order for consumers to identify their capacity to participate in the audio description trial, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy commissioned and published research into over 280 receivers with audio description capability. The ABC audio description technical trial then broadcast drama, documentary and other content with audio description on digital ABC1 for 14 hours per week during prime time on free to air digital ABC1. The ABC included programs such as *The Slap*, *Midsomer Murders* and *Grand Designs* in the trial of audio description. Viewers were able to provide feedback on the trial via the ABC switchboard and an online survey page.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Government's captioning reforms, in the *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Improved Access to Television Services) Act 2012*, arose from the extensive consultations conducted around the Media Access Review. In mid-2012, the draft bill was exposed for stakeholder and public comment.

The government consulted with a range of stakeholders, including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Australian Communications and Media Authority and with external stakeholders including the Australian Human Rights Commission while consumers directly participated in the audio description trial providing feedback to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Success indicator

Success will be indicated by increased levels of captioning on television and the introduction of quality standards for captioning. The Australian Communications and Media Authority is consulting with broadcasters to inform the development of reporting forms and captioning standards. A quality standard for captioning will be developed before the end of June 2013. The success of these new captioning requirements will be monitored by the Australian Communications and Media Authority in the context of broadcaster compliance with the targets and quality standards.

The audio description trial will be considered successful when all production, technical and consumer issues associated with the trial are identified and reported to the Australian Government. The Australian Government will consider the report in the context of all issues affecting the converging digital broadcasting environment.

Action 1.2.2. Review and enhance Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Ramp Up*

Why is it important?

Consultations undertaken for the National Disability Strategy identified the need for better information, as well as strategies to reduce isolation and build community capacity. People with disability have lower rates of social and community engagement compared to people without disability.

What will it do?

The website's purpose is to 'ramp up' discussion about disability in Australia. It provides a lively community space for people who live with disability, are friends or family members, work in the sector or just want to get a better picture to have a say.

Ramp Up is an online, interactive website that focuses on the interests, issues and the social and community networking needs of people with disability. *Ramp Up* is dedicated to everything about disability. It is a place for discussion, news, debate, humour and general information for everyone in Australia's disability communities.

It provides a unique and popular web-based communication medium to raise community awareness of issues affecting the lives of people with disability, to encourage debate and to provide an outlet to share ideas, information and creative expression, including humour.

Future developments for *Ramp Up* over the next two years include an increased focus on building a bigger audience through writing and promoting stories of interest to the public.

Responsibility

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation in partnership with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation has built and hosts the *Ramp Up* website and provides management and technical support. The website contains a range of source material including material produced in house as well as specifically commissioned content and user generated content. The website also draws on relevant Australian Broadcasting Corporation content from across all of its platforms: television, radio, news and online.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation consults with stakeholders, including the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council on a regular basis on the content and delivery of *Ramp Up*.

Success indicator

An increase in the number of visitors to the website, new contributions and positive community feedback will indicate the success for this action.

Area for future action 1.3. Monitor adherence to and evaluate the effectiveness of the Disability (Access to Premises Buildings) Standards 2010 and Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 and improve accessibility of reports.

Action 1.3.1. Improve adherence to the Disability (Access to Premises—Buildings) Standards 2010

Why is this important?

People with disability have a right to expect greater and dignified access to, and use of, publicly accessible buildings. Unfortunately they are not always able to access buildings due to physical barriers.

What will it do?

This initiative involves aligning state-based building law with the Australian Government's *Access to Premises Standards*. Compliance will be managed at the time of building approval rather than after the building is occupied. This will ensure that dignified, equitable, cost-effective and reasonably achievable access to public buildings is provided.

The Standards clarify the general non-discrimination provisions of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* in relation to the design, construction and management of buildings. Compliance with the Standards is an important means of improving access.

An audit of a sample of new buildings or building work is to be conducted before the *Access to Premises Standards* are reviewed.

Improvements in data collection will assist with monitoring the implementation of these standards and better evaluation of their effectiveness.

Responsibility

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education and the Attorney-General's Department have responsibility for the Standards.

How will it be done?

The work will be progressed by the Australian Government and state and territory officials.

Stakeholder participation

A public consultation process including people with disability and their representative organisations as part of the five-year review is scheduled to be completed by May 2016.

Success indicator

The five-year review of the Standards will identify the practical impact of improved disability access provisions in buildings that the public has the right to enter.

Action 1.3.2. Improve adherence to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Why is this important?

People with disability find it difficult to participate in their communities because of inaccessible transport. Ensuring that providers continue to improve their adherence to the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport* (Transport Standards) will ensure greater access for people with disability to public transport.

What will it do?

This initiative will improve implementation of the Transport Standards through a common form of reporting on the standards to make reports more accessible and consideration of a national mobility aid labelling scheme to inform consumer choice.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport and the Attorney General's Department have responsibility for these Standards.

How will it be done?

The work will be progressed by the Australian Government, and state and territory officials. A review of the Standards is due to commence in late 2012.

Stakeholder participation

Peak disability sector organisations have representation on the Accessible Public Transport National Advisory Committee.

The Committee acts in a consultancy capacity to provide advice on specific national accessible transport issues, with a particular focus on the Transport Standards.

Success indicator

The second five-year review of the Transport Standards scheduled to commence in late 2012 will identify changes in accessibility to public transport.

Area for future action 1.4. Promote the development of Disability Access Facilitation Plans by airlines and airport operators to improve communication between operators and passengers with disability.

Action 1.4.1. Development of disability access facilitation plans

Why is this important?

Accessibility at airports and airlines is a major concern for people with disability and can impact on their participation in air travel.

What will it do?

Several airlines and airports are publishing disability access facilitation plans. The plans are intended as a communication tool between airline and airport operators and the travelling public on the availability and accessing of services for passengers with disability—ideally covering the total travel experience from making a reservation through to arriving at the intended destination.

The plans may include information such as:

- the services and facilities on aircraft or in airport terminals
- procedures for transporting mobility aids and assistance animals
- the extent of direct assistance available to passengers with disabilities
- advice to passengers on ways to work with airline and airport operators to meet specific needs
- contact details to assist passengers with disabilities to provide feedback on the travelling experience.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport has responsibility.

How will it be done?

A dedicated government, industry and consumer working group, the Aviation Access Working Group, has been established to consider a range of issues affecting disability access to aviation services, such as airport terminal facilities, cabin safety matters, and travelling with mobility aids.

The Australian Government is encouraging all airlines and airports to develop disability access facilitation plans. A number of domestic airlines and airports and some international carriers have now published their plans and other plans are currently under development.

Stakeholder participation

Disability advocacy organisations, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and airport and airline operators participate in the Aviation Access Working Group.

Success indicator

Increased number of airports and domestic and international airlines with published disability access facilitation plans.

Area for future action 1.5. All levels of government develop approaches to increase the provision of universal design in public and private housing in both new builds and modification of existing stock.

Action 1.5.1. Increase the building industry's understanding of livable housing design

Why is this important?

Many Australians will experience some form of limited mobility at some time in their lives as a result of permanent disability, injury or ageing. As a result, they do not have the same choice, flexibility and stability in their housing needs.

What will it do?

The availability of more accessible public and private housing will provide more choice and opportunity for people with disability in terms of where they live. It will open up social and economic opportunities. Livable housing design will offer choice, flexibility and stability to people in these circumstances.

It will establish partnerships between governments and the ageing, community, real estate, building and construction sectors to increase the number, distribution and location of private and public housing built to accessible design standards.

Responsibility

The Australian Government has provided \$1 million over three years in seed funding (commencing 2011–2012) to support the establishment of a non-government organisation, Livable Housing Australia, to promote the initiative. Australian and state and territory housing ministers have agreed to develop options for incorporating the Livable Housing Design standards in all future social housing developments across Australia. This work is being done under the auspices of the Select Council on Housing and Homelessness.

How will it be done?

Livable Housing Australia has been established to work with the ageing, disability community, residential building and construction sectors with the aim of ensuring that all new homes are of an agreed Livable Housing Design standard by 2020.

Stakeholder participation

Livable Housing Australia was established in July 2011 and is comprised of board members from the Property Council of Australia, Australian Human Rights Commission, National Disability Services, the Council on the Ageing, Australian Institute of Architects, the Master Builders Association and Stockland. The Board will engage as appropriate with other key stakeholders including the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council.

Success indicator

The achievement of agreed targets for the number of new dwellings built that comply with the Livable Housing Design standards will indicate the success of the action.

The application of the Livable Housing Design Guidelines is a key element of working toward the aspirational target. The agreed interim targets are:

- 25 per cent to silver level by 2013
- 50 per cent to silver level by 2015
- 75 per cent to silver level by 2018
- 100 per cent to silver level by 2020.

Area for future action 1.6. Improve community awareness of the benefits of universal design.

Action 1.6.1. Develop accreditation process to raise community and industry awareness of universal design

Why is this important?

Many Australians will experience some form of limited mobility at some time in their lives as a result of permanent disability, injury or ageing. As a result, they do not have the same choice, flexibility and stability in their housing needs.

What will it do?

Governments have taken responsibility for increasing the amount of public housing stock that complies with universal building standards.

However, to meet the target of all new homes—public and private—being of an agreed Livable Housing Design by 2020, home owners, buyers, the community, real estate, and building and construction sectors also need to be aware of universal design standards and their benefits.

This initiative will promote the benefits of universal housing design and encourage individuals and organisations with responsibility for the acquisition or construction of new dwellings to consider these benefits when investing in housing.

Responsibility

Housing ministers and Livable Housing Australia have responsibility.

How will it be done?

Livable Housing Australia will develop an accreditation process to facilitate voluntary adoption of Livable Housing Design guidelines and a national outreach strategy.

Stakeholder participation

Livable Housing Australia was established in mid-2011 and is comprised of board members from the Australian Human Rights Commission, National Disability Services, the Council on the Ageing, Australian Institute of Architects, the Master Builders Association and others. The Board will engage as appropriate with other key stakeholders including the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council.

Success indicator

Agreed targets for the number of new dwellings that comply with Livable Housing Design standards.

Area for future action 1.7. Promote universal design principles in procurement

Action 1.7.1. Promote universal design principles in procurement

Why is this important?

Governments need to lead by example in the adoption of universal design standards and promotion of the benefits.

This will contribute to non-government, community and private sectors considering universal design options, not only in the building sector but across all areas of design and manufacture.

What will it do?

This work will build an evidence base to further promote the benefits of universal design. This is an area of future work under the National Disability Strategy.

Responsibility

All governments will have responsibility.

How will it be done?

Governments will work together to develop this initiative.

Stakeholder participation

People with disability will be involved in this action, however a process for engagement is yet to be determined.

Success indicator

Success indicators will be developed.

Area for future action 1.8. All governments adopt the mandated conformance levels for web accessibility as a baseline requirement to ensure more people with disability have access to online information and services.

Action 1.8.1. Adopt website accessibility standards, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 (WCAG 2.0), and the development of a web accessibility national transition strategy

Why is this important?

People with disability cannot always access web-based government information because it is provided in inaccessible formats.

What will it do?

Governments publish a wide variety of information about policies, funding, services, eligibility and guidelines on their internet sites to make it widely accessible to the general public, which includes people with disability. Accessibility standards will assist more people with disability to access this information.

It will ensure that people with disability have access to the same web-based government resources that are available to the wider population.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Information Management Office has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Governments have agreed to adopt website accessibility standards, *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.0 (WCAG 2.0)*, and the development of a web accessibility national transition strategy. This will result in more people with disability accessing necessary information and resources via government internet sites.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) consults regularly with select representative organisations of people with disability with regard to the implementation of the National Transition Strategy and undertakes broader consultation on key issues such as PDF accessibility. In addition, individuals and organisations are welcome to comment on articles on the AGIMO blog, <http://agimo.govspace.gov.au/category/accessibility/>.

Success indicator

Australian Government agencies must update all government websites (as specified within scope under the national transition strategy) to WCAG 2.0 conformance:

- level A (Single A) by 31 December 2012
- level AA (Double A) by 31 December 2014.

To claim conformance, websites must meet all five WCAG 2.0 conformance requirements.

Area for future action 1.9. Use the National Broadband Network as an enabling technology platform to deliver innovative services, communication and support for people with disability, their families and carers.

Action 1.9.1. Implementation of the National Broadband Network

Why is this important?

People with disability have lower rates of social, economic and community participation than people without disability. The National Broadband Network will provide an enabling platform for applications and services that will increase the social, economic and cultural participation of people with disability.

What will it do?

The National Broadband Network will provide 100 per cent of Australian households and businesses access to better, reliable, high-speed broadband. Ninety three per cent of premises will be able to access the optical fibre network. The remaining 7 per cent will be served through a combination of next-generation, high-speed wireless and satellite technologies.

The availability of high-speed broadband will result in fundamental changes to the way in which a range of services are provided. Some of the services that will be possible include:

- improved telecommuting (working or studying from remote locations)
- high-definition videoconferencing
- expanded online education opportunities
- improved online government service delivery and engagement
- the delivery of more advanced and new e-health and e-care services
- the development of assistive communication technologies
- new ways of online shopping
- information management.

The National Disability Strategy seeks to increase the social, economic and cultural participation of people with disability and the National Broadband Network has the potential to play a vital role.

The realisation of that potential will depend on the capacity and understanding of people with disability, government, businesses and service providers to appreciate how high-speed broadband can support a new paradigm in community participation and service delivery for people with disability.

Responsibility

The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy has responsibility for driving this initiative. NBN Co Limited has been established to design, build and operate the National Broadband Network.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government outlined its vision for the National Broadband Network-enabled digital economy in its release of the National Digital Economy Strategy. It included the goal that by 2020, four out of five Australians will choose to engage with the government through the internet or other type of online service.

The Australian Government, state and territory officials are working together to ensure that the needs of people with disability are taken into account when considering initiatives enabled by the National Broadband Network.

Stakeholder participation

It is important that the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy is made aware of the issues that people with disability will face in accessing services over the National Broadband Networks—for example, affordability, capacity building, regulation for universal access.

The National Disability Strategy will provide the opportunity and impetus for the Australian Government to promote people with disability as both consumers and a market for services and applications that can be developed for delivery over the National Broadband Network.

As part of this process the Australian, state and local governments are encouraged to engage with the community including people with disability, their families and carers, consumer groups such as Australian Communications Consumer Action Network and industry.

Success indicator

Evidence that suggests people with disability, their families and carers are embracing the digital economy with increased use of applications and services enabled by the NBN will be used to measure success.

Action 1.9.2. Remote hearing and vision services for children

Why is this important?

Children with hearing and vision impairment in regional and rural areas who do not receive early intervention require more intensive assistance in mainstream schools and may miss key development milestones.

Their families face significant hardship in travelling to major cities to receive regular treatment. This issue is particularly significant in Indigenous communities where children face a disproportionate likelihood of hearing impairment.

What will it do?

Taking advantage of the increased reach and capacity of the National Broadband Network, the Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children Initiative will provide children with hearing and vision impairment, and their families, with video-based access to information, guidance, support and skills development from allied health and education professionals where such expertise may otherwise be scarce.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for implementing this action.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will provide \$4.1 million over three years to selected service providers to assist clients to access allied health and education professionals via live, high definition videoconferencing using the National Broadband Network and web-enabled communication technologies.

The health and education professionals will be able to see children clearly and offer real-time advice as they undertake exercises and everyday activities such as eating and playing.

The initiative will help a further 125 children with vision and hearing impairment in regional and rural locations. This is on top of the 100 children currently supported by the Australian Government through an existing program administered by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

Stakeholder participation

The initiative was developed collaboratively with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, and in consultation with the Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing. In undertaking this work, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs also met with an existing provider to evaluate how their service delivery model operates in practice.

Success indicator

A program evaluation is scheduled to take place between July and December 2013. Funding of \$120 000 has been set aside for the evaluation.

A key indicator for success is an increase in the number of children with hearing and vision impairment in regional and remote areas and in Indigenous communities who are able to access allied health and education services.

The initiative will also measure the improvement in service delivery made possible through the use of the National Broadband Network.



Outcome 2. Rights protection, justice and legislation—*People with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.*

Five policy directions under this outcome:

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



Australia devotes significant effort to ensure people with disability are able to enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Australian, state and territory governments have sought opportunities to ensure the United Nations Convention is implemented effectively, and that the inherent dignity of people with disability is respected and promoted. Nevertheless, people with disability continue to face discrimination in many areas of their lives.

People with disability are citizens with rights, not objects of charity. (National Disability Strategy, p. 16)

The Strategy seeks to promote awareness and understanding of the rights of people with disability, improve responses to them in the justice system, ensure their safety and enable them to participate fully in the economic, civic and social life of our nation.

In 2009–2010 disability discrimination accounted for the highest number of complaints received by the Australian Human Rights Commission, with a total of 1057 (42 per cent) complaints lodged under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Most complaints related to two key areas of life: the provision of goods, services and facilities (36.7 per cent) and discrimination in employment (36.5 per cent).

The 2010 General Social Survey found that people with restrictions in core activities felt more vulnerable when walking alone in their local area after dark than people without disability.

The survey also showed that people with restrictions in core activities were 1.6 times more likely to have been victims of physical or threatened violence and 1.7 times more likely to have been victims of actual or attempted break-ins (in the previous twelve months) than people without disability.

Source: National Disability Strategy evidence base, pp. 18–22

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy-discussion-paper-easy-english-version/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020-evidence-base>

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs.

South Australia – Rights

In South Australia, the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People launched flash cards to teach children with disability in care about their rights.

South Australia—Prevention of abuse and neglect

South Australia has developed a booklet entitled *Protecting children and young people with disabilities; a booklet for parents and carers* which has been created to raise awareness for protecting children with disability from abuse and neglect. The booklet outlines where a parent and carer, including family, informal, unpaid or foster carers, can go for advice. The booklet will increase understanding of the reasons why children are at higher risk of harm, what parents and carers can do to make abuse less likely and which services can help if parents or carers suspect their child has been harmed. A companion resource entitled *A guide to protecting children and young people with disability and preventing sexual abuse* has also been developed to support parents of children with disability by raising awareness about developing protective behaviours and the prevention of sexual abuse.

South Australia—Disability justice plan

South Australia is in the process of developing a disability justice plan in consultation with people with disability and the disability sector to ensure outcomes for people with disability in the justice system are significantly improved. A focus will be vulnerable witnesses and the ability of children with disability to testify in court cases.

South Australia—Court Liaison Team

In 2011, after a review of the interface between the child protection and courts systems, South Australia established a Court Liaison Team to oversee the interface between key agencies regarding child protection matters.

South Australia—Amendments to the *Evidence Act 1929*

The South Australian Government will introduce amendments to the *Evidence Act 1929* to improve outcomes in criminal proceedings for young children and people with an intellectual disability. If passed, the changes will allow for a special exception to the hearsay rule to permit the court, in its discretion, to admit evidence from another person of what a young child or person with an intellectual disability said to them out of court to provide the truth of what the child or person with an intellectual disability said. The South Australian Government will also seek to make wider improvements of both a legislative and non-legislative nature to criminal justice processes for young children and people with an intellectual disability who provide evidence in trials of sexual or violent offences whilst ensuring the defendant's right to a fair trial is preserved.

Northern Territory—Establishment of services for high risk disability clients

The Northern Territory has progressed amendments to the Disability Services Act to allow for the commencement of services in the secure care facilities. Two secure care group homes have been built in Darwin and Alice Springs. These facilities will provide appropriate care and support structures to ensure the wellbeing of adults with disability who present a significant risk of harming themselves and others. Comprehensive clinical assessment, case management and therapeutic intervention are designed to decrease risk behaviours and allow clients to transition out of the service at the earliest appropriate time, creating opportunities for these clients to live in less restrictive settings in the future outside of the secure care facility, giving them a level of independence they have not had previously.

Western Australia – Community Guardianship Program

The *Community Guardianship Program* is run by the Office for Public Advocate for people who require decisions to be made on their behalf and do not have family or friends who can make such decisions for them.

Western Australia – Our Voices, Our Journeys

Our Voices, Our Journeys is a DVD developed by the Disability Services Commission to inform people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds of their rights and what supports and services are available to them across Western Australia.

Australian Capital Territory – Everyone Everyday Program

The *Everyone Everyday Program* is being developed to promote awareness throughout the Canberra community about people with disability and their capabilities and contributions, and to foster respect for their rights and dignity. The aim of the program is to positively influence attitudes and behaviours within the community by raising awareness amongst ACT school students – the next generation of decision makers – who will be our future employers, service providers, business owners, advocates, policy makers, teachers, colleagues, neighbours and friends.

A draft curriculum resource is being developed and will be trialled in ACT schools in late 2012. The focus of the program will be with children in Years 3 to 5. This work is supported by Disability ACT and is be overseen by representatives of BLITS (Business Leaders Innovative Thoughts and Solutions) and the ACT Education Directorate with expertise in curriculum development.

Australian Capital Territory – ACT Carers' Charter

The *ACT Carers' Charter* was launched in October 2011. The Charter is intended to improve the circumstances of carers by raising community awareness and promoting carers' role in service delivery. The Charter consists of five concise core principles. Broadly these focus on ensuring that carers are engaged, supported and able to achieve a quality of life that is in line with community standards. This is in line with the renewed vision of the *Canberra Social Plan 2011* for people to reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community.

Tasmania – Review of the Disability Services Act 1992

The Tasmanian Government's review of the *Disability Services Act 1992* has resulted in a new Act, the *Disability Services Act 2011* being proclaimed in January 2012. The new legislation includes a broader human rights perspective in line with Australia's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Areas for future action

Area for future action 2.1. Promote awareness and acceptance of the rights of people with disability.

Action 2.1.1. Celebrate the United Nation's International Day of People with Disability in December each year

Why is it important?

Celebrating the International Day of People with Disability on 3 December each year provides an opportunity to ensure that the achievements and needs of people with disability, their families and carers remain visible.

What will it do?

The day celebrates and recognises the achievements, contributions and abilities of people with disability. This also provides an important opportunity to raise awareness about disability issues more broadly across the community and, ultimately, to support the development of an inclusive Australian society.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs funds and coordinates Australia's participation in the International Day of People with Disability.

How will it be done?

Australia's annual celebrations include the National Disability Awards which acknowledge the achievements and contribution that individuals or groups with disability make to the community across a range of categories. The awards also recognise individuals or groups that have contributed to the disability sector.

Additionally, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs provides small grants to assist state and territory governments to participate in the International Day of People with Disability celebrations.

Stakeholder participation

People with disability, their families, carers and advocates are involved in the planning and participation of national and local events associated with the day. Nominees and finalists for the awards are nominated by their peers and associates.

The National People with Disabilities and Carer Council performs an important role as a single advisory body on the inter-related issues of disability and caring relationship. Its role in relation to the International Day includes helping to promote and raise the profile of the awards in the community, particularly among people with disability, their families and carers; and providing advice and supporting key decision-making processes leading up to the awards ceremony.

Success indicator

An increased rate of participation in the International Day of People with Disability and subsequent publicity and awareness of the rights of people with disability and carers will indicate the success of this action.

Action 2.1.2. Australia's Human Rights Framework—Education grants fund community and non-government organisations to deliver practical, grassroots human rights education projects for the community and vulnerable groups

Why is it important?

The National Human Rights Consultation recommended that education must be the highest priority for improving and promoting human rights in Australia. Action to make information about human rights more readily available across our community is the centrepiece of *Australia's Human Rights Framework*. Despite the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation in Australia in 1992 as well as ongoing community awareness campaigns, people with disability, their families and carers still report both direct and indirect forms of discrimination in various facets of their lives.

What will it do?

Australia's Human Rights Framework—Education Grants program promotes awareness and understanding of human rights within the Australian community. This includes awareness and understanding the rights of persons with disabilities.

Governments are committed and obliged to promote awareness and acceptance of their rights in accordance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* which aims to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disability from enjoying equal opportunities to participate in the life of the community.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department has responsibility for implementing this action.

How will it be done?

Under *Australia's Human Rights Framework—Education Grants*, the Australian Government is providing \$2 million over four years to non-government organisations to deliver practical and grassroots human rights education to the Australian community.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department provides grants to non government organisations to deliver human rights education. This includes human rights education for people with disability, disability advocates and service providers.

Success indicator

Success for this action will be measured by the number of human rights education projects funded under the program that focus on the rights of people with disabilities. Twenty per cent of the projects funded in the first two rounds of funding deliver training and education specifically to people with disabilities, carers and advocates.

Area for future action 2.2. Monitor and ensure compliance with international human rights obligations.

Action 2.2.1. Develop a National Human Rights Action Plan

Why is this important?

The development of a *National Human Rights Action Plan* which identifies a number of specific actions for people with disability will ensure that human rights for all people, including those with disability, are protected.

What will it do?

The Australian Government aims to promote and undertake measures to respect, protect and fulfil Australia's international human rights obligations, and monitor its efforts.

In particular, the plan demonstrates what governments are doing to implement recommendations accepted or accepted-in-part during Australia's 2011 Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations.

The Plan will provide an overview of what the Australian, state and territory governments will do over the next five years to improve human rights, including for people with disability.¹

Priority areas in the plan were informed by a baseline study of human rights issues and the efforts being undertaken to address them. Each priority area lists relevant actions with a corresponding timeline or performance indicator.

The plan identifies a number of specific actions for people with disability including:

- laying the foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme which will provide people with disability with the care and support they need
- working with the states on the regime governing the sterilisation of women and girls with disability
- making communications more accessible for people with disability in the event of an emergency
- investigating ways that the justice system can better address mental illness and cognitive disability.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

The plan will be implemented over five years. The Australian Government Attorney General's Department will monitor overall implementation. A progress report will be prepared after three years and a final report after five years.

Stakeholder participation

The United Nations *Handbook on human rights action plan* (the plan) recommends broad stakeholder participation.

¹ Queensland Government will not be making a contribution at this time

The plan was developed by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department in consultation with a broad range of government stakeholders and the public, particularly non-government organisations.

In addition to seeking submissions on the baseline study and ideas for new actions, the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department provided funding to the Human Rights Law Centre to run workshops and set up a web presence (including guest blogs) and workshops to engage stakeholder groups.

An exposure draft of the plan was open for public comment until 29 February 2012. Feedback from the public on the exposure draft of the plan asked for more detail about the actions being undertaken in the states and territories. Further consultation with relevant state and territory governments was undertaken and subsequent changes were included in the plan.

The Attorney General's Department expects that the plan will be finalised in late 2012, and then tabled in Parliament and lodged with the United Nations.

Success indicator

Both the interim and final reports will report on a range of human rights outcome indicators to be developed by a joint government and non-government organisation advisory group and approved by the Australian Attorney-General.

The advisory group will also provide advice to the Australian Government on potential improvements to data collection and interpretation to better measure progress on human rights in Australia into the future.

Area for future action 2.3. Develop strategies to reduce violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability.

Action 2.3.1. Ensure that the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022 and the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children have priority action to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children with disability

Why is this important?

People with disability have increased vulnerability to violence, abuse and neglect and measures to mitigate this vulnerability are needed.

What will it do?

This action will raise awareness of the rights of people with disability, provide education and training to young people to encourage respectful relationships with people with disability and make people with disability aware of protective behaviours that they can adopt.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

This will be achieved through:

- promoting and encouraging young people to think about respectful relationships through *The Line* website and campaign
- providing grants to support young people's awareness of ethical behaviour, develop protective behaviours, and develop their skills in conducting respectful relationships
- implementing the national standards for children and young people in out-of-home care
- implementing the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010–2022* which includes strategies to assist people with disability, such as:
 - number 1.2: primary prevention and local community action grants
 - number 4.2: supporting specialist domestic violence services to meet needs of women with disability
 - number 5.1: improving access to justice.

Stakeholder participation

Community organisations with expertise in disability will be supported to promote relationships that are based on respect.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be seen through reduced prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault; increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities; reduced deaths related to domestic violence and sexual assault; and reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence.

Area for future action 2.4. Review restrictive legislation and practices from a human rights perspective.

'Restrictive legislation' provides for the authorisation of restrictive practices. Restrictive practices are predominantly provided for in state and territory legislation.

'Restrictive practices' involve:

- containing or secluding an adult with an intellectual or cognitive disability
- using chemical, mechanical or physical restraint on an adult with an intellectual or cognitive disability
- restricting access of an adult with an intellectual or cognitive disability.

Action 2.4.1. Statements of compatibility and the establishment of a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Why is this important?

The establishment of a requirement for all new Commonwealth Bills and disallowable legislative instruments to be accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility will assist in ensuring that human rights, including the rights of people with disability, are considered in the development of policy and legislation by the Australian public sector. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights is the first Parliamentary Committee dedicated solely to human rights scrutiny.

What will it do?

Every Commonwealth Bill and disallowable legislative instrument must be accompanied by a statement assessing its compatibility with the rights in the seven core United Nations human rights treaties to which Australia is a party.

The Parliamentary Joint Committee has statutory functions to:

- examine Bills for Acts and legislative instruments for compatibility with Australia's human rights obligations
- examine existing Acts for compatibility with human rights
- inquire into any matter relating to human rights which is referred to it by the Attorney General.

Responsibility

Responsibility for ensuring that all Bills and disallowable legislative instruments are accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility rests with the Minister or Member of Parliament who introduces the Bill, or the relevant rule maker in relation to a legislative instrument.

The Australian Parliament through the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights will also have responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

The Committee will review Commonwealth legislation for compliance with Australia's human rights obligations. From 2012, each new Bill introduced into Parliament and disallowable legislative instrument registered must be accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility with human rights. The Committee will report to Parliament.

Stakeholder participation

The *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011* and the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) (Consequential Provisions) Act 2011* were developed in response to the recommendations of the National Human Rights Consultation Committee report.

Success indicator

Human rights are considered early in the development of policy and legislation by the Commonwealth public sector. All new Commonwealth Bills and disallowable legislative instruments are accompanied by a Statement of Compatibility. Reports of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights on improving parliamentary scrutiny of human rights are responded to by the government.

Area for future action 2.5. Examine recommendations arising from the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration on migration treatment of disability, *Enabling Australia*.

Action 2.5.1. Examine recommendations from the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration on the migration treatment of disability

Why is this important?

The legal application of the migration health requirement can result in adverse outcomes for clients and the Australian community. This is especially concerning where applicants are of demonstrable benefit to Australia. The examination of recommendations made by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration will explore options to address this issue.

What will it do?

The Minister for Immigration requested the Committee to inquire into the migration treatment of persons with disability. On 21 June 2010 the Committee tabled its report, *Enabling Australia: inquiry into the migration treatment of disability*.

The recommendations are being examined and a government response is anticipated in 2012. Examination of the recommendations has led the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to begin a review of the health requirement.

In summary the Committee recommended:

- a more flexible and individualised approach to applying the health requirement to persons with disability
- a widening of the range of positive factors, including social and economic contributions, that should be considered when determining whether visa applicants with disability meet the health requirement
- increased transparency of the department's processes and procedures when assessing an applicant with disability against the health requirement.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is reviewing the application of the health requirement cost element taking into account the Committee's recommendations. An announcement on the government's response to the report is expected in late 2012.

Responsibility

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship is developing responses to the recommendations for consideration by government. An inter-departmental committee will be formed to obtain input from other affected Australian government departments.

How will it be done?

The recommendations are complex and, have significant implications in terms of the health budget and the availability of services.

It is therefore important that appropriate time is allowed for proper and detailed analysis of, and consultation on, the implications of the recommendations when determining a response.

Stakeholder participation

Prior to publishing its recommendations the Committee sought the views of people with disability, employers, business organisations, disability and community services providers, advocacy groups and other interested individuals or community stakeholders.

The Committee also asked for personal accounts from those who had difficulties getting a visa because of a disability or condition.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship will seek further input from key stakeholder groups if any changes to the health requirement are to be made as a result of an examination of the recommendations.

Success indicator

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship will provide a detailed and considered response to the recommendations in the *Enabling Australia: inquiry into the migration treatment of people with disability*.

Area for future action 2.6. Improve the reach and effectiveness of all complaint mechanisms.

Action 2.6.1. Review and consolidate the five current Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws to make protections and obligations clearer so the law is more user-friendly for all users of the legislation, including people with disabilities, and to ensure there are simple, cost-effective mechanisms for resolving complaints of discrimination

Why is this important?

Anti-discrimination law has become too complex and there are inconsistencies between the various pieces of legislation.

What will it do?

Streamlined and simplified Commonwealth anti-discrimination laws are needed to improve the effectiveness of mechanisms for people with disability to ensure their human rights are protected and promoted.

The project also seeks to ensure there are effective mechanisms for resolving complaints, and that there is a range of compliance mechanisms to assist organisations to understand their obligations and prevent discrimination from occurring.

Responsibility

A Better Regulation Ministerial Partnership being led by the Australian Government Attorney-General's Department with the Australian Government Department of Finance and Deregulation has responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Attorney-General and Minister for Finance and Deregulation released the exposure draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill on 20 November 2012. On 21 November 2012 the Senate referred the exposure draft of the Bill to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee for inquiry and report. The reporting date is 18 February 2013.

Stakeholder participation

Interested stakeholders are encouraged to provide their views on the exposure draft through the Senate Committee process. The Committee is currently seeking written submissions from interested individuals and organisations. The deadline for submissions is 21 December 2012.

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department undertook extensive consultation around the discussion paper, including multi-stakeholder forums and one-on-one meetings. A number of organisations representing people with disabilities have been involved in these consultations.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be the achievement of a consolidated anti-discrimination law which succeeds in addressing issues of structural and systemic discrimination; and which reduces instances of unlawful discrimination from occurring, but when unlawful discrimination does occur, provides a low-cost, effective means of resolving complaints.

Area for future action 2.7. Provide greater support for people with disability with heightened vulnerabilities to participate in legal processes on an equal basis with others.

Action 2.7.1. Fund selected community legal centres

Why is this important?

Navigating the legal system can be difficult for most people and more so for people with heightened vulnerabilities if their disability and additional needs are not understood. This is particularly the case in discrimination matters where a range of different remedies may be available.

What will it do?

Community legal centres provide legal assistance services to people experiencing discrimination because of a disability or perceived disability or because a family member or friend has a disability. Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services*, people with special circumstances such as an intellectual, psychiatric or physical disability are to be given priority by legal aid commissions when assessing eligibility for a grant of legal aid (Schedule A, Commonwealth legal aid service priorities).

Funding for these community legal centres, and giving priority to applications to legal aid commissions for grants of aid from people with special circumstances, will help:

- ensure the legal needs of people with heightened vulnerabilities are addressed
- achieve widespread understanding of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and other relevant legislation
- educate other community legal centre workers so there is a resource of knowledgeable advocates with access to the complaints mechanism within the Act and any other available avenues of recourse.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department has responsibility for this action

How will it be done?

Funding is provided to nine community legal centres, including two specialist disability discrimination legal centres, to assist people who are pursuing outcomes and remedies through the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Federal Magistrates Court, Fair Work Australia or state jurisdictions using the Anti-Discrimination Commissions and Tribunals.

Australian Government funding for legal assistance services provided by legal aid commissions is provided to the state and territory governments.

Stakeholder participation

Stakeholders are consulted on program guidelines for community legal centres.

Success indicator

This action will result in people with disability being better supported when they seek to pursue legal remedies for discrimination matters. They will be given priority when seeking grants of aid from legal aid commissions.

Area for future action 2.8. Ensure people with disability have every opportunity to be active participants in the civic life of the community—as jurors, board members and elected representatives.

Action 2.8.1. Improve voting services for people with disability

Why is this important?

Participation in the civic life of the community is a basic democratic right. It is important that people with disability are supported to take full advantage of this right and to ensure they have a voice.

What will it do?

This activity will support people with disability to cast their vote and actively participate in democratic processes.

Responsibility

The Australian Electoral Commission has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Voting services for people with disability will be improved and preferred solutions for future elections will be determined in consultation with people with disability.

Stakeholder participation

To ensure people with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in elections the Australian Electoral Commission will continue working closely with disability peak bodies to improve voting services and determine preferred solutions for future elections.

Success indicator

This action will result in more people with disability voting in elections and an increase in the number of people with disability who vote via the online voting system.

Action 2.8.2. Supporting participation by representatives of people with disability in key international forums on human rights

Why is this important?

Supporting participation in international forums will enable Australia to comply with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 32: International Cooperation.

It will also inform Australian disability policy development and promote and protect the rights of people with disability in Australia.

What will it do?

This initiative will support people with disability who wish to represent their non-government organisations at international events with the focus on United Nations forums directly related to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is providing the Australian Human Rights Commission with \$300 000 over three years. The Commission will administer the program.

How will it be done?

The Commission will publish on its website a regularly updated provisional calendar of events containing information about events deemed eligible, and ineligible, for funding following the nomination process.

Events nominated will relate to:

- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- key international forums on human rights for people with disability that relate to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- other key international (and if appropriate, domestic) forums that relate to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and human rights of people with disability.

Consideration will also be given to complementary non-related forums.

Sponsored delegates may be asked to provide the following reports:

- delegation preparation plan – about the domestic preparatory consultation process and anticipated outcomes for attendees
- post event report – about the relevance and benefits of this event for Australians with disability and the lessons that may assist future delegates.

Stakeholder participation

When an event is added to the provisional calendar of events, an email will be circulated via the Disability Discrimination Commissioner's electronic mailing list to alert other potential applicants that the event has been added and indicate a closing date for funding applications.

Disability peak bodies participated in developing the guidelines for this initiative.

Success indicator

This action will result in greater participation by Australian non-government organisations in international events focused on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

People with disability who represent their non-government organisations will now have the opportunity to apply for financial support should they wish to attend key international forums on human rights.

Action 2.8.3. Supporting attendance of people with disability at disability conferences with a national focus held in Australia.

Why is this important?

People with disability often face barriers in participating in conferences.

What will it do?

The National Disability Conference Initiative supports the inclusion and maximises the participation of people with disability at disability-focused conferences in Australia.

The initiative also informs Australian disability policy development and promotes and protects the rights of people with disability in Australia.

The initiative provides funding to eligible organisations to assist them to:

- assist people with disability (or a family member or carer(s) attending to provide support) with the costs of attending conferences
and/or
- facilitate improved access and/or participation for people with disability at such conferences, for example by funding Auslan interpreters, live captioning services, hearing loops and/or other aids or appliances.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs funds and administers the initiative.

How will it be done?

Under the Services and Support for People with Disability appropriation, the annual National Disability Conference Initiative provides funding to eligible organisations following an annual competitive selection process.

Stakeholder participation

The competitive selection process for National Disability Conference Initiative funding is promoted via national advertising. Funding is provided under the initiative to assist conference organisers to improve the participation of people with disability in their conference which can include the cost of attendance for relevant participants.

Success indicator

Increased attendance and participation of people with disability at disability focused conferences.

Area for future action 2.9. Support people with disability with heightened vulnerabilities in any contacts with the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on early identification, diversion and support.

Action 2.9.1. Develop strategies to improve the experience of people with disability with heightened vulnerabilities who come into contact, or are at risk of contact, with the criminal justice system, as alleged offenders, victims and witnesses of crime

Why is this important?

People with mental illness, intellectual or cognitive disability are over-represented in the criminal justice system.

What will it do?

This action will provide a better understanding of the service journey an individual in these circumstances experiences so that appropriate support and diversion programs can be established, delivered and maintained. It will support people with intellectual or cognitive disability who come into contact, or are at risk of contact, with the criminal justice system.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Families, Housing and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and all state and territory governments have committed to progress this action.

How will it be done?

This will be achieved through the following complimentary inter-jurisdictional working groups:

- the National Justice Chief Executive Officers' Group has established a working group to conduct two parallel projects—one on mental illness and the other on cognitive disability—in the context of persons who are involved, or at risk of involvement, with Australia's criminal justice system. This group has previously published, in conjunction the Victorian Department of Justice, *Guidelines for best practice: diversion and support of offenders with a mental illness*
- the Corrective Services Administrators' Council has established a national working group, coordinated by the Victorian Department of Justice to address Outcome 2: Policy Direction 5—*More effective responses from the criminal justice system to people with disability who have complex needs or heightened vulnerabilities*. The working group is currently identifying priorities for 2012
- the National Forensic Disability Working Group, established by the Corrective Services Administrators' Conference in April 2010 and made up of senior officers within Corrections Portfolios, is furthering the objective of facilitating best practice for offenders with disability across Australia and New Zealand with the view of reducing the overall impact of crime and recidivism

- the Disability and Policy Research Working Group of the Standing Committee of the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council has established the People with Disability and the Criminal Justice System Working Group on jurisdictional responses to people with cognitive disabilities in the criminal justice system. The working group has identified a number of areas for future action that could be pursued either at an individual jurisdictional level or through national collaborative activities to respond to the over-representation of people with cognitive impairment in the criminal justice system.

Stakeholder participation

This issue requires collaboration between all stakeholders along the criminal justice system continuum, including people with a mental illness or cognitive disability, their families, carers, and community, members of the justice system, clinical service providers, and human and social service providers.

Success indicator

This action will be successful if experiences for people with a mental illness or cognitive disability who come into contact, or are at risk of coming into contact, with the criminal justice system are improved.

Area for future action 2.10. Ensure people with disability leaving custodial facilities have improved access to support in order to reduce recidivism. This may include income and accommodation support and education, pre-employment, training and employment services.

Action 2.10.1. Governments to work together to better understand and support the needs of people with disability who come into contact with the criminal justice system, including through prisons and forensic services, and as victims and witnesses of crime

Why is this important?

People with a mental illness, intellectual or cognitive disability are over-represented in the criminal justice system.

What will it do?

This work will bring about a better understanding of why and how people with an intellectual or cognitive disability come into contact with the criminal justice system. It will also provide more empirical evidence about the kind of support services that prevent initial and repeat contact with the system.

It will ensure that governments target their ongoing response to people with disability leaving custodial facilities in the most effective manner.

Responsibility

All Attorney-General and Corrective Services Departments have responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Standing Council on Community and Disability Services has tasked justice and other relevant government officials to provide advice on the experience of people with disability in the criminal justice system including advice on good practice, options for diversion and early intervention and post-release services such as accommodation and housing.

Stakeholder participation

A process for stakeholder participation is to be developed.

Success indicator

Performance indicators are to be developed.

Area for future action 2.11. Support independent advocacy to support the rights of people with disability.

Action 2.11.1. Continue support for the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Disability Discrimination Commissioner to advocate for the rights of people with disability

Why is this important?

It is important that the Australian Human Rights Commission is resourced to advocate for people with disability to ensure their rights are protected.

What will it do?

Empower the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Disability Commissioner to advocate for the rights of people with disability, including conciliating complaints of breaches of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Disability Discrimination Commissioner have responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will continue to fund the Australian Human Rights Commission to discharge its statutory functions. As it is an independent statutory agency, it is a matter for the Australian Human Rights Commission to manage resourcing. The Disability Discrimination Commissioner and relevant support staff are funded from within the Australian Human Rights Commission's budget.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Human Rights Commission performs a wide range of functions to assist individuals and organisations to understand their rights and meet their legal responsibilities. It conducts public inquiries, negotiates disability guidelines and standards, supports organisations to develop disability action plans and runs community education programs.

Success indicator

The success of this action will result in more people with disability understanding and exercising their rights, and using the Commission to help them conciliate when they have been a victim of discrimination.

Action 2.11.2. National Disability Advocacy Program

Why is this important?

People with disability have a right to full and equal enjoyment of all human rights, community participation and freedom from discrimination and abuse.

The Australian Government funds the National Disability Advocacy Program, which provides people with disability access to advocacy that promotes, protects and ensures their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights.

What will it do?

Funded advocacy organisations work on behalf of the interests of people with disability, to protect their rights to freedom from discrimination, exploitation and abuse and being more able to fully participate in the community. An advocate may assist with a range of issues including access, transport, health, education and accommodation.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility.

How will it be done?

In 2011–2012 the Australian Government provided \$16.38 million under the National Disability Advocacy Program, which included funding to sixty-one advocacy agencies across Australia in every state and territory.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Government actively consults with key stakeholders in disability advocacy, including funded agencies and peak bodies, including Disability Advocacy Network Australia.

Funded agencies will be required to gain certification under a new quality assurance system to be implemented from 1 July 2012. This will involve independent third party quality assurance audits of National Disability Advocacy Program agencies that will include feedback from consumers of advocacy agencies.

Success indicator

Success will be measured by the number of people with disability provided with disability advocacy support.

Area for future action 2.12. Ensure supported decision-making safeguards for those people who need them are in place, including accountability of guardianship and substitute decision makers.

This is an area for future work. State and territory governments are responsible for addressing these important issues in their jurisdictions.

Outcome 3. Economic security—*People with disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.*

Three policy directions under this outcome:

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



This implementation plan (2011–2014) has a clear and immediate focus on employment as well as business and leadership development because these are recognised as critical factors that enable economic and social participation in the community.

In addition to the individual and family benefits of improving outcomes for people with disability, there is a strong economic imperative to encourage workforce participation and build human capital. (National Disability Strategy, p. 19)

Work is essential to an individual's economic security and is important to achieving social inclusion. It contributes to physical and mental health, personal wellbeing and a sense of identity.

Australia's current economic strength provides a unique opportunity for more people with disability to participate in the workforce and to ensure that the personal and financial benefits of work are shared by all.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that the labour force participation rate for people with disability aged 15–64 years was 54.3 per cent and the unemployment rate was 7.8 per cent. These figures compare to 82.8 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively for people without disability.

The combination of a lower labour force participation rate and a higher unemployment rate means that people with disability are less likely to be employed than people without disability (50 per cent, compared with 78.6 per cent).

The 2009 Survey of Disability and Carers also showed that the main source of income for 42.6 per cent of people with disability aged 15–64 years was a government pension or allowance.

In June 2008, people with disability comprised 31.1 per cent of all public rental housing tenants.

According to a 2009 report by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, people with disability experience greater housing stress than people without disability. Some 36 per cent of households affected by a disability and renting paid more than 30 per cent of their gross income for housing compared with 26 per cent of households where no disability was reported.

Sources: *National Disability Strategy evidence base*, pp. 23–27; *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*, p. 44.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy-discussion-paper-easy-english-version/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020-evidence-base>

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs.

New South Wales – State payroll tax exemption

To promote the employment of people with disability, the NSW Government established a payroll tax rebate scheme—through the *Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme (Disability Employment) Act 2011*—for employers who employ eligible people with disability between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2015.

An employer can claim up to \$4 000 for new employees who continue in the job for more than six months. More information is at:

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+54+2011+cd+0+N> .

New South Wales – Procurement from disability employment organisations

The New South Wales Government has amended the Public Sector Management (Goods and Services) Regulation 2000 to allow New South Wales Government agencies to procure goods and services directly from disability employment organisations without the need for a competitive process. The exemption will cover organisations approved by the Minister for Disability Services that are focused on the provision of employment opportunities for people with disability.

South Australia – Improving employment

In South Australia, promoting the disability register and providing information regarding funding and assistance for both employees with disability and employers of people with disability are key strategies in breaking down barriers to disability employment. To support this strategy, the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion is developing an intranet page dedicated to information and support to both employees with disability and their managers. The department also offers online training in disability awareness for both managers and employees.

Day option providers in South Australia are given an incentive to transition people from a day option program to supported or open employment. The organisation is paid \$1 000 for each client that transitions, and the client's day option funding is maintained for three months to allow for any adjustments in staffing once the client has left.

Northern Territory – The Willing and Able Strategy

The Northern Territory Public Sector aims to become an employer of choice for people with disability. The *Willing and Able Strategy* is a strategy for the employment of people with disability in the public sector.

The overall goals of the *Willing and Able Strategy* are to:

- increase the attraction and retention rates for people with disability
- improve career opportunities in the Northern Territory Public Sector for people with disability
- raise awareness of the value that people with disability may bring to the workplace and increase disability confidence
- create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

The Strategy assists all agencies in understanding issues that may arise when employing people with disability, and helps them develop strategies to assist people with disability to succeed in their work. The Strategy also commits to action through the Cross-agency Implementation Plan 2009–2012. Progress against the key actions under the implementation plan is reported in the annual *State of the service* report.

Western Australia—Development of small business, training and social enterprises

There are fledgling small business enterprises being developed with support from the Disability Services Commission and other government agencies, for example:

- Vancouver Café (Albany)—provides work experience and employment for people with disability
- *Getting Down to Business* project—a partnership between three non-government organisations recently received a social innovation grant to support people with disability to establish sustainable micro businesses.

Western Australia—Keeping Mandurah Magnificent project

The City of Mandurah teamed up with an employment agency to employ adults with disability in environmental maintenance jobs, providing on-the-job training to improve employee skills. Some fifty young adults have been employed through the program. The City of Mandurah gained a *Count Me In Award* for this initiative.

Queensland—Supporting social enterprises

Queensland promotes and supports the development of social enterprises to create employment opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers. It has pursued initiatives to influence the take-up of social procurement practices by Queensland Government agencies with activities undertaken in 2011-12 including information sharing, showcasing the diversity of good and services on offer, and developing social procurement guidelines specifically for use within the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Queensland—Improved employment opportunities in property and construction

The Queensland Government, through its Property and Construction Strategy aims to investigate successful strategies to encourage more Queenslanders to choose a career in the property and construction industry, including people with disabilities, women and mature aged workers.

Research will be undertaken, along with targeted industry consultation, on the key drivers of attraction and retention of job seekers to this sector, particularly those that are disadvantaged jobseekers.

Australian Capital Territory—Employment strategy

The *ACT Public Service Employment Strategy for People with Disability 2011–2015* was launched by the Chief Minister in April 2011. It includes a target of doubling employment of people with disability in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) by 2015. The number of people with disability employed in the ACTPS has increased since June 2010 from 327 to 375 as at June 2012.

Australian Capital Territory—BLITS Access Scheme

The *BLITS Access Scheme* is a tool being developed by BLITS (Business Leaders Innovative Thoughts and Solutions) to recognise accessible and inclusive business, community and government groups in the ACT. A draft self-assessment tool with information and education materials has been developed and consulted on. Recruitment of business, community and government groups is slated for late in 2012.

Tasmania – Tasmanian Adult Literacy Plan

The Tasmanian Government has implemented two programs under the *Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan* specifically targeting people with disability to enable the development of core skills for labour market participation. *The Employer Pledge Program* will provide literacy training during work hours for participating employers. *The Adult Literacy Community Grants Program* is designed to improve the literacy skills of community members to improve their access to further education, training and employment.

Areas for future action

Area for future action 3.1. Improve employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability.

Action 3.1.1. Increase employer demand for people with disability

Why is this important?

People with disability have lower rates of employment. Increasing employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability, and of government support in doing so, is a crucial step in improving employment opportunities for people with disability.

What will it do?

Increasing employer demand for people with disability will lead to an increase in the number of people with disability gaining and maintaining employment.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Within the Building Australia's Future Workforce package there are new initiatives to support Australians with disability into work including encouraging employers to take on more people with disability through:

- the new *Wage Connect* wage subsidy, which commenced on 1 January 2012, provides incentives to employers of up to \$5 700 to employ very long-term unemployed job seekers, including job seekers with disability. The *Wage Connect* initiative has helped over 1 400 people with disability enter the paid workforce since the program began.
- the new enhanced *Wage Subsidy* became available from 1 July 2012 to assist Disability Employment Services job seekers who have not been employed in the previous twelve months. It provides a subsidy of up to \$3 000 to encourage longer term employment at a minimum of 15 hours a week. The enhanced *Wage Subsidy* complements the continuing *Wage Subsidy Scheme* which encourages employers to provide sustainable employment to workers with disability, by providing wage subsidies of up to \$1 500 as an incentive to employ people with disability.
- an information campaign, which commenced in August 2011 to encourage under-skilled Australians, including those who are disadvantaged people, to up-skill, re-skill or obtain a formal education qualification.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has funded the development of the Employers Guide to Partnering with Disability Employment Services, which was produced by Disability Employment Australia and Australian Network on Disability. More information is at:

http://disabilityemployment.org.au/static/media/Employers_Guide_Web_Ready.pdf

A review of the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator is examining ways to enhance the service to better support employers. The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator has arrangements in place with 28 large employers who have committed to increase their employment of people with disability. The National Disability Recruitment Coordinator service continues to work with the Australian Public Service Commission to increase awareness among Australian Public Service agencies of the assistance available recruitment and employment assistance from the Disability Employment Services program, the JobAccess advisory service and the Employment Assistance Fund.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is sponsoring the Disability Employment Category award in the 2012 Australian Human Resources Institute Diversity Awards which recognises employers who demonstrate excellence in inclusive workplace initiatives and practices. Public recognition of successful human resource management practices that promote the employment of people with disability are one important way of promoting the benefits of employment of people with disability. Public recognition of successful employers also encourages other employers to adopt similar strategies.

Stakeholder participation

There will be consultation with a range of stakeholders including disability organisations.

Success indicator

Success will result in increased employer awareness of Disability Employment Services and other Australian Government disability support services through targeted approaches by employment brokers.

Action 3.1.2. Link job seekers to employers

Why is this important?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (Disability, Australia, 2009) reports that of people with disability aged 15–64 years and living in households, 54 per cent were participating in the labour force, compared to 83 per cent of people without disability.

What will it do?

The Disability Employment Broker program will create greater awareness of the advantages of employing people with disability and develop a focus on their abilities. Projects will achieve this through innovative employer engagement strategies that inform and link employers to available services and broker solutions that meet employers' labour market requirements.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has responsibility.

How will it be done?

Up to ten disability employment broker projects will be funded to target small to medium employers in an industry sector and/or within a regional location.

Stakeholder participation

Draft program Guidelines were made publicly available for comment prior to the release of the final program Guidelines.

Success indicator

Increased employer awareness of Disability Employment Services and other Australian Government disability support services through targeted approaches by employment brokers.

Area for future action 3.2. Reducing barriers and disincentives for the employment of people with disability.

Action 3.2.1. Reform key aspects of the Disability Support Pension to better support people with disability into work where possible

Why is this important?

Work is essential to an individual's economic security and is also important in achieving social inclusion. Reform of the Disability Support Pension will address barriers and disincentives for people with disability and better support them into work where possible.

What will it do?

Changes to Disability Support Pension assessments will focus on helping people with disability return to the workforce. New rules will encourage and assist people with disability to access employment opportunities and support them to build their skills and work capacity.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Applicants, who do not have a severe impairment, now need to provide sufficient evidence that they are unable to work independently, even after receiving assistance from an appropriate program of support.

Revised impairment tables have been introduced from 1 January 2012 to ensure that people applying for the Disability Support Pension will be assessed based on what they can do and not what they cannot do.

From 1 July 2012, those under thirty-five who have some work capacity will attend regular participation interviews with the Department of Human Services and develop an individualised participation plan tailored to their needs and aimed at building their capacity.

More generous rules from 1 July 2012 allow Disability Support Pension recipients to work up to thirty hours a week indefinitely and, subject to the income test, receive a part rate of pension while they work.

Stakeholder participation

An advisory committee including medical and allied health professionals, people with disability and other disability stakeholders was established to have oversight of the impairment tables' review. Consultations were also undertaken with key disability stakeholder groups in finalising the impairment tables.

A Disability Support Pension Advisory Group was established to work with government, and provide advice on the implementation of the recent reforms. The group includes representatives from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and comprises peak disability and welfare stakeholders.

Success indicator

An increase in the number of people with disability in paid employment will indicate success for this action.

Area for future action 3.3. Encourage innovative approaches to employment of people with disability such as social enterprises, or initiatives to assist people with disability establish their own small business.

Action 3.3.1. Encourage and support the development of social enterprises

Why is this important?

Social enterprises are one type of employment, or self-employment, option for people with disability. The Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund has been established to help social enterprises access appropriate loan finance and business support to help them grow their businesses, and by doing so, increase the impact of their work in their communities.

What will it do?

The Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund managers will provide tailored loans and support to eligible social enterprises, some of which may be involved in the employment of people with disability or be operated by people with disability.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has provided \$20 million to seed the establishment of the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund.

Foresters Community Finance, Social Enterprise Finance Australia and Social Ventures Australia are the fund managers for the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund.

How will it be done?

Social enterprises will be able to apply to the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund funds managers for loan finance and support to help them develop and grow their businesses.

Stakeholder participation

The funds managers have developed social enterprise engagement strategies which include, for example, website updates, workshops, presentations at conferences and engagement with social enterprise intermediaries.

In addition, the process for assessing the investment readiness of a social enterprise involves significant one-on-one interaction with each social enterprise.

Success indicator

The funds managers operate the funds at arm's length from Government and report quarterly to the Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations on progress with the implementation of the Social Enterprise Development and Investment Fund including, but not limited to, providing information on the demand from social enterprises for finance.

Action 3.3.2. Extend the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme to Disability Employment Service job seekers

Why is this important?

Self-employment provides avenues for people with disability to participate in society and the economy that are often not available to them through mainstream jobs. These avenues also have greater flexibility to shape work and workplaces around the particular needs of individual persons with disability.

What will it do?

People with disability will be encouraged and supported to set up small businesses.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

On 1 July 2012 the *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme* was extended to eligible Disability Employment Service job seekers to support them to set up small businesses.

Stakeholder participation

Extending access to the *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme* to Disability Employment Services job seekers is a direct result of stakeholder requests to provide this group of job seekers the opportunity to establish small businesses through the *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme* while continuing to receive complementary assistance through the Disability Employment Service.

There will be consultation during the delivery and implementation stages of this initiative with a range of stakeholders including Disability Employment Services providers, the Department of Human Services, *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme* providers, and relevant industry peak organisations.

Success indicator

Success of this action will be determined by increased participation from people with disability in the *New Enterprise Incentive Scheme*.

Area for future action 3.4. Improve employment, recruitment and retention of people with disability in all levels of public sector employment, and in funded organisations.

Action 3.4.1. Develop a strategy to address the representation rates of people with disability in the Australian Public Service

Why is this important?

People with disability are under-represented in the Australian Public Service.

What will it do?

Developing an overarching strategy to make the Australian Public Service a more progressive and sustainable employer of people with disability will be beneficial to all people with disability and facilitate the growth in numbers of people with disability employed in the public service.

Responsibility

The Australian Public Service Commission, all Australian Government departments and agencies have responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Australian Public Service Commission's *As One—APS Disability Employment Strategy* was launched in May 2012. It aims to increase the representation of people with disability in the Australian Public Service.

In addition, organisations such as the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator will be engaged to help achieve the measure across the public sector.

Stakeholder participation

Employees with disability, public sector leaders and hiring managers, peak bodies and private sector organisations will be engaged via a range of consultation and participation channels.

Success indicator

Success will be indicated by an increase in the employment of people with disability in the Australian Public Service.

Area for future action 3.5. Develop innovative approaches to future financial planning including private provision for people with disability, their families and carers.

Action 3.5.1. Respond to the recommendations of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs (Inquiry into Special Disability Trusts)

Why is this important?

People with disability have a low awareness of the availability of special disability trusts.

What will it do?

Actions are under way to increase the number of people taking up special disability trusts by changing the provisions governing the trusts.

Legislation was passed in June 2010, May 2011 and November 2011. The effect of these measures on the take-up of special disability trusts will be monitored closely.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will continue to promote special disability trusts with community-based organisations and lawyers. In January 2013 it will undertake a review of the amount that can be held in the trust on a concessional basis, the amount that can be gifted, and who can request audits of trusts.

Stakeholder consultation

The changes were made in response to the recommendations of the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs (Inquiry into Special Disability Trusts) which consulted with people with disability, their families and carers and other disability organisations.

Success indicator

Success will be indicated by an increase in the number of people taking up special disability trusts.

Area for future action 3.6. Develop innovative options to improve affordability and security of housing across all forms of tenure.

Action 3.6.1. Include universal design elements in the majority of new dwellings built through stage two of the Social Housing Initiative

Why is this important?

The availability of housing, including social housing stock that incorporates universal design elements is limited. Increasing availability of housing that incorporate these elements will provide people with disability with greater choice and flexibility in their living arrangements.

What will it do?

It is important that social housing meets the needs of people with disability and older persons. The National Partnership Agreement on the *Nation Building and Jobs Plan—Schedule C—Social Housing* includes the provision to adhere to universal design features that facilitate better access for people with disability when building dwellings under the Social Housing Initiative.

An increase in the availability of accessible public housing will help to ensure secure housing options are more available for people with disability needing social housing.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and state and territory governments have responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Where possible, dwellings built under stage two new construction of the initiative will meet agreed universal design principles with 20 per cent achieving a higher level of adaptability.

Stakeholder consultation

State and territory governments are engaging with their local stakeholders, including disability representatives.

Success indicator

Success will result in more than 90 per cent of stage two new construction incorporating basic universal design features with 20 per cent of these achieving a higher level of adaptability.

Action 3.6.2. National quality framework to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Why is this important?

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by key factors that increase the risk of homelessness. These factors include unemployment, inadequate income and the lack of affordable, secure housing.

What will it do?

A national quality framework will be developed to achieve better outcomes for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including people with disability, by improving the quality and integration of services they receive (under the White Paper on homelessness, *The road home*).

Responsibility

The Council of Australian Governments Select Council on Homelessness has responsibility with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs taking the lead.

How will it be done?

The national quality framework is being developed by Council of Australian Governments officials through the Housing and Homelessness Policy and Research Working Group.

Stakeholder participation

Development of the national quality framework is being guided by the outcomes of two rounds of national consultations with service providers and people experiencing homelessness as well as by a sector reference group comprising members of the homelessness sector from each jurisdiction.

Success indicator

Success will result in the effective implementation of a homelessness national quality framework that drives improved quality of service delivery and stronger outcomes for people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness, including those with disability.

Area for future action 3.7.

See Chapter 2, Section 1. Reviews of national agreements and national partnerships.

Area for future action 3.8. Consider the implications for economic security for people with disability, their families and carers arising from investigation into a national long-term care and support scheme.

Action 3.8.1. Development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Why is this important?

People with disability have called for a radical overhaul of the system of support for people with disability in Australia. The Productivity Commission reported that the current system is

underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient, and that it gives people with disability little certainty and choice about the care and support they receive.

The report also noted that individuals and families cannot adequately prepare for the risk and financial impact of significant disability.

We need a system of support that addresses these features and delivers a system we can be proud of as Australians.

What will it do?

A National Disability Insurance Scheme would provide all Australians with reasonable and necessary support in the event of significant and permanent disability.

People with disability and their carers have lower rates of participation in the labour force than the population as a whole and the Productivity Commission proposed that one of the objectives of the National Disability Insurance Scheme would be to provide people with disability with support to help them to participate in, and contribute to, social and economic life to the extent of their abilities.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability ministers and treasurers have responsibility.

How will it be done?

In August 2011, the Council of Australian Governments agreed that a major reform of disability services was needed.

The development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme is being led by the Council of Australian Governments, reflecting the significance all governments place on improving the disability services and support system. The Council of Australian Governments has established a Select Council of Treasurers and Disability Services Ministers (the Select Council on Disability Reform) to make recommendations to the Council of Australian Governments on the overall design, governance and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Council of Australian Governments has developed high-level principles to guide consideration of the Productivity Commission recommendations regarding a scheme, including for foundation reforms, funding and governance.

On 30 April 2012, the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP announced that the Australian Government would deliver \$1 billion over four years to launch a National Disability Insurance Scheme. In July and August 2012, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory agreed to host launch sites as part of the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will start rolling out from July 2013. Each of these states and territories will also contribute funding to the launch of a National Disability Insurance Scheme in their jurisdiction. All states and territories continue to progress work on design, funding and governance.

In addition to the Select Council, a National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group was established to advise on the progress of the reforms. The group includes experts in social insurance principles, disability policy, service provision, performance monitoring, training and curriculum development, academia and research, psychological and intellectual disability,

Indigenous disability services, young people and children with disability.

Stakeholder participation

The Productivity Commission's report into disability care and support was the result of extensive consultation.

Governments have also been consulting extensively on the design and implementation of the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, including engagement with people with disability, families, carers, disability services, and the community.

A number of mechanisms have been established to capture the views of stakeholders to feed into the design and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. These include:

- The Commonwealth National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group to provide independent advice to the Select Council on Disability Reform and to provide specialist advice to government on the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, and its launch.
- The Advisory Group is undertaking online engagement 'Your Say' forums to enable interactive conversations with all stakeholders, including people with disability, their families and carers, the disability sector, advocacy groups and experts, and elicit feedback on key policy issues.
- State and Territory National Disability Insurance Scheme reference or advisory groups which include:
 - Victorian National Disability Insurance Scheme Taskforce
 - Queensland Disability Advisory Council and Disability Services Partnership Forum
 - South Australian National Disability Insurance Scheme Taskforce and Minister's Disability Advisory Council
 - New South Wales Disability Council
 - Tasmanian Working Group
 - Western Australia Reference Group
 - Australian Capital Territory Expert Panel
- Four Expert Groups to work with the Advisory Group to provide technical advice on: National Approach to Choice and Control; Eligibility and Assessment; Quality, Safeguards and Standards; and Workforce and Sector Capacity. Expert groups are comprised of experts from the community and sector, people with disability, carers and service providers.
- The Australian Government is also providing funding to the National Disability and Carer Alliance to engage with peaks, their members and people with disability, their families and carers at the grassroots from right around the country. This engagement will take many forms, including public forums, roundtables and face to face meetings. The results and feedback from these discussions will inform the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Engagement on key design aspects of eligibility and reasonable and necessary support

At its meeting on 25 July 2012 the Council of Australian Governments agreed that as a first step to settling the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, consultations should occur with people with disability, their families and carers, the workforce and disability sector and peak bodies to define eligibility and reasonable and necessary supports under a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Select Council's description of eligibility and reasonable and necessary supports was released for public comment on 31 August 2012 through a range of networks including: the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group and 'Your Say' online forum; state/territory based National Disability Insurance Scheme / disability advisory groups and the National Disability and Carers Alliance. The closing date for feedback was 28 September 2012.

Feedback from these various engagement channels will be consolidated and provided to officials and the Select Council for consideration in formulating policy and legislation for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Success indicator

Success indicators will be determined when the scope and nature of the scheme is agreed.

Outcome 4. Personal and community support—*People with disability, their families and carers have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities*

Four policy directions under this outcome:

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



With the right support, many people with disability are able to maintain a high level of independence, to be involved in activities such as work, education, training and a full range of social and recreational activities.

This outcome focuses on people with disability, their families and carers being able to maintain and achieve independence and community engagement through improved access to specialist and mainstream community support services.

An individualised approach provides greater choice and flexibility for people with disability, their families and carers. (National Disability Strategy, p. 48)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (survey of disability and carers) reported that 59 per cent of Australians with disability (or around 2.3 million people) need ongoing assistance because of their disability or age.

In 2009–2010 there were 295 024 people who received specialist disability services, including case management, open and supported employment services, community access and day programs, accommodation support and respite.

Among these 295 024 people, 117 754 (39.9 per cent) had an informal carer.

The caretaker ratio at the start of the millennium stood at around 2.5 people most likely to care (women aged 50–64) to people most likely to need care (people over 80). AMP and the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling forecast a steady fall in Australia's caretaker ratio over the next 50 years to below 1.

Sources: *National Disability Strategy evidence base*, pp. 32–34; *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*, p. 50.

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs.

South Australia – Residential Care Directorate

In South Australia, the newly established Residential Care Directorate, Families SA is charged with responsibility for developing specialised placement options for children and young people with varying needs. There will be specific short-term, long-term and emergency accommodation placements as well as specialised therapeutic placements for children and young people with extremely high needs. In line with the Directions for *Alternative Care 2011–2015*, released in September 2011, the directorate will be working towards building a residential care sector that provides nurturing home-like environments and high-quality care with a strong focus on positive life outcomes.

South Australia—Health and disability sectors working together

In South Australia the health and disability sectors work together to ensure people with disability are provided with appropriate community care accommodation when leaving acute care.

South Australia—Children’s Centres for Early Childhood Development and Planning Family Service Coordinator Program

The South Australian Family Service Coordinator Program within Children’s Centres for Early Childhood Development and Planning, supports vulnerable children and families to engage with services. The family contact initiative is one example of how this program supports families in contact with the child protection system to improve relationships between parents and their children. Developmental needs are identified and links are made to specialist services to support families towards reunification. This program will seek to expand service provision to include home visiting and increase collaboration with other agencies in efforts to engage with hard-to-reach families.

Northern Territory—Remote Intensive Therapy Program

The *Northern Territory Remote Intensive Therapy Program* continues to provide specialised and intensive allied health treatment and support for children and young adults with significant disability living in a remote location. The program is designed to maximise function, participation and quality of life. The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of its population under fifteen years, and this is particularly evident in remote areas. The need to address the gap in services for the remote paediatric population is widely acknowledged and has led to the development of services focused on supporting this age group with disability and their families.

A key aim is to build a sustainable program to meet the needs of this client group in an ongoing manner. The program is aimed at maintaining the health of children with disability within the community and enabling families to care for their children and meet their developmental needs at home. The underlying principle of the program is to develop treatment and management programs that are carried out by the family, extended family, carers, schools, childcare centres and play groups, as a natural part of the child’s day. It is recognised for this to happen the intervention needs to be culturally safe and all parties need to be trained and understand what they are doing and why they are doing it.

The program’s approach promotes ownership, control, pride in achievements and independence in order to lead to sustainable services that can be managed by families and clients in their day-to-day lives. The program aims to develop an intensive and comprehensive treatment program for all clients deemed suitable and to coordinate access to existing services in a streamlined and coordinated manner, as well as to provide additional intensive therapy and training as required.

Northern Territory—Disability Services Awards

The inaugural Northern Territory Disability Services Awards were held on 2 December 2011. The awards recognise and reward disability support workers and mainstream services and/or businesses that have demonstrated outstanding commitment to improving the lives of people with disability and creating opportunities for participation in the community.

Western Australia – Dreamfit

Dreamfit helps people with disability to become involved in activities of their dreams by engineering special equipment to overcome physical barriers and enable participation. The Disability Services Commission has recently supported Dreamfit to expand and develop a recreation program where people with disability, alongside other community members, can try out the range of adapted equipment.

Western Australia – Community Living Initiative

This initiative focuses on increasing the range of community living options for adults with disability in Western Australia. A community living option is developed through a sustainable plan that is anchored in family, carers, friends and community, including appropriate formal supports, which enables a person with disability to live in their own home in the community.

Queensland – Your Life Your Choice Self Directed Support

Queensland will provide increased choice and control for people with disability and their families through the introduction of a Your Life Your Choice Self-Directed Support Framework from November 2012. The framework has been co-produced with the sector, and provides flexibility for people with disabilities and service providers to design a personalised model of self-directed support that best suit their needs. While Government is establishing the framework for self-directed support, service providers will be encouraged to develop their own service models of self-directed support, including their scale of fees and payment methods, to reflect a market environment. Families and people with disability will then be able to choose and negotiate the service provider model that best suits them.

Queensland – Increasing respite for 16–25 year olds and their care

The Queensland Government will provide \$22 million over four years to assist people with high needs disability, aged between sixteen and twenty-five, to access additional respite hours through more flexible arrangements. This will deliver up to an extra fifteen hours a week of additional respite for up to 200 new and 40 existing clients and their families every year for the next four years. The new flexible respite support options will be delivered through traditional respite service models or through self-directed funding arrangements depending on individual choice, to enable supports to be tailored to individual's needs.

Queensland – Parent Connect

The Queensland Government will establish the *Parent Connect* initiative with \$4 million over four years that will link parents of newborns, and those children newly diagnosed with a disability to the support services they require. *Parent Connect* will assist parents of children with disability and their families to develop the skills and resilience required to continue in their parenting role. It will provide a service response that enables parents to have access to flexible, needs-based support when and how they need it.

Victoria – Innovative respite, accommodation and support

The Victorian Government allocated \$20.1 million to establish innovative supported accommodation places. Additionally, the Victorian Government supported community service organisations to make submissions for Australian Government capital funding under the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund.

A consultation process with people with disability, families, carers and other significant stakeholders was undertaken to help inform the development of innovative accommodation and support and respite submissions. The supported accommodation initiatives complement Victorian Government initiatives regarding respite and carer support services and which provide \$21 million for innovative and responsive respite.

Victoria—Release of the Senior Practitioner Physical Restraint Direction Paper

A new direction from Victoria's Senior Practitioner (Disability), the Senior Practitioner Physical Restraint Direction Paper was launched in 2011. The direction requires from 1 July 2011 that all episodes of physical restraint be reported to the Senior Practitioner via the Restrictive Interventions Data System within a specific timeframe following the application of the physical restraint.

From 1 January 2012, disability service providers are prohibited from using physical restraint in the course of providing a disability service, except in circumstances outlined in the direction paper. The new direction applies to all disability service providers defined in the *Disability Act 2006*, disability service employers and their employees, including managers, support professionals, clinical practitioners, trainers and volunteer staff and all people with disabilities including children and young people. In addition to information sessions, funding of \$300 000 will be available to assist disability service providers make the necessary changes.

Australian Capital Territory—Good Life Planning Grants

Good Life Planning Grants were introduced in April 2011 to assist people with disability plan for their future. The grants target people who are not linked to a government-funded service which is able to assist with planning. In 2011, grants were provided to engage facilitators to help develop a futures plan, to attend planning workshops, or to create and implement a futures plan.

Australian Capital Territory—After-school and vacation care programs

In August 2011, new after-school and vacation care programs for young people with disability were announced by the ACT Government. The new services will include twenty after-school and forty school holiday places. The service locations and models were informed by a *Scoping Study for Specialist Afterschool and Vacation Care*. The first of the new after school programs will commence from Term 1 in the 2012 school year; the remainder will be established throughout 2012.

Australian Capital Territory—Hands Across Canberra

The Chief Minister launched *Hands Across Canberra* in December 2010 on behalf of the members of the community and private sector who developed the initiative. *Hands Across Canberra* is a website for organisations to profile and promote the work they do and to accept donations over the internet. The approach is affordable, easy and secure. Since its launch, numerous community organisations which support people with disability have registered on the site.

Area for future action

Area for future action 4.1. Continue reform begun under the National Disability Agreement.

Action 4.1.1. National Disability Agreement reforms

Why is this important?

Although a National Disability Insurance Scheme is the focus for improving the system of support for people with disability into the future, governments need to concurrently pursue improvements to the existing system of support available. Many of these reforms are also important to prepare the groundwork for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

What will it do?

The Australian Government has allocated funding to the state and territory governments through the National Disability Services Specific Purpose Payment since January 2009 to support specialist disability services and to achieve a range of important reforms. Australian and state and territory governments fund both government and non-government providers of disability services under the National Disability Agreement.

Total expenditure on these services was \$6.2 billion in 2010–11. State and territory governments funded the majority of this expenditure (\$4.3 billion), directed towards accommodation support services and community support, while the Australian Government funded the remainder (\$1.9 billion, including \$1.1 billion in transfer payments to state and territories) mostly in the area of employment services. All governments are working together to progress reforms to the system under the Agreement, and people with disability will benefit from improved access to services.

Australian and state and territory governments agreed policy amendments along with the revised National Disability Agreement Performance Framework to the National Disability Agreement at the Council of Australian Governments meeting on 25 July 2012. These amendments give effect to changes resulting from the implementation of the National Health Reform Agreement, the National Disability Strategy and agreement to the work program of the Select Council on Disability Reform.

These reforms include the following:

- Build the evidence base for disability policies and strategies – A National Research and Development Agenda to be actioned from 2012; continued improvements to the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers; and annual publication of the National Need and Supply Model including Population Benchmarks, will provide a stronger basis for future policy decisions.
- Enhancing Family and Carer Capacity – All governments are committed to strategies that focus on improving outcomes for carers, including the National Carer Strategy and relevant jurisdictional strategies. This encompasses carers of people with disability.
- Strategies for Increased Choice, Control and Self-directed Decision-making – Pursue individual and/or self-directed funding arrangements for disability services that emphasise choice and control by the person with disability

- Maintain innovative and flexible support models for people with high and complex needs – This may include options for younger people in, or at risk of entry into, residential aged care, people at risk of interaction with the criminal justice system (including those on forensic orders), and those who require support due to challenging behaviours, including those who are subject to restrictive practices.
- Develop employment opportunities for people with disability – Through models for enhancing independence and work readiness at different life transition points.

Across all policy and reform directions consideration will be given to strategies specific to Indigenous Australians, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those living in regional, rural and remote communities.

Responsibility

Disability ministers and officials have responsibility.

How will it be done?

The Disability Policy and Research Working Group comprising Australian, state and territory government disability officials will work together to progress reforms begun under the National Disability Agreement.

Stakeholder participation

All jurisdictions liaise regularly with peak non-government organisations that represent the disability sector. These non-government organisations liaise with and provide advice to governments on behalf of their members. The development and ongoing directions of reforms under the National Disability Agreement are informed through this process.

Success indicator

The performance of the National Disability Agreement is independently monitored by the Council of Australian Government's Reform Council through annual reporting on the performance indicators and benchmarks outlined in the National Disability Agreement.

The Council of Australian Governments requested a review of the National Disability Agreement performance framework in order to improve performance information and public accountability. This review has been completed with revised performance indicators agreed by COAG on 25 July 2012. New performance benchmarks with targets are expected to be added to the Agreement by the Council of Australian Governments in late 2012.

National Need and Supply model

The *National need and supply model report for 2009–2010* was released in January 2012 (<http://www.dprwg.gov.au/>).

The model and report were prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Disability Policy and Research Working Group (a working group to Disability and Community Services Ministers) as a component of the national work to address the National Disability Agreement priority (a) Better measurement of need.

The model will provide:

- a methodology to determine the extent to which formal disability services meet the need for support within the potential population
- a nationally-consistent definition for measuring the potential population level demand across jurisdictions (the need model) and a consistent definition of service provision (the supply model) to estimate the level of demand not supported by disability services.

PricewaterhouseCoopers has developed an actuarial model based on analysis of characteristics of people most likely to require support from the disability service system. It uses logic and a set of assumptions of support received.

The model will also be used as part of the population benchmarking framework under the National Disability Agreement priority (b) Population benchmarking for disability services to measure:

- the proportion of the potential population with high-level support needs who then receive a high-level support response
- expenditure per service user and number of service users per potential population
- the proportion of the population receiving a low level support response and the proportion who have substantial levels of care provided informally and who receive selected low level support—an interim respite benchmark.

An additional benchmark—the proportion of people with disability accessing disability services who receive individual support—was also included as part of the 2009–2010 report. Separate data was obtained from states and territories to calculate this benchmark as it was not part of the model.

Disability Ministers have committed to releasing annual updates of the model and population benchmarks. The 2010–2011 report is expected to be released by end 2012.

Area for future action 4.2. Consider new approaches to long-term disability care and support, including responses to the Productivity Commission Inquiry, which is due to provide its final report to Government on 31 July 2011.

Action 4.2.1. Development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme

Why is this important?

People with disability have called for a radical overhaul of the system of support for people with disability in Australia. The Productivity Commission reported that the current system is underfunded, unfair, fragmented and inefficient, and that it gives people with disability little certainty and choice about the care and support they receive.

A system of support is needed that addresses these features and delivers a system we can be proud of as Australians.

What will it do?

A National Disability Insurance Scheme would provide all Australians with reasonable and necessary support in the event of significant disability.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability ministers and treasurers have responsibility.

How will it be done?

In August 2011, the Council of Australian Governments agreed that a major reform of disability services was needed.

The development of a National Disability Insurance Scheme is being led by the Council of Australian Governments, reflecting the significance all governments place on improving the disability services and support system. The Council of Australian Governments has established a Select Council of Treasurers and Disability Services Ministers (the Select Council on Disability Reform) to make recommendations to the Council of Australian Governments on the design, governance and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The Council of Australian Governments has developed high-level principles to guide consideration of the Productivity Commission recommendations regarding a scheme, including for foundation reforms, funding and governance.

In addition to the Select Council, a National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group was established to advise on the progress of the reforms. The group includes experts in social insurance principles, disability policy, service provision, performance monitoring, training and curriculum development, academia and research, psychological and intellectual disability, Indigenous disability services, young people and children with disability.

Work is underway on the design, funding and governance for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

On 30 April 2012, the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP announced that the Australian Government would deliver \$1 billion over four years to launch a National Disability Insurance Scheme. In July and August 2012, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and

the Australian Capital Territory agreed to host launch sites as part of the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, which will start rolling out from July 2013. Each of these states and territories will also contribute funding to the launch of a National Disability Insurance Scheme in their jurisdiction. All states and territories continue to progress work on design, funding and governance.

Support for Indigenous Australians

The National Disability Insurance Scheme has significant potential to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians with disability, their families and carers. Indigenous Australians with disability and their representatives should have the opportunity to be active participants in designing services and supports that are appropriate to their needs and accessible to them.

The first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme will be launched in South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT, the Hunter in NSW and the Barwon area of Victoria.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency has started working with state and territory governments in launch sites on ways that the NDIS can make sure that Indigenous people with disability will get the supports they need.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Launch Transition Agency will do this by:

- working with local communities to understand the best ways that Indigenous people with disability can get the supports that they need
- employing Indigenous local area coordinators, where possible
- training local area coordinators and assessors in the best ways to work with Indigenous people with disability, their families and carers and Indigenous communities
- ensuring that Indigenous people with disability and their families, carers and communities are aware of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the supports available under the scheme.

Stakeholder participation

Governments have also been consulting extensively on the design and implementation of the first stage of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, including engagement with people with disability, families, carers, disability services, and the community.

A number of mechanisms have been established to capture the views of stakeholders to feed into the design and implementation of a National Disability Insurance Scheme. These include:

- The Commonwealth National Disability Insurance Scheme to provide independent advice to the Select Council on Disability Reform and to provide specialist advice to government on the overall design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme and its launch.
- The Advisory Group is undertaking online engagement 'Your Say' forums to enable two way conversations with all stakeholders, including people with disability, their families and carers, the disability sector, advocacy groups and experts, and elicit feedback on key policy issues.
- State and Territory National Disability Insurance Scheme reference or advisory groups which include:

- Victorian National Disability Insurance Scheme Taskforce
 - Queensland Disability Advisory Council and Disability Services Partnership Forum
 - South Australian National Disability Insurance Scheme Taskforce and Minister's Disability Advisory Council
 - New South Wales Disability Council
 - Tasmanian Working Group
 - Western Australia Reference Group
 - Australian Capital Territory Expert Panel
- Four Expert Groups to work with the Advisory Group to provide technical advice on: National Approach to Choice and Control; Eligibility and Assessment; Quality, Safeguards and Standards; and Workforce and Sector Capacity. Expert groups are comprised of experts from the community and sector, people with disability, carers and service providers.
 - The Australian Government is also providing funding to the National Disability and Carer Alliance to engage with peaks, their members and people with disability, their families and carers at the grassroots from right around the country. This engagement will take many forms, including public forums, roundtables and face to face meetings. The results and feedback from these discussions will inform the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Engagement on key design aspects of eligibility and reasonable and necessary support

At its meeting on 25 July 2012 the Council of Australian Governments agreed as a first step to settling the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme, consultations should occur with people with disability, their families and carers, the workforce and disability sector and peak bodies. The consultations will inform the final approach to eligibility and reasonable and necessary support to be agreed by Council of Australian Governments, as well as further work on how these definitions would work in practice, and how they would be reflected in legislation, regulations or guidelines.

The Select Council's description of eligibility and reasonable and necessary supports was released for public comment on 31 August 2012 through a range of networks including: the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group and 'Your Say' online forum; state/territory based National Disability Insurance Scheme / disability advisory groups and the National Disability and Carers Alliance. The closing date for feedback was 28 September 2012.

Feedback from these various engagement channels will be consolidated and provided to officials and the Select Council for consideration in formulating policy and legislation for a National Disability Insurance scheme.

Success indicator

Success indicators will be determined when the scope and nature of the scheme is agreed.

Action 4.2.2. Consider the introduction of a National Injury Insurance Scheme

Why is this important?

In their report into disability care and support, the Productivity Commission identified that current arrangements for catastrophic injury across jurisdictions are fragmented and varied, which in many cases leads to inadequate care and support. A *National Injury Insurance Scheme* would comprise a coherent set of state-based, no-fault arrangements for providing lifetime care and support, building on existing schemes.

What will it do?

A *National Injury Insurance Scheme* would provide no-fault lifetime care and support for all catastrophic injuries through the establishment of separate, state and territory based schemes, subject to agreed reasonable minimum benchmarks. The Productivity Commission recommended that no-fault insurance arrangements for motor vehicle accidents should be in place in all jurisdictions by the end of 2013. Other catastrophic injuries, including those sustained in workplace accidents, medical accidents and general accidents were recommended to be covered by 2015.

Responsibility

As the *National Injury Insurance Scheme*, as proposed by the Productivity Commission, would be a federated model, state and territory governments would have responsibility for their own schemes. At the Australian Government level, the Treasury has primary responsibility for progressing the *National Injury Insurance Scheme*.

How will it be done?

A *National Injury Insurance Scheme* is being progressed through the Heads of Treasuries process, reporting to the Standing Council on Federal Financial Relations. Updates are also provided to the Select Council on Disability Reform so that developments on a *National Injury Insurance Scheme* and the National Disability Insurance Scheme can be managed.

In line with the Productivity Commission's proposed *National Injury Insurance Scheme* implementation timetable, officials have initially focussed on the establishment of no fault catastrophic injury schemes for motor vehicles.

Stakeholder participation

The National Injury Insurance Scheme Advisory Group comprises experts and key stakeholders, including representatives from the insurance, legal, disability and medical sectors, as well as local government and unions. The Advisory Group meets regularly to consider issues associated with the establishment of a *National Injury Insurance Scheme* and provides advice to Government

Success indicator

Success indicators will be determined when the scope and nature of the scheme is agreed.

Area for future action 4.3. Adopt sustainable funding models and service approaches that give information, choice and control to people with disability and that are flexible, innovative and effective.

Action 4.3.1. Develop flexible, person-centred disability services which engage early with people with disability and their carers

Why is this important?

There is overwhelming evidence that a person-centred approach leads to better outcomes for people with disability. Under the person-centred policy direction of the National Disability Agreement, most state and territory governments are already, or are on the way to, implementing an individualised funding approach, clear entry gateways and improved assessments to increase the level of choice and control to people with disability.

What will it do?

Sustainable funding models and service approaches will provide more choice and flexibility for people with disability and their carers. Ongoing work on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and continued reforms under the National Disability Agreement will help to progress these initiatives.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability ministers and officials are responsible for progressing this action.

How will it be done?

Work is under way to lay the National Disability Insurance Scheme's foundations including common assessment tools, national minimum service and quality standards, and building workforce and sector capacity to prepare for reform. Work is also under way on the overarching design, funding and governance.

The development of flexible, person-centred services will be considered in this work.

Stakeholder participation

The National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group and National People with Disabilities and Carer Council will provide input for this action.

Success indicator

Success indicators for the National Disability Agreement are under review by Heads of Treasuries. Success will also be indicated by the laying of foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme by mid-2013.

Providing opportunities for children

In December 2010, at the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference, ministers agreed on the National Standards for Out-of-Home Care, a priority project of the first three-year action plan under the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*. Standard two is distinctly focused on providing opportunities for children, including children with disability, to participate in and have further control on decisions that affect their lives.

Area for future action 4.4. Support the development of assistive technologies and more access to aids and equipment for people with disability.

Action 4.4.1. Provide more consistent access to aids and equipment

Why is this important?

Access to appropriate assistive technology and aids and equipment is essential for the health and wellbeing of people with disability. The current provision of aids and equipment is inconsistent and inequitable.

What will it do?

It will provide improved and more consistent access to appropriate assistive technologies and aids and equipment.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability ministers and officials have responsibility for progressing work under this action.

How will it be done?

On 4 June 2010 Community and Disability Services ministers agreed to a framework of measures to give more consistent access to aids and equipment by the end of 2012.

This involves considering:

- arrangements for the supply of equipment
- current subsidies and co-contributions
- assessment and prescription processes
- strengthening portability arrangements to allow people who move across state borders to retain access to their equipment.

Issues regarding access to aids and equipment were also identified in the Productivity Commission's report, *Disability care and support*, and are among the foundation reforms being considered in preparation for a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

In addition, the Select Council on Disability Reform is investigating options for a National Disability Insurance Scheme and will advise on the progress of the foundations for reform. Disability officials will continue to progress reform initiatives under the National Disability Agreement.

Stakeholder participation

People with disability and their carers and advocates, service providers and the disability workforce have been given the opportunity to work with government to develop and design how a scheme will work with the establishment of four expert groups to work under the National Disability Insurance Scheme Advisory Group.

Success indicators

Success indicators will be determined when the scope and nature of the scheme is agreed.

Area for future action 4.5. Continue development of innovative and flexible support models for high and complex needs, including supported accommodation and community and family living approaches.

Action 4.5.1. Implementing the Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund

Why is this important?

The accommodation needs of people with disability are diverse and require a greater range of innovative solutions and supported accommodation options that improve quality of life and independence.

What will it do?

The Supported Accommodation Innovation Fund delivers innovative, community-based supported accommodation places.

The initiative encourages community organisations and governments to develop new and flexible models of accommodation that support people with severe and profound disability to live as independently as possible within the community.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability ministers and officials have responsibility for implementing this action.

How will it be done?

Community organisations apply directly for capital funding from the Australian Government to build innovative supported accommodation. Successful organisations must demonstrate a need for the accommodation and that they can secure a source of ongoing costs. State and territory governments will confirm that a source of funding has been secured prior to the Australian Government process commencing.

Stakeholder participation

The National People with Disability and Carer Council, state and territory governments and peak disability and social housing bodies have been consulted on this action.

Success indicators

The success of this action will be the delivery of 150 supported accommodation places for adults with severe or profound disability by the end of the 2013–2014 financial year.

Area for future action 4.6. Improve access to timely, comprehensive and effective early intervention for people with disability.

Action 4.6.1. Implement and review early intervention initiatives for young children with disability

Why is this important?

It is universally recognised that early childhood intervention for children with disability leads to better long-term outcomes.

What will it do?

A range of initiatives are underway to assist families including:

- *Healthy Kids Check* for four-year-olds receiving welfare payments. This will promote early detection of lifestyle risk factors, delayed development and illness and introduce early intervention strategies
- review and evaluation of the Australian Government's *Better Start for Children with Disability* initiative including considering eligible conditions and effectiveness of the model
- finalisation of the evaluation of the Australian Government's *Helping Children with Autism* package, and the review of eligible therapies
- develop tools to help families better navigate Early Intervention services for children and young people with disability, and improve coordination of the *Better Start* and *Helping Children with Autism* measures with state early childhood intervention services, commencing with pilot work in South Australia.

Responsibility

The Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, disability ministers and officials and health ministers and officials have responsibility for progressing individual parts of this action as appropriate.

How will it be done?

The *Healthy Kids Check* can be delivered by a General Practitioner or a practice nurse; it includes health indicators such as height, weight, eyesight and hearing assessments. The check is claimable at the same time as the four-year old immunisation. State and territory governments receive funding to strengthen linkages between the check and state-funded child health assessment services, and to promote the provision of health assessment services to children who are about to enter school.

A review of evidence for the effectiveness of early intervention for children with a range of developmental disabilities, undertaken by KPMG, was released on 20 December 2011 and can be accessed at: <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/better-start-for-children-with-disability-initiative/reviewing-the-evidence-on-the-effectiveness-of-early-childhood-intervention>

An Evaluation of the *Helping Children with Autism* has been completed and an evaluation of *Better Start for Children with Disability* measures has commenced.

This work, combined with ongoing analysis of program information, provides valuable information toward the design of a National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Stakeholder participation

People with disability and other stakeholders, including experts in the field, parents, carers and service providers are consulted as part of the *Healthy Kids Check* program implementation and evaluation.

Helping Children with Autism and *Better Start* have established help lines to provide information and assistance to families and service providers.

Carers Australia and autism advisers in each state and territory register eligible children and provide key information and assistance to families for both *Better Start* and *Helping Children with Autism*.

Success indicators

The percentage and number of individuals, parents and carers who report they were assisted to access choices and options that enabled them to manage their needs and the percentage and number of clients reporting that the services were appropriate to their needs as parents and carers will indicate the success of this action.

Area for future action 4.7. Collaborate with providers of universal personal and community support services to improve access for people with disability.

Action 4.7.1 Implementation of the Australian Government new Family Support Program

Why is this important?

Targeted support services for families and children are essential to prevent poor outcomes and vulnerable families often do not access such services.

What will it do?

Families with adults or children who have a disability are regarded as having multiple and/or complex needs and considered a priority for Family Support Program services, particularly where there is a high unmet need.

To give effect to the government's expectation, all Family Support Program services were required to agree to an individual Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Access Strategy with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs by 30 June 2012.

The Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Access Strategy is intended to help service providers identify the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families in the local areas they service and how they can work more effectively with key stakeholders to offer more holistic service responses.

Actions committed to in the Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Access Strategy should address the access barriers experienced by families who have a child, or parent/carer with disability. This can be at an organisational level or through actions that aim to foster or strengthen relationships to enable more linked approaches to be developed.

The Accessibility Services Standard requires funded providers to deliver services that ensure their sensitivity and accessibility to any people who face a real or perceived barrier to receiving assistance. It also requires providers to ensure the buildings they operate from are accessible to people with disability.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for progressing this action.

How will it be done?

To help providers meet new requirements the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has developed a Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Client Access Plan template. It gives providers a framework to reflect on aspects of their organisation's operations and to document specific actions and measurable outcomes for improving access for vulnerable and disadvantaged families. Actions will be monitored until June 2014.

Stakeholder participation

Family Relationships Services Australia were consulted in the development of the new Family Support Program.

Success indicator

There is quantitative data collected on the number of 'people with disability' in the Performance Reports for Communities for Children—Direct Services and Communities for Children—Facilitating Partner services.

Immediate performance indicators include the proportion of clients with improved family, community and economic engagement and the proportion of clients with improved access and engagement with services.

Intermediate performance indicators include the proportion of clients with improved family functioning including child wellbeing; the proportion of children with improved development; the proportion of clients that live in safer family and community environments; and the proportion of clients who are included in and socially connected to the community.

Area for future action 4.8. Promote and sustain community support networks which provide information and support to families and carers.

Action 4.8.1. Promotion of community support networks

Why is this important?

People with disability often face social exclusion and barriers to participating in their community.

What will it do?

Strong community support networks assist the quality of life and participation for people with disability, their families and carers and assist with social inclusion.

A range of initiatives has been implemented to assist in the promotion of community support networks that will assist all members of the community including people with disability. These initiatives will provide opportunities for people with disability to connect to a range of networks appropriate to their needs.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, has responsibility for progressing work under this action.

How will it be done?

Initiatives to improve community support networks include:

- the *Ramp Up* website on www.abc.net.au that encourages interaction for people with disability, their families and carers and provides information on disability issues
- continued support from all governments to disability and carer organisations to support disability communities and provide information to their members
- a new national website www.familyrelationshiponline.gov.au/carers that provides information to grandparents or other relatives who are caring for children, including those with disability
- the *Young Carers Respite and Information Program* that provides information to young carers to support them in managing the challenges they face in their role
- the *My-Time Peer Support Program* that gives parents and carers the opportunity to meet with others in similar circumstances, socialise and share information.

In addition, the following areas for future action in the National Carer Strategy will help ensure families and carers are provided with information and support to maintain their caring role:

- address the information needs of carers who need particular support, such as older carers
- educate agencies that are the first point of contact for carers – such as health, community and school based professionals – about how to quickly link carers with appropriate and relevant information
- work with peak bodies, community care, mental health services and allied health professionals to help them identify and support people who do not identify themselves as carers.

Stakeholder participation

People with disability have been involved in the establishment of these initiatives through the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and funded peak organisations. *Ramp Up* is supported by an advisory group consisting of people with disability.

Success indicator

Success of each separate initiative under this action will be individually determined, however overall there is an expectation that the number of people with disability accessing and participating in community activities will increase as a direct result of these initiatives. Education has a pivotal role to play in making Australia an inclusive and equitable society.

Outcome 5. Learning and skills—People with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high-quality education system that is responsive to their needs. People with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives

Four policy directions under this outcome:

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



A good quality inclusive education is important for all students to enable them to be successful learners, confident and creative individuals, active and informed citizens.

Access to learning and skills development also provides the basis for economic security and social inclusion.

Educational disadvantage occurs when the benefits of education are not equally distributed within the community, when there are barriers to access and participation and when expected outcomes from education differ for particular individuals or groups.

Targeted support is needed to assist people who are disadvantaged in education and in the workforce, but mainstream education programs need to be designed for people of all abilities. (National Disability Strategy, p. 53)

There are a number of initiatives being pursued in education reforms which will benefit students with disability from early childhood education, in schooling and through to further education and skills development.

A key focus in each of these domains is how better to support participation in learning and educational outcomes for disadvantaged students, including students with disability.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers found that students with disability are less likely to complete Year 12 than students without disability (33.3 per cent compared with 54.9 per cent). This is significant given that early school leavers are more likely to be unemployed for longer periods, earn lower incomes, and accumulate less wealth over their lifetime compared to non-early school leavers.

In 2010 the proportion of students with disability studying in publicly-funded vocational education and training across Australia was only 6.1 per cent. Research has indicated that completing a vocational education and training course improves the chances of obtaining employment.

In 2010 the percentage of people with disability in higher education was around 4.5 per cent. The proportion of students with disability in higher education remains well below their share of the population.

Source: National Disability Strategy evidence base, pp. 38–41.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy-discussion-paper-easy-english-version/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020-evidence-base>

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs:

South Australia—Every Chance for Every Child

A key strategic direction of the Department for Education and Child Development Strategic Plan 2012–2016 includes ensuring that every child achieves their potential by striving for excellence in education and care. This is aligned with the South Australian commitment of *Every Chance for Every Child*, led by a Cabinet Taskforce overseeing positive child development outcomes.

South Australia—Transitioning to independence

The Better Pathways Program provides an advocacy, mentoring and support service for young people with disabilities and mental health issues from Year 9 to one year post-school. Its purpose is to improve transition and post-school outcomes.

South Australia, through Families SA, begins formalised transition planning for young people when they reach fifteen years of age. The young people leaving care practice guide outlines the approach to post-care support to be provided to young people up to the age of twenty-five years.

Skills for All is the new policy direction for Vocational Education and Training in South Australia, introducing a demand driven Vocational Education and Training system. *Skills for All* includes several strategic measures to increase accessibility to training for disadvantaged groups, including people with disability. These include: removing fees for lower level training; making access to additional foundation skills training fee free and trialling the introduction of individualised case management style support services for students with complex needs to assist with transitions into training; and support to complete and support with transitions from training to employment. Students with disability are a particular target group within this trial of Learner Support Services with different eligibility criteria and an emphasis on building pathways and relationships with the Disability Employment Services sector to smooth the pathways for students with disability into employment.

West Australia—Transitions to Employment Pilot (GAIN)

This is a two-year pilot for up to forty young people leaving school who qualify for mixed alternatives to employment option. Individuals will be supported to develop tailored personal employment plans which target skill development and pathways to achieve employment.

Western Australia—Launch Pad

Launch Pad is a Disability Services Commission initiative to support young people into Thursday evening and Saturday employment to improve pathways to employment after leaving school.

Queensland—Transition Planning and Support

In Queensland, the *My Future, My Life* initiative supports young people with disability in their final years of schooling to make plans for their future after they leave school. Time limited financial supports empower young people to achieve the goals outlined in their SET plan (Senior Education and Training plan or equivalent), which they have developed in conjunction with their families and school. *My Future, My Life* is a key element of supporting young Queenslanders with disability to transition effectively from school to adult life.

Victoria—Collaboration between Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

As part of a joint work plan between Disability Services in the Department of Human Services and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, a trial to strengthen

pathway planning and transitions for young people with disability was conducted from July to December 2011, in fourteen secondary schools (seven mainstream schools and seven special schools) in three Department of Human Services regions. This incorporated a trial of an enhanced workplace learning initiative.

Australian Capital Territory—Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools

The ACT *Education and Training Directorate Strategic Plan 2010–2013: Everyone matters* articulates the vision for public schooling that young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives. Central to this vision are safe and inclusive schools. In particular, *Excellence in Disability Education in ACT Public Schools Strategic Plan 2010–2013* describes how the Directorate's vision will be realised for students with disabilities.

Australian Capital Territory—Transition service

The Transition Service is provided by an ACT community agency to deliver individually tailored information, and support to young people and their families for up to three years after the young person has left school and generally commences whilst the young person is still at school.

Tasmania—Teaching Scholarship for Student with Disability

The Tasmanian Government created a scholarship place in the University of Tasmania's Partnerships for Teaching Excellence Program for a Bachelor of Education or Master of Teaching for a student with disability. The scholarship will provide financial, support, mentoring and professional development support in addition to guaranteed permanent employment upon completion.



Areas for future action

Area for future action 5.1. Reduce barriers and simplify access for people with disability to a high-quality inclusive education system including early learning, child care, school and further education.

Action 5.1.1. Review of funding for schools

Why is this important?

Australia's current school funding arrangements are complex and opaque. An independent *Review of funding for schooling*, chaired by David Gonski, was undertaken which recommended changes to the school funding model to achieve a funding system beyond 2013 which is transparent, fair, financially sustainable and effective in promoting great education outcomes for all Australian students.

What will it do?

On 3 September 2012 the Australian Government announced a National Plan for School Improvement, where a new national school funding model and increased funding will be tied to concrete improvement in all schools. The Australian Government also set a goal for school improvement that by 2025 Australia would be among the top five schooling systems in the world.

Under the National Plan, there will be a new funding benchmark for every student – a new Schooling Resource Standard – based on the costs of schools that are already getting great results. Schools with students who face additional challenges would be entitled to extra funding based on six categories, including students with disability.

Further work is currently underway towards the collection of nationally consistent data on students with disability, which will potentially provide an evidence base on which to distribute the loadings for students with disability.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will implement this reform in collaboration with education authorities.

Stakeholder participation

In working on these reforms, the Australian Government will carry out a consultation process with Australian families, teachers, principals and the wider community. Further information about stakeholder consultation is at www.betterschools.gov.au

Success indicator

Success will result in Australia's school funding model beyond 2013 being focussed on excellent learning and teaching outcomes across the entire school system and supporting students in overcoming barriers to achievement regardless of their background or where they go to school.

Action 5.1.2. Implementation of national quality standards for early childhood education and care and school age care

Why is this important?

Access to a quality early childhood education and care service that provides a high-quality child-centred educational program will provide children with educational stimulation to develop intellectual growth, the need for play and friendship, social, physical and emotional development.

Early identification and the provision of early intervention make a significant difference to the lifelong learning and social inclusion outcomes for all children, including those with a disability, and is vital for children with disability so their learning needs are addressed.

What will it do?

This action will improve participation of children with disability in early education, child care and school and increase the likelihood of early identification of children with disability resulting in the earlier placement of intervention strategies.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory governments and regulatory authorities, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and Australian Children's Education Care Quality Authority have responsibility.

How will it be done?

The National Quality Standard will improve quality through a range of measures including:

- improved staff-to-child ratios
- a quality ratings system
- new qualification requirements for all early childhood education workers.

Stakeholder participation

Australian Children's Education Care Quality Authority has taken on the role of developing and implementing a comprehensive stakeholder communication and engagement strategy in cooperation with the Australian, state and territory governments. A key objective of the strategy is to promote the importance of the early years and the role of education and care services in delivering quality outcomes for all children.

The Australian Government is assisting the sector to support the implementation of the National Quality Framework including through the provision of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program. The aim of this program is to promote and maintain high-quality care and inclusion for all children in eligible child care services, by increasing the skill level of educators and management in line with nationally-consistent priorities.

The Australian Government is also supporting families and services through the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate schemes.

Success indicator

Children with disability will have access to a quality early childhood education and care service that will have the provisions to provide a tailored education and care program.

Action 5.1.3. Inclusion and Professional Support Program

Why is this important?

Children with disability sometimes face barriers to attending formal child care because of special needs.

What will it do?

Improving the capacity of child care services to provide inclusive child care helps child care services be ready to meet the needs of all children in their care and to equip them for life and learning. In turn, this goes towards the Australian Government's commitment to providing universal access to education and care services for all children.

Through the *Inclusion and Professional Support Program*, support is provided to eligible child care services to promote and maintain high-quality care and inclusion for children.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

There are four discrete elements to the program that collectively aim to improve the:

- capacity of child care services to include all children – for example, by subsidising the cost of additional child care educators and carers for those services with children with ongoing high support needs related to disability, and by funding inclusion support facilitators to advise and assist services to develop appropriate support arrangements
- professional capacity of children care services – through professional development and training and individual support to services.

Stakeholder participation

The Australian Government undertook a review of the program in 2011 which included the release of a discussion paper, to which a number of peak disability bodies made a submission. The purpose of this review was to inform the policy and selection processes for the program in the next funding agreement period, 2013-2016.

It is anticipated that an evaluation of the program will be undertaken during 2013-2014.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be determined by the various program elements being well utilised and child care service feedback.

Action 5.1.4. Reform vocational education and training

Why is this important?

People with disability do not participate in vocational education and training to the same extent as people without disability and therefore are disadvantaged in a competitive labour force.

Reform of the vocational education and training system is intended to deliver a productive and highly skilled workforce that will contribute to Australia's economic future, and enable all working age Australians, including people with disability, to develop the skills and qualifications needed to participate effectively in the labour market.

What will it do?

A revised National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development and a new National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, which were agreed by the Council of Australian Governments in April 2012, will introduce reforms that will deliver a productive and highly skilled workforce that is responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing economy. Agreements are expected to be implemented from 1 July 2012.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory governments, in cooperation with public and private registered training organisations and industry groups have responsibility.

How will it be done?

Reforms in state systems to be implemented include:

- increased transparency of information on vocational education and training to students, employers and governments
- higher quality of training:
 - providing an entitlement to skills training
 - enhanced equity
 - improved efficiency and responsiveness of the system.

Stakeholder participation

Existing stakeholder forums will continue to be used to formally engage with people with disability.

Success indicator

Indicators are yet to be finalised through negotiations.

Action 5.1.5. Improve support services for Australian apprentices, including those with disability

Why is this important?

Completion rates for Australian apprenticeships are unacceptably low (about 48 per cent). This represents a significant economic cost, given the time and resources provided for both on-the-job and off-the-job training. As well, there are particular sectors currently experiencing significant skills shortages, such as engineering and the traditional trades.

What will it do?

The Australian Apprenticeships Mentoring package will provide additional support for apprentices, including those with disability.

Responsibility

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Mentoring projects will target priority groups, including apprentices with disability.

Stakeholder participation

External consultation was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders in July and August 2011. Some follow-up consultations were undertaken after the announcement of Australian Government Skills Connect.

Success indicator

An increase above the current national average in the retention and completion rates of Australian apprentices, including those with disability will be reported.

Action 5.1.6. National Broadband Network—Enabled Education and Skills Services Program

Why is this important?

Children with disability often face barriers to their learning opportunities.

What will it do?

The National Broadband Network enabled *Education and Skills Services Program* will support the development and trialling of online education and skills services that take advantage of the high-speed broadband connections being made available through the National Broadband Network.

This will provide more interactive and effective learning opportunities, which could be very effective for students with disability.

Responsibility

The program is being delivered by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in consultation and agreement with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science Research and Tertiary Education.

How will it be done?

The program commenced in 2011 inviting proposals for innovative online and interactive education and skills services using the National Broadband Network.

The program will focus on proposals that conduct National Broadband Network enabled projects within, connecting to, or preferably between, communities to first benefit from the National Broadband Network.

These projects should be cost-effectively scalable outside of the initial deployment trial sites and potentially to a national level.

Stakeholder participation

Public information about the program is available through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and government National Broadband Network websites.

The primary stakeholder groups include state and territory education departments, representative bodies for the non-government sector, and other peak bodies for education, including the Australian Information and Communications Technology in Education Committee.

Success indicator

Children with disability could benefit from more interactive and effective learning opportunities, under this action.

Success will be gauged by the degree to which projects have successfully developed concepts which are likely to lead to innovative education and skills that enable Australian teachers and students to gain increased access to information; make education, training, and skills development more accessible to Australians; improve lifelong learning through professional and skills development in the workplace through high-speed broadband connectivity; mitigate location-dependent or regional skills shortages; and improve links between learners, education, training and skills providers, employers and parents.

Area for future action 5.2.

See Chapter 2, Section 1. Reviews of national agreements and national partnerships.

Area for future action 5.3. Develop innovative learning strategies and supports for students with disability which are accessible, reliable and responsive, to strengthen their aspirations and enable them to reach their full potential.

Action 5.3.1. More support for students with disabilities

Why is this important?

This initiative is ensuring that Australian schools and teachers are better able to support students with disability to improve their educational outcomes.

What will it do?

Children with disability often face barriers to their participation and learning in schools and have lower rates of Year 12 or equivalent attainment compared to children without disability.

It is building the capacity of schools and teachers to better meet the individual needs of students with disability and is being accomplished through a range of activities including coordinated services by health specialists within a school and/or assistive technology to support learning in the classroom.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, state and territory government and non-government education authorities have responsibility.

How will it be done?

Teachers are receiving more resources and training to better meet the needs of school students with disability under the \$200 million *More Support for Students with Disabilities* initiative.

Stakeholder participation

In 2010 an expert working group of teachers, principals, unions, government and non

government education authorities and representatives of people with disability reported to the Minister for School Education regarding strategies to support students with disability. This report informed the development of the initiative.

State and territory education authorities continue this engagement with education and disability stakeholders, including people with disability during the consultations the development and implementation of activities in their jurisdictions.

Success indicator

Education authorities have provided the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations with an implementation plan including performance benchmarks for their selected activities. Progress will be measured through attainment of performance benchmarks.

An independent evaluation is also being undertaken to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the initiative and will showcase strategies effective in supporting students with disabilities.

Area for future action 5.4. Investigate options for reporting on educational outcomes of students with disability.

Action 5.4.1. Better data on school students with disability

Why is this important?

Currently there is no national understanding about the cohort of students with disability, their educational needs and adjustment provided for them. Nationally-consistent data about school students with disability is not collected.

What will it do?

The collection of nationally-consistent data will lead to a better national understanding of the diversity of the population of students with disability, how many there are, where they are and the level of adjustments provided for them to participate in schooling.

Responsibility

The Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood through a Joint Working Group consisting of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, state and territory and non-government school education sectors and Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority has responsibility for the implementation of a nationally consistent data collection on students with disability

How will it be done?

The former Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, now SCSEEC (now Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood) established a joint, time-limited working group to develop a national plan for implementation of a new national data collection on students with disability. This includes the conduct of a trial, in the second half of 2012, of a model for the Collection of nationally consistent data on school students with disability.

Stakeholder participation

Ongoing consultation has occurred with state and territory governments, sectors and peak organisations representing people with disabilities.

Success indicator

The success of this measure will be an agreed process for the data collection and implementation of a national data collection as soon as possible.

Area for future action 5.5. Identify and establish best practice for transition planning and support through all stages of learning and from education to employment.

Action 5.5.1. Improve school transitions

Why is this important?

People with disability have lower levels of Year 12 or equivalent attainment compared to people without disability.

What will it do?

This action will help to assist school transitions through the implementation and review of the *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions*.

Evidence across Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development nations demonstrates that completion of senior schooling, or its vocational equivalent, is a key factor influencing future economic opportunities and engagement in lifelong learning.

Australian studies using Program for International Student Assessment data show the importance of having career plans for successful post-school outcomes.

Responsibility

The Australian, state and territory governments share responsibility for this initiative.

How will it be done?

The *National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions* was established to:

- support the achievement of a national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90 per cent by 2015
- provide an education or training entitlement to young people aged 15–24
- better engage young people in education and training; for example, through programs like *Youth Connections* which delivers individual support services to more than 45 000 young people, including 12 600 who have been identified as having disability and young people for whom mental health is identified as a barrier
- assist young people aged 15–24 to make a successful transition from schooling into further education, training or employment
- better align Australian, state and territory programs and services related to youth, careers and transitions.

Stakeholder participation

Australian, state and territory governments, and the catholic and independent school sectors are represented on a Multilateral Working Group that oversees the implementation of the National Partnership.

Success indicator

Success will result in increased participation by young people in education and training; more young people making a successful transition from school to further education, training or full time employment; and increased attainment by young people aged 15–24, including Indigenous youth.

Area for future action 5.6. Respond to the recommendations of the review of the Disability Standards for Education.

Action 5.6.1. Review Disability Standards for Education

Why is this important?

All children have a right to a quality education but often face barriers that impact on their learning. The *Disability Standards for Education 2005* clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

What will it do?

A review into the effectiveness of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* has been undertaken.

The review report makes a series of recommendations on how Standards can be implemented more effectively to make it easier for students with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

Responsibility

The Australian Government Minister for School Education, in consultation with the Australian Government Minister for Early Childhood and Child Care, the Australian Government Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills and the Australian Government Attorney-General are responsible for the Standards.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government has responded to the recommendations in the review with a plan to: work with state and territory education authorities and the non-government sector to follow up on these recommendations.

Stakeholder participation

The consultation process for the review involved a series of meetings with people with disability and other key stakeholders. It also provided the opportunity for interested stakeholders to make submissions to the review.

The Australian Government will also work with key stakeholders such as government and non government education providers to implement the recommendations of the review. The Schools Disability Advisory Council will also provide advice on effective implementation of the recommendations.

Success indicator

Specific success indicators will be developed once the review is released.

Area for future action 5.7. Ensure the Early Years Learning Framework, national assessment processes and Australian Curriculum incorporate the needs of students with disability within an inclusive education framework.

Action 5.7.1. Early Years Learning Framework

Why is this important?

Children with disability often face barriers to their learning. All children need to be provided with individual learning approaches so their developmental achievements can be optimised.

What will it do?

The Early Years Learning Framework emphasises that early childhood educators must respect and work with each child's unique qualities and abilities through individualised learning approaches that enhance all children's development.

Responsibility

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

The framework describes the principles, practice and learning outcomes essential to support young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. It guides early childhood educators in their development of quality learning programs for each child.

Children's individual needs will be met regardless of where they are positioned on the learning continuum.

Stakeholder participation

During the development of the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework, a range of stakeholder engagement activities took place.

A consortium of early childhood experts led by Charles Sturt University developed the Early Years Learning Framework. The consortium was made up of early childhood academics, practitioners, service providers, leaders of peak bodies, professional organisations and consultants. The draft Early Years Framework was the subject of extensive consultation conducted around Australia, including public consultation forums and a national symposium held in October 2008.

The development of the National Quality Framework was also guided by a Stakeholder Reference Group. Membership for the Stakeholder Reference Group was drawn from a broad range of peak bodies and professional organisations, including the Chief Executive Officer of Early Childhood Intervention Australia. State and territory governments also conducted similar reference groups, with representation from the relevant disability, inclusion and early intervention organisations.

Success indicator

A review of the National Quality Framework is planned for 2014. To inform this work a baseline study of quality against the elements of the Early Years Learning Framework is being undertaken.

Action 5.7.2. Increase Participation in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) by students with disability

Why is this important?

Children and young people with disability often face barriers to their learning and may not participate in NAPLAN. This means their performance at school cannot be monitored.

What will it do?

NAPLAN recognises that special provisions should be granted to support students with disability to access the tests and facilitate maximum participation. Accommodations should reflect the kind of support and assistance provided for assessment in the classroom, in order for students to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Responsibility

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority will manage the program on behalf of all ministers of education, in collaboration with the Australian, state and territory education authorities.

How will it be done?

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority publishes the *National Protocols for Test Administration*. The protocols, updated annually, provide a clear set of guidelines for special provisions intended to maximise the participation of students with disabilities.

Stakeholder participation

The Students with Disabilities Advisory Group advises the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority on aspects of curriculum, assessment and reporting with regard to students with disabilities. The group has representatives from national peak bodies such as the Australian Association of Special Education and the Australian Special Education Principals Association, as well as representatives from each jurisdiction with expertise in this area.

Success indicator

Success for this action will be indicated by an increased participation in the National Assessment Program by students with disability.

Action 5.7.3. Making the Australian curriculum for all students including those with disability

Why is this important?

Children and young people with disability often face barriers to their learning.

What will it do?

The *Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum* for english, mathematics, science and history has been developed to be inclusive of all students. Its objectives reflect the intention that each student can learn and that the needs of every student are important. The design of the Australia Curriculum, comprising learning areas, general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities, provides teachers with flexibility to cater for the diverse needs of students across Australia and to personalise learning. It enables teachers to plan rigorous, relevant and engaging learning and assessment experiences for students with disability.

Responsibility

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority will develop a national curriculum for the eight key learning areas listed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* over three phases. The first phase involved the development of english, mathematics, science and history. The Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum for these learning areas was published in 2010. A second phase of work involves languages, geography and the arts. Phase three includes health and physical education, technologies, economics, business, and civics and citizenship.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority is committed to the development of a high-quality curriculum for all students, while understanding the diverse and complex needs of students with disability. The Authority acknowledges the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005), as well as its obligation as an education and training service provider to articulate the rights of students with disability to access, participate and achieve in the curriculum on the same basis as students without disability.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority is extending the general capabilities learning continua as appropriate, initially for literacy and numeracy. These extended continua will support teachers to provide age-appropriate learning opportunities for students with disability that are drawn from the full range of learning areas in the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority is also developing advice materials for teachers on how to use the Australian Curriculum to address the learning needs of all students and examples of teaching and learning activities that illustrate how students with disability can access and participate in the Australian Curriculum on the same basis as their peers.

Stakeholder participation

As it develops the curriculum, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority will engage and consult with stakeholders in a range of ways, for example convening national workshops and forums on each of the learning areas. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority's Australian Curriculum Consultation Portal facilitates opportunities for all interested parties to view and comment on documents as they are released.

In addition, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority has established a Students with Disability Advisory Group to provide it with high-level advice. Membership includes representatives from state and territory governments, the non-government school sector, higher education providers, school leaders as well as the Australian Special Education Principals Association and the Australian Association of Special Education and the Australian Parents Council.

Success indicator

Success will result in the endorsement by Ministers of Education of Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority's advice on how the Australian Curriculum meets the diverse learning needs of students, including students with disability. Publication of the curriculum materials for students with disability will ensure each phase of the Foundation to Year 10 Australian Curriculum offers the opportunity for students with disability to engage in rigorous and relevant learning experiences.

Area for future action 5.8. Promote leadership development for people with disability

Action 5.8.1. Leaders for Tomorrow Program

Why is this important?

People with disability face barriers to developing their leadership skills and accessing leadership opportunities.

What will it do?

People with disability will develop the skills and confidence to become leaders in business, the community and government. This has benefits for individuals, but also benefits for the whole community by ensuring a more representative and diverse group of people in leadership roles.

By linking people with disability with appropriate training, support and mentoring, Leaders for Tomorrow will help them develop the skills and confidence to become leaders in business, the community and government.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for progressing this action.

How will it be done?

TAFE New South Wales Hunter Institute, leading a consortium with E-QUAL (Enhancing Quality), is delivering the program and will provide aspiring leaders with disability with the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity.

Five participant intakes will be conducted over the life of the program and applications can be submitted at any time.

The *Leaders for Tomorrow* program is not designed around set modules. Trained facilitators work with participants to develop a personalised program for each individual based on their interests, needs and requirements. Participants have access to training, coaching, mentoring and other leadership development opportunities. All participants will develop an individual Leadership Development Plan and support will be provided for up to twelve months to implement this plan.

Stakeholder participation

The program receives strategic advice and support from an advisory group comprising people with disability and representatives from the Australian Government, the education, disability and business sectors, and the community.

As part of the program, participants can be linked to mentors from the business, community or government sectors.

Informal mentoring may also occur through family, friends, employers and peers.

Success indicator

Success will be indicated by the number of people with disability participating in the program (target 200); the proportion of participants who are satisfied with the program (target 90 per cent); the percentage and number of people with disability from Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds participating in the program; and the proportion of participants who achieve key delivery requirements (target at least 80 per cent).

Action 5.8.2. Indigenous Leadership Workshops

Why is it important?

The Australian Government has identified that it is essential that the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability have strong representation, particularly as the Government prepares for reform in the way that disability care and support is delivered in Australia.

What will it do?

It is important to provide the opportunity for Indigenous disability leaders to further enhance their skills, leadership and governance in order to effectively represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

A leadership program was funded in 2011–2012 to bring Indigenous disability advocates together to strengthen their network and to explore how they could work more closely with governments and service providers to identify and tackle the needs of Indigenous people with disabilities.

Responsibility

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has responsibility for progressing this action.

How will it be done?

The Australian Government will provide up to \$60 000 to the First People's Disability Network so that a program of leadership and governance training can be provided in partnership with the *Indigenous Leadership Program*.

Stakeholder participation

The First Peoples Disability Network, an Australian Government funded peak body, has been consulted in the development of this initiative.

Success indicator

Success will be indicated by the number of people participating in workshops and through the effectiveness of future working relationships between the organisation and key stakeholders, including the Australian, state and territory governments.

Outcome 6. Health and wellbeing—*People with disability attain highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.*

Four policy directions under this outcome:

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



Major reform to the national health system is of great importance for people with disability.

Australians with disability experience significantly worse health outcomes than the general population. They are more likely to:

- have multiple long-term health conditions
- acquire health conditions that are identified as national health priority areas at an earlier age than others
- experience mental disorders and psychological distress.

Good health and wellbeing is important for everyone. (National Disability Strategy, p. 60)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States Parties to provide people with disability with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care as provided to others, and to prevent the discriminatory denial of health services or health care on the basis of disability (article 25).

The aim of the National Healthcare Agreement is to improve health outcomes for all Australians and the sustainability of our health system.

Together with the National Disability Strategy the agreement provides an opportunity for the health and disability sectors to consider what they can do, both individually and in partnership, to reduce health inequalities, plan improvements for access and inclusion, and to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes and life opportunities of people with disability.

There is strong evidence to suggest that people of low socioeconomic status are least likely to enjoy good health. People with disability are one such group within our society who have poorer socioeconomic outcomes than the general Australian population.

In 2010 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that despite the overall improvement in population health, the gap in self-assessed health between people with a severe or profound core activity limitation and people without disability remains large.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007–08 National Health Survey found that people with a severe or profound core activity limitation were 9.5 times more likely to report being in fair or poor health, compared with people without disability (45.6 per cent compared with 9.5 per cent).

The national health survey also showed that people with a profound or severe core activity limitation were more likely than people without disability to have lifestyle-related health risk behaviours associated with poorer health outcomes, such as obesity, smoking and lack of exercise.

Source: *National Disability Strategy evidence base*, pp. 43–44.

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy-discussion-paper-easy-english-version/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020-evidence-base>

The following are examples of actions taking place under state and territory government disability plans or programs:

New South Wales—Service Framework to Improve Health Care of People with Intellectual Disability

In conjunction with the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care, the Department of Family and Community Services, and the New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability, the New South Wales Ministry of Health has developed the Service Framework to *Improve Health Care of People with Intellectual Disability* which aims to:

- promote a broader understanding of the health needs of children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disability and their right to effective services and care
- improve the quality, range, consistency, accessibility and integration of services necessary to meet the health needs of children, adolescents and adults with intellectual disability.

New South Wales Health has committed \$1.5 million per annum recurrently to establish three specialised health clinics and a Clinical Network to implement key strategies in the *Service Framework*. An independent evaluation will take place to assess the impact these strategies has had on the health of people with intellectual disability and information collected will be used for continuous improvement and further policy development.

South Australia—High Risk Infant Program

The *High Risk Infant* Program in South Australia provides an early intervention response for infants where it has been identified they may be at risk of future harm. The interagency focus of the Program was strengthened following Departmental changes in late 2012. The program now incorporates education and health sector services. This provides an opportunity to support families of high risk infants through a continuum of services from pre and post-natal and during the early years of a child's life.

South Australia—Optimal Care of Individuals with disability in acute care

In South Australia, the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion and the Department for Health and Ageing have established a Memorandum of Administrative Agreement which outlines clear expectations and best practice relevant to care and management of people with disability whilst in an acute care setting.

South Australia—Facilitating optimal interface of individuals with disability from acute settings to the community

South Australia has established an innovative program that ensures safe and effective care pathways and arrangements that facilitate the transfer of individuals with disability across the acute-community interface. Funding of \$3.5 million per year has been provided by the South Australian Government to establish the *Disability Transition to Community Program* which provides targeted support and defined care pathways for individuals with disability who may be experiencing complexities related to their hospital discharge.

Western Australia—New Children's Hospital Project

The new children's hospital project has a Youth Advisory Committee to ensure children and young people have a voice in the planning stages of the hospital. This committee is made up of young people, including a young person with disability, who have experienced hospital life and who have advised on the needs of patients for the new hospital.

Queensland—Comprehensive Health Assessment Program

The *Comprehensive Health Assessment Program* (CHAP) enables improved identification and documentation of health needs of adults with an intellectual disability. CHAP is available to every adult with an intellectual disability in Queensland who receives a Disability Services delivered or funded service and has been developed by the Queensland Centre for Intellectual and Developmental Disability as a two-part book, which can be downloaded and completed by individuals, family members, carers, general practitioners and staff of government and funded non-government service providers on behalf of a person with an intellectual disability.

Victoria—Population health survey of people with an intellectual disability

The first Victorian population health survey of people with an intellectual disability was released on 24 October 2011. The Survey was undertaken by the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health and represents a significant step forward in understanding the health and wellbeing of Victorians with an intellectual disability. The Victorian population health survey of people with an intellectual disability provides some measures of social inclusion, economic participation and wellbeing compared to the general Victorian population.

Australian Capital Territory—ACT Equipment Scheme

All recommendations from the *ACT Health Equipment Services Review February/March 2008* by Michael Keen have been implemented. The Equipment Loans Service provides a broad range of equipment to eligible residents of the ACT. Full financial support and equitable eligibility criteria systems are also in place for people seeking support. The final recommendations which included a van and staff to provide a Mobile Equipment Repair and Maintenance Service for the ACT Equipment Scheme and the contract for an external continence supplier to provide a full range of items, including home delivery, were finalised in June 2011.

Areas for future action

Area for future action 6.1. Increase the representation of people with disability on universal health advisory bodies.

Action 6.1.1. Ensure increased representation of people with disability on universal health advisory bodies

Why is this important?

People with disability are more likely to have poorer health than the general population and therefore their views need to be taken into account.

What will it do?

This action will increase representation on universal health advisory bodies and enhance the consideration of the particular health needs of people with disability in decision-making processes.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory health ministers, officials and relevant organisations such as Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals have responsibility for individual parts of this action where appropriate.

How will it be done?

Health officials will encourage increased consideration of people with disability. For example, Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals are expected to acknowledge within their service level agreements:

- the presence of people with disability within their boundaries
- the specific health care needs of this cohort
- the strategies to meet those health care needs.

Stakeholder participation

Health officials and relevant organisations such as Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals are expected to consult with people with disability on how boards can reflect the health needs of people with disability.

Success indicator

The Department of Health and Ageing will monitor Medicare Local Board arrangements through routine requirements under the Medicare Locals Deed for funding.

The National Health Performance Authority will monitor and report on the performance of Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks including how they engage in the health needs of people with disability.

Area for future action 6.2.

See Chapter 2, Section 1. Reviews of national agreements and national partnerships.

Area for future action 6.3. Ensure a strong interface between disability services, Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals with strong links to local communities and health professionals.

Action 6.3.1. Ensure the health and disability sectors strengthen links with key stakeholders.

Why is this important?

People with disability are more likely than the general population to have poorer health.

What will it do?

Strong connections with key stakeholders will ensure a person-centred approach to the health needs of people with disability. For example, an intellectual disability stakeholder group has been engaged to develop resource material to support Medicare Locals and local intellectual disability groups to work together in meeting the health care needs of people with intellectual disability.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability and health ministers and officials, and relevant organisations such as Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals have responsibility for individual parts of this action where appropriate.

How will it be done?

Australian, state and territory disability and health ministers plan to meet to discuss the intersection of the disability and health systems.

Medicare Locals will be expected to engage with the full range of primary health care providers in their community such as general practitioners, physicians, pharmacists, practice nurses, allied health professionals and other stakeholders, including disability service providers.

Medicare Locals will be responsible for working collaboratively with all providers to ensure that primary health care works for the entire local population including, for example, people with disability who often require health care and services from multiple providers.

Establishment of these groups will provide an opportunity for the disability sector to be engaged. It will also further strengthen the interface between disability services, Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals.

Local Hospital Networks and Medicare Locals are expected to develop respective engagement protocols and have common membership on their governing bodies wherever possible, thereby providing a further opportunity for prioritising linkages with the disability sector.

Stakeholder participation

Medicare Locals will engage with providers in their community via transparent and visible processes appropriate to their area. These processes may include the use of advisory groups or formal sub-groups of the board.

Local Hospital Networks will consult with people with disability through stakeholder reference groups.

National Clinicians Network (NCN) forums will bring together clinicians and health managers from a range of different settings to identify how improvements may be developed and

implemented in their own local health services. It will provide a mechanism for clinicians to collaborate and share innovation across sectors and the local, state and national levels through state and national forums. Funding will also be provided to the Australian Medicare Local Alliance to deliver projects that encourage clinical engagement and cross sector collaboration.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be measured by the reporting of improved health outcomes of people with disability and improved interaction between disability and health systems.

Area for future action 6.4. Strengthen health care planning, training and the capacity of universal health care providers to diagnose and treat the health and co-morbid conditions of people with disability.

Action 6.4.1. Ensure the health sector plans for the needs of people with disability when implementing the Council of Australian Governments' primary health care reforms

Why is this important?

Despite the high prevalence of secondary medical conditions among people with disability, primary health care providers tend not to refer patients with disability for medical services focused on early detection or prevention unless the service is directly related to the patient's disability.

What will it do?

Medicare Locals will undertake population health planning to identify the health needs of local areas and develop locally focused and responsive services. They will conduct joint service planning with Local Hospital Networks and other appropriate organisations.

Health Workforce Australia is managing and overseeing major reforms to the health workforce to create new models of care, including:

- measures to increase supply
- redesigning the workforce and support structures.

Responsibility

Medicare Locals, Local Hospital Networks and Health Workforce Australia have responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Medicare Locals will assess their population's health needs and use this information in their planning and priority-setting activities.

Health Workforce Australia will monitor and report on reforms to the health workforce and will provide information to the 2014 National Disability Strategy progress report to the Council of Australian Governments.

Local Hospital Networks must have annual service level agreements in place with their respective state or territory government at the start of each financial year. As part of this process the interests and needs of the disability sectors are expected to be recognised and planned for in relation to the acute care setting.

Stakeholder participation

Medicare Locals, Local Hospital Networks and Health Workforce Australia will consult with people with disability to ensure their needs are considered in healthcare planning and capacity building.

Medicare Locals will engage with providers in their community via transparent and visible processes appropriate to their area. These processes may include the use of advisory groups or formal sub-groups of the board.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be measured by the reporting of improved health outcomes of people with disability and improved interaction between local primary care providers and allied health practitioners.

Areas for future action 6.5. Strengthen the continuity, coordination and range of primary, multidisciplinary and subacute care available to meet the health needs of people with disability.

Action 6.5.1. Improved coordination across a range of care to meet the health-related needs of people with disability

Why is this important?

People with profound or severe disability are six times more likely to report having four or more long-term health conditions compared to people without disability. Many have difficulty accessing and navigating the health system as the boundaries of responsibility for service provision are sometimes unclear.

What will it do?

Medicare Locals are expected to work with Local Hospital Networks, patients and the local community to develop, monitor and maintain high patient care standards and integrated and coordinated clinical pathways to improve access to services. This includes after-hours and Telehealth services provided in the most appropriate setting, and links between services in the local area.

Responsibility

Australian, state and territory disability and health ministers and officials, and relevant organisations such as Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks have responsibility for individual parts of this action where appropriate.

How will it be done?

Consultation will be undertaken on how Medicare Locals might coordinate and integrate primary health care services for people in their catchment, including people with disability. This could involve considering the health needs of people with disability when:

- undertaking health planning and identifying gaps in services at the local level
- providing information to local primary care providers and allied health practitioners about the health needs of people with disability
- establishing links with the medical disability sector and those Local Hospital Networks that also provide non-acute care services to assist people with disability.

The Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record System legislation has provision for nominated and authorised representation to assist people with disability, including those who have either permanent or fluctuating incapacity.

The personally controlled electronic health record will reduce the potential for fragmentation of health records, reducing the need for people to personally retain documentation and retell histories to subsequent clinicians. It will also reduce repetitive reporting and testing on conditions and reduce the potential for adverse drug events through lack of information.

Timely, effective and appropriate subacute services, including rehabilitation and subacute mental health services are currently being enhanced for all Australians, including people with disability. These enhancements are occurring through the implementation of the:

- National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services – New Subacute Beds Guarantee from 2010–2011 to 2013–2014, which is investing in over 1300 additional subacute beds and equivalent services nationally
- National Partnership Agreement on Hospital and Health Workforce Reform, which is enhancing subacute care services in public hospitals and the community by 5 per cent per annum or 20 per cent over the period 2009–2010 to 2012–2013, and improving the mix and regional availability of services.

State and territory governments have agreed to work closely with Local Hospital Networks to strengthen subacute care services.

Stakeholder participation

Medicare Locals will engage with providers in their community via transparent and visible processes appropriate to their area. These processes may include the use of advisory groups or formal sub-groups of the board.

Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks will consult with people with disability through reference groups to ensure a smoother transition across all stages of the healthcare system.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be measured by the reporting of improved health outcomes and improved interaction with local primary care providers and allied health practitioners.

Areas for future action 6.6. Address issues specific to people with disability as part of the national expansion of key public health strategies such as dental programs, nutrition and physical activity programs, mental health, drug and alcohol and sexual and reproductive health programs, so they explicitly meet the needs of people with disability.

Action 6.6.1. Ensure public health strategies are implemented and monitored with the needs of people with disability as a priority

Why is this important?

People with disability are more likely to have health risk factors such as smoking and being overweight. Almost half have a mental health condition compared to 6 per cent of people without disability. Over one-third experience high to very high psychological distress levels compared to people without disability.

What will it do?

As part of the national health reforms there is an increased focus on prevention and early intervention. For example, governments have committed to implementing the National Preventative Health Strategy and the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health.

The Australian National Preventative Health Agency has been established to guide the national preventative agenda through datasheet, research, evaluation and policy advice.

There are a range of other actions targeted at public health strategies including the:

- national mental health plan
- *Measure Up* social marketing campaign
- universal health check for three-year-olds
- national male health policy
- national women's health policy.

Responsibility

Australian Government and state and territory health ministers and officials from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs have responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Australian Government and state and territory officials will consider including strategies consistent with the National Disability Strategy in the review of the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health in 2013–2014.

All governments are working together to implement actions under the Fourth National Mental Health Plan focusing initially on two priority flagship areas: social inclusion (led by Queensland) and child and youth (led by the Australian Government).

In the 2011–2012 Federal Budget the Government committed \$2.2 billion over the next five years to the Delivering National Mental Health Reform Budget package, elements of which assist in providing services for those individuals with a severe and persistent illness and a disability. Community-based mental health services will be expanded to assist people with mental illness, their families and carers, help overcome social isolation, and increase connections to the community.

People with disability will continue to be able to access mental health services through programs such as the *Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners* through the Medicare Benefits Schedule initiative.

The Australian Government has developed Australia's first *National Male Health Policy* to address the health of males, including those with disabilities. Released in May 2010 it seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australian males by addressing particular health issues, focusing on the social determinants of health inequalities and encouraging the health system to be more responsive to priority groups. The policy identifies six priority areas including health equity between population groups of males and details how change may be achieved.

Likewise, the *National Women's Health Policy 2010* aims to improve the health and wellbeing of all women in Australia, especially those at the greatest risk of poor health. This will be achieved by addressing particular health issues, focusing on the social determinants of health inequities and encouraging the health system to be more responsive to women.

People with disability are specifically included within the Australian Government's *Measure Up* social marketing campaign which aims to reduce the risk factors for chronic disease such as some cancers, heart disease and type two diabetes.

Stakeholder participation

The needs of people living with disability and mental illness will be considered through representation on a number of the Mental Health Budget package and the Fourth National Mental Health Plan implementation reference groups.

Disability groups also advised on the development of both the male and women's health policies through public submissions.

Success indicator

The 2014 National Disability Strategy progress report to the Council of Australian Governments will include an update on how the National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health reflects the health needs of people with disability and how performance indicators will be disaggregated by disability status.

The Australian National Preventative Health Agency will report on outcomes and actions for people with disability.

Areas for future action 6.7. Ensure informal and supported decision makers are part of preventative, diagnostic and treatment programs where necessary and appropriate, always ensuring the rights of the individual are respected and protected.

Action 6.7.1. Improve take-up of time-based health assessments for people with intellectual disability

Why is this important?

People with intellectual disability face stark health and access inequities. They have lower life expectancy and higher morbidity rates than does the general population.

What will it do?

The Australian Government has introduced an additional Medicare item number to allow for longer GP consultations with people with intellectual disability: to assess their physical, psychological and social function, and to identify any medical intervention and preventative health care needs. This will ensure there is adequate time for decision makers to be part of treatment programs for people with an intellectual disability.

Responsibility

Department of Health and Ageing has responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

Assessments will be provided under the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

Stakeholder participation

This Medicare service was developed in consultation with the New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability.

Success indicator

The success of this action will be measured by the reporting of improved health outcomes for people with intellectual disability.

Areas for future action 6.8. Further develop the evidence base for the social and environmental determinants of health and ensure it informs the development and implementation of programs and policies.

Action 6.8.1. Research undertaken to fill important research gaps and progress knowledge on the health outcomes for people with disability

Why is it important?

Given the significant health issues facing people with disability and their experiences with accessing the health system, it is important to improve understanding of their outcomes as health reform is implemented.

What will it do?

There are a range of activities planned, including research grants to be awarded, the creation of the National Health Performance Authority, and the publication of health communities' reports.

Responsibility

The National Health and Medical Research Council and the National Health Performance Authority have responsibility for this action.

How will it be done?

As the Australian Government's principal funder of health and medical research, the National Health and Medical Research Council invests in the highest quality research as determined through peer review. Its focuses include:

- creating knowledge—by investing in research most likely to yield new knowledge through independent, investigator-initiated research
- translating knowledge—by supporting funding schemes that help ensure research findings flow into improved policy and practice
- building capacity to undertake research—by supporting, renewing and widening Australia's pool of talented new researchers, from early training through to their most productive years.

The National Health and Medical Research Council administers the *Hearing Loss Prevention Program* as a special initiative under its project grants funding scheme with funding from Department of Health and Ageing.

The *Hearing Loss Prevention Program* targets young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those in the workplace. Research will focus on preventing hearing loss or reducing the impact of hearing loss.

Priority will be given to proposals that address specific activities or behavioural changes which help prevent avoidable hearing loss or reduce the impact of hearing loss.

Project grant applications must have a direct, demonstrable link to the findings of existing research in this area. Applications may also aim to fill important research gaps and progress knowledge to inform prevention activities.

From 2012 the National Health Performance Authority will monitor the performance of, and publish performance assessments for, each Medicare Local in health communities' reports. These reports will contain assessments against new service and financial reporting indicators which will focus on:

- access to services
- quality of service delivery
- financial responsibility
- patient outcomes
- patient experience.

The National Health Performance Authority will consider disaggregation of these indicators by disability status.

Stakeholder participation

The National Health and Medical Research Council and the Consumers Health Forum developed the *Statement on Consumer and Community Participation in Health and Medical Research* in 2001.

The Statement recognises the contribution that consumers can make to health and medical research and their right to do so. It encourages consumers and researchers to work in partnerships based on understanding, respect and shared commitment to research that will improve the health of humankind.

The National Health and Medical Research Council encourages researchers to adopt the Statement vision where consumer involvement is appropriate.

Success indicator

The National Health and Medical Research Council's annual report will examine its achievements and performance against its strategic directions identified in the National Health and Medical Research Council Portfolio (Agency) Budget Statement.

The National Health Performance Authority's reports will examine the health outcomes and experiences with the health system of people with disability.

Appendix 2. National agreements and national partnerships

National agreements

National agreements	Review period	Expiry date
National Health Reform (NHRA)	Late 2013	
National Healthcare	As required with agreement of all parties	NA
National Education (NEA)	As required with agreement of all parties	NA
Skills and Workforce Development	2011	NA
National Disability	As required with agreement of all parties	NA
National Affordable Housing (NAHA)	As required with agreement of all parties	NA
National Indigenous Reform (NIRA)	As required with agreement of all parties	NA

National agreements

National partnerships	Review period	Expiry date
Elective Surgery Waiting Lists	NA	31 December 2011
Productivity Places Program (PPP)	No later than 30 June 2010	30 June 2012
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	After the first 18 months	30 June 2013
Nation Building and Jobs Plan (NBJP)	2010	31 December 2012
Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access (RIPIA)	2010–2011	30 June 2013
E-Health	By 30 June 2011	30 June 2012
Hospitals and Health Workforce Reform	July 2011	30 June 2013
Improving Public Hospital Services	By 31 December 2013	30 June 2017

National partnerships	Review period	Expiry date
Homelessness	Council of Australian Governments review three years after commencement (2011–2012) Brought forward mid-term review to be completed by August 2011	30 June 2013
Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory	2011–2012	30 June 2012
Smarter Schools – Literacy and Numeracy	Before expiry	31 December 2012
Health Infrastructure	At least once every three years from 7 December 2009 (2012–2013)	To expire when each party has completed all agreed projects, completed applicable reform requirements; and provided all of the reports required under this agreement
Indigenous Economic Participation	2012 second half 2011	30 June 2013
Health Services	Once every three years from December 2009 (2012–2013)	To expire when each party has completed all agreed projects, completed applicable reform requirements; and provided all of the reports required under this agreement
Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes	2012–2013	30 June 2013
Youth Attainment and Transitions	Before expiry	31 December 2013
Smarter Schools – Improving Teacher Quality	NA	31 December 2013
School Pathways Program	NA	30 June 2014
Closing the Gap – Indigenous Early Childhood Development	NA	30 June 2014

National partnerships	Review period	Expiry date
Remote Service Delivery	2013–2014	30 June 2014
More Support for Students with Disabilities	Before expiry	30 June 2014
National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care	2014 and 2019	NA
Preventive Health	2014–2015	30 June 2015
Smarter Schools – Low SES School Communities	Before expiry	2015
Remote Indigenous Housing	2012 and 2017	30 June 2018

Appendix 3. Consultation

Community engagement and consultation framework

Overview: Commitment to engagement and consultation (as outlined in the National Disability Strategy)

The National Disability Strategy does not give prescriptive guidelines or protocols for community engagement and consultation.

However, there is a clear expectation that all governments will work collaboratively with people with disability, their representative organisations, their families and carers, communities, unions, businesses, service providers, advocacy and other organisations in the development of programs, policies and systems that affect people with disability.

Feedback provided by national, state and territory peak bodies and organisations during the development of this first report indicated that a clear and structured approach was needed for future consultation and engagement.

The following section outlines the consultation that has taken place to date. It also outlines the proposed approach to future consultation and engagement on the implementation and reporting of the National Disability Strategy.

Consultation on the framing of the National Disability Strategy

The development of the National Disability Strategy included the establishment of the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council comprising the chair, Dr Rhonda Galbally AO, and up to twenty-nine members.

Its formation creates a single advisory body on the inter-related issues of disability and caring relationships.

The National People with Disabilities and Carer Council works closely with the Australian Government on the implementation of a number of key reforms aimed at delivering improved care, support and choice for people with disability including the implementation of the National Disability Strategy and the National Carer Strategy.

The National Disability Strategy was developed in consultation with the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and included an extensive public consultation process and ongoing engagement with people with disability and other community stakeholders. There was an overwhelming response to the initial consultations on the National Disability Strategy, with more than 2 500 people attending capital city forums and focus groups in regional and remote areas and more than 750 written submissions received.

The National Disability Strategy consultation report, *Shut Out: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia* was presented to the Australian Government by the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council on 5 August 2009.

The *Shut Out* report has informed the National Disability Strategy by helping governments identify the issues and policy priorities for people with disability, their families and carers. It also assisted in guiding the development of solutions.

Accordingly, the Australian Government and its Council of Australian Governments partners view the Strategy as the voice of people with disability and they will be working together to implement it on this basis, in conjunction with ongoing engagement with people with disability.

Consultation on the first report to the Council of Australian Governments

Improving outcomes for people with disability requires a whole-of-government and community response. All governments, through the National Disability Strategy, committed to work together to achieve change across all mainstream and disability-specific policies, programs and services to improve the lives of people with disability, their carers and families.

The National Disability Strategy has been promoted by all jurisdictions and several thousand copies have been distributed nationally and internationally in mail-outs. It has also been downloaded in various formats.

In addition to drawing on the views of people with disability expressed in *Shut Out*, existing stakeholder forums were used to formally engage with people with disability about the implementation of the Strategy.

Consultation on this first report commenced in May 2011 with an initial meeting between the Chair of the Development Officials Working Group and the Australian Human Rights Commission to discuss the role of the Commission in implementing the Strategy. The working group met with the Australian Human Rights Commission on several other occasions during the report's drafting.

The Development Officials Working Group convened its inaugural annual meeting with chairs of the national, state and territory disability advisory bodies in August 2011 to discuss policy priorities for implementing the Strategy. The working group convened an additional meeting with the chairs of disability advisory bodies in early December 2011 to consult further on the development of this first report.

In mid-December 2011 an exposure draft of this report was distributed to existing stakeholder groups including the Australian Human Rights Commission, the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, state and territory disability advisory bodies and the network of national and state and territory disability peak organisations.

The National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and state and territory disability advisory bodies are funded by governments to ensure that disability policies, programs and services are appropriately and effectively informed and guided by people with disability, their families and carers who access these services and programs.

The National People with Disabilities and Carer Council, disability advisory bodies, peaks and other key stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the draft report and to offer suggestions on their own role in advancing the Strategy, on behalf of people with disability.

The key themes emerging from this engagement and consultation process were that there needed to be:

- more engagement with people with disability, their families, carers and organisations that represent them
- more information about future work to be progressed
- more detail about the areas for future action, including who is responsible, how success will be measured, and how people with disability are being involved
- less detail about work that is already underway
- practical advice on how to make the document more accessible.

This feedback was considered by governments and where possible, incorporated into the report.

Importantly, a more structured and transparent approach to future consultation on the implementation of the Strategy has been developed. This has been outlined in the following section.

Proposed approach to consultation over the life of the Strategy

Governments acknowledge that ongoing consultation on the implementation of the Strategy requires an agreed, more structured and transparent framework to guide future engagement and feedback with people with disability and their representative organisations over its life.

This will ensure that all government agencies are aware of their obligations and can embed consultation and engagement in their forward work plans. It will also assist disability organisations with their forward work plans and resource management.

Each jurisdiction (except Northern Territory) has a disability advisory body appointed by the Disability Minister. The chairs of each jurisdictional advisory body meet with disability officials to provide advice on the Strategy.

While the Strategy was being developed, the Australian Government established the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council. The Council meets at least three times a year to provide advice—including advice on the Strategy and its implementation—to the Minister for Disability Reform and the Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Carers.

In addition, a National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group has been established by the Australian Government to specifically focus on providing advice on the ongoing implementation of the National Disability Strategy. This group will comprise equal numbers of representatives from the National People with Disabilities and Carer Council and representative organisations to ensure that the views of people with disability are heard. The group will work with the Australian Government on key implementation tasks and will also meet three times per year.

The National Disability Strategy Development Officials Working Group will ensure greater engagement with people with disability, their families and carers, and the disability organisations that represent them, in the progression of future work under the Strategy. This includes the mainstream areas of work including disability champion ministers and national agreements and national partnerships.

Ministers with responsibility for disability issues will also hold a national forum with people with disability and their representative organisations in conjunction with each two-yearly report. These high-level reports are due to the Council of Australian Governments in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Encouraging the non-government sector to embrace the spirit of the National Disability Strategy

Australian governments have primary responsibility for driving the National Disability Strategy and for ensuring that meaningful and measureable progress is made under each of the six key outcome areas.

In addition to driving and delivering tangible improvement in the design and delivery of services that people with disability need, governments also have a role in providing the leadership and support necessary to drive a community-wide shift in attitudes that will contribute to the universal inclusion and consideration of people with disability.

This attitudinal change is everybody's business. It will require widespread involvement and buy-in from all sectors of the community including, but by no means limited to, private enterprise and business, employers and employees, industries involved in the built environment, the information and communication technology sector, mainstream service providers, advocacy and other private and community-based groups and organisations.

This first report to the Council of Australian Governments largely focuses on policies, services and programs that governments can directly influence. However, further work needs to be done to develop strategies that will encourage and support the non-government sector to embrace the underlying principles of the Strategy as a standard approach to the way they do business.

This work will rely on input and engagement of people with disability and their representative organisations.

