

Help shape the National Disability Strategy beyond 2020

Community Consultation Survey

About the survey

From April 2019, the Australian community is invited to take part in national consultation to help shape the future of disability policy for 2020 and beyond. This survey is one of the ways we are finding out what is important to people with disability, their families and carers. There are also community workshops and online forums.

Anyone who would like to have their say on the future of disability policy and a new strategy can complete the survey.

It includes some questions that ask you to rate items on a scale. In this word version, the scale is available as a dropdown list. Other questions ask you to write about your views and experiences. It has questions about your views on:

- The attitudes of people towards disability
- What things are still issues or barriers for people with disability and what has improved
- What is important to make a national disability strategy work well.

This survey will take around 20-30 minutes to complete

An asterix symbol (*) means you need to answer this question. If you do not want to answer a question, you can select the 'Prefer not to say' response option.

This survey is being conducted in accordance with the [Privacy Act 1988](#).

Support to help you complete the survey

You can get help to do this survey. You can:

- Ask a friend, family member or support person to help you
- Call 1800 334 505 and someone from the Department of Social Services will help
- Call 1800 334 505 using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required and someone from the Department of Social Services will help
- Email disabilityreform@dss.gov.au with any questions or concerns.

If any of the questions or content in this survey cause you distress, you can end the survey at any time. If you or someone you know is in crisis or feeling distressed and needs support, call [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 or [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 224 636.

How will responses be used?

All responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous.

We will consolidate answers to the survey and put them in a report. The public will be able to read the report, but no identifying information about you is shared in this report.

We will ask if you would like what you have written to be included in the report. If you say yes, we will make sure you can't be identified (that nobody can tell who you are from what's written).

Findings from the survey will be used in the consultation report to help develop priorities and directions for future disability policy.

If you would prefer you can complete the [Easy Read version of the survey](#). You can complete this online and submit it by email or print it and submit it by post.

Thank you for sharing your views.

This question requires an answer.

***1. Based on this information, are you sure you want to complete the survey?**

Yes

***2. Before we get started, please tell us which of the following statements best describes you.**

Please select all that apply.

I work for a disability peak association or body

If you are a person with disability, please answer question 3. If not, please skip to question 4.

The experiences of people with disability

***4. What do you think has improved for people with disability over the past five years?**

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) under the National Disability Strategy (NDS) has helped some Australians with disability and possibly improved their lives.

For some people who are blind or have low vision, it has provided them with greater choice and control. There have, however, been a range of fundamental system design and process issues that could be enhanced to better meet the needs of people who are blind or have low vision, and the significant delays some people have experienced in waiting for their supports to be approved (or advocating for basic system change) has at times been challenging.

The introduction of the NDIS and associated funding changes, coupled with changes in aged care systems and responsibilities, has also had the unintended consequence of creating some gaps in the system of access and supports for people who are blind or have low vision, from school aged children needing support and early intervention

(where a combination of disability, health and/or school funded supports may be needed) through to older Australians with vision loss who, if otherwise in good health, may now struggle to access affordable low vision aids and supports.

***5. We want to know how people with disability are treated in Australia. How much have the following issues got better or worse over the past 5 years?**

No V2020A comment proposed

6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

No V2020A comment proposed

7. How much are each of the following areas an issue for you, or someone you know who has a disability?

(Not an issue, A minor issue, Somewhat of an issue, A major issue, A severe issue, Prefer not to say)

Negative community attitudes towards disability

A major issue

Support for carers

Somewhat of an issue

Access to quality disability supports and services

A severe issue

Access to sport, arts, recreation and leisure

Somewhat of an issue

Availability or cost of aids, equipment and assistive technology

A severe issue

Safe and accessible housing and accommodation

Somewhat of an issue

Education and learning opportunities

A major issue

Finding and keeping a job / career

A severe issue

Safe, accessible and affordable transport

A severe issue

Work and career opportunities

A severe issue

Having enough money to pay for daily expenses

A major issue

Access to health services and programs

A major issue

8. During the past month, approximately how often did you, or someone you know with disability, take part in activities in the community?

This includes activities such as playing or watching sport, recreation, entertainment, and social activities. This doesn't include working or studying.

No V2020A comment proposed

9. We want to understand why people with disability might not take part in activities in their local community.

No V2020A comment proposed

***10. Had you heard of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 before taking this survey?**

Yes, I had heard of the National Disability Strategy before taking this survey

About the National Disability Strategy

11. The National Disability Strategy guides communities and governments in making policies that help improve the lives of people with disability in Australia.

What are your ideas for specific areas or actions that would make a big difference to improving the lives of people with disability?

Please list up to 3 ideas.

Idea 1.

A systemic approach

Currently the structure of government is such that one government department is responsible for disability issues in the community which means there are few incentives for other parts of government to share responsibility for the experiences or outcomes for people with disabilities. This means that the central tenets of current Australian disability policy (such as choice, control, maximising inclusion and opportunities) are not actively taken up by, or reflected in, the work of the broader public sector.

Shifting this would in part mean that people with disability do not get caught in the gaps between current programs and responsibilities but rather experience a more integrated, pragmatic approach that takes into account their preferences and finds practical ways to address challenges arising from current policy or funding barriers.

Ensuring planning and design of all government policies, programs and services have accessibility to all as a starting point, not as an after-thought or as a special issue only in some circumstances, would also fundamentally shift the lived experience of people living with disabilities who need to engage with government services across many domains including: benefits and payments; business and industry; culture and arts; education and training; environment; family and community; health; IT and communications; job and workplace; public safety and law; transport and regional services.

Idea 2.

Business sector must implement National Disability Strategy

The business sector in Australia must adopt and implement the NDS to ensure all large and small businesses in Australia provide accessible goods and services to all Australians, including those with disability. In particular, large industries such as the banking, telecommunications, retail and technology sectors must ensure accessibility for all is paramount in their design and planning processes.

The Business Council of Australia also needs to ensure the needs of people with disability in the operations of all businesses and the accessibility of retail outlets in general, are an integral part of the business community and part of Australian business.

The next NDS must have a targeted approach to the business sector in Australia. This would make a significant difference to improving the lives of people with disability.

Idea 3.

Implementation of Universal Design principles across Australia

The implementation of Universal Design principles across all sectors in Australia would make an enormous difference to the lives of people with disability. In particular, for people who are blind or have low vision, Universal Design would improve access to the environment and reduce the need for specialist adaptive support and costly retro-fitting of equipment, systems and facilities.

The *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* explicitly states that one of its 'Areas for Future Action' is:

"1.7 Promote principles of universal design principles in procurement"¹

Therefore, at the very minimum governments must adopt – **and implement** – a procurement policy that any equipment, software systems or facilities purchased, rented or leased for government services are accessible to all people with disability, particularly those who are blind or have low vision. Universal Design must also be

¹ National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, p.35, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020>

adopted across all sectors of society, such as buildings, transport, technology, banking, wayfinding, voting and television services.

The implementation of Universal Design benefits all Australians, not just those with disability.

12. Are there any things you think should be done better to support people with disability who are from specific groups? For example, this might include:

- age (children, young people, older people)
- gender
- sexual orientation
- gender identity and intersex status
- people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people who live in remote or rural locations
- people from lower-socio-economic backgrounds.

Please write your ideas in the space below.

Access to information for all

The biggest barrier for all people who are blind or have low vision – regardless of their background - is access to information. Whether someone is from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or lives in a rural and remote location, all people need access to information and responses to information in a format of their choice.

Governments must lead by example and provide all government materials in alternate formats to ensure people who are blind or have low vision – from all backgrounds – can access government information and services as easily as any other Australian. The most disappointing example of all is the failure of the NDIS to make its information and services, including participant plans, accessible from the outset of the scheme. It is understood this issue is currently being addressed by the NDIA after many years of advocacy on this issue.

Recognition of older people with disability

It is estimated that there are 4 million people in Australia with disability and many of these are people over the age of 65 who cannot currently access the kinds of supports available to people aged under 65 with similar disabilities who are supported through the NDIS.

This is a particular challenge in the area of blindness and low vision, where prevalence increases significantly in older age groups and age related vision loss is common. As the current aged care system and associated assessment/eligibility processes are predicated on an assumption that the primary reason for seeking support is frailty, people aged 65+ who develop age related vision loss but are otherwise in good health will often struggle or be unable to access the kinds of support needed. A solution to

this challenge – either through changes to aged care² or NDIS settings – is needed and the NDS should specifically recognise older people who have a disability.

13. Reviews of the current National Disability Strategy provided a number of recommendations, some of which are in the lists below.

When it comes to having accessible and inclusive communities, how much of a priority should each of the following be?

(Not a priority, Low priority, Medium priority, High Priority, Essential, I'm not sure)

If you are unsure, please select 'I'm not sure'.

More participation and inclusion of people with disability when developing policies and programs

High priority

Make sure all services in the community such as public transport and housing, are inclusive and accessible for people with disability

High priority

Employ more people with disability

High priority

Collect and share more data about how people with disability access services in the community, such as transport, healthcare, education, employment and community activities

High Priority

Increase the profile and awareness of the national disability strategy

High priority

14. When it comes to government action, how much of a priority should each of the following be?

If you are unsure, please select 'I'm not sure'.

Develop measurable goals and concrete targets and report against them, for example on employment

High priority

Strengthen disability and carer-specific laws to guide action and improvements for people with disability

Medium priority

² For example, Vision2020 Australia has recommended changes to current aged care legislation to include “disability” as a special needs group.

Fund disability advocacy organisations

High priority

Fund and support local community and grassroots initiatives and trials to promote innovation and sharing ideas

Low priority

Fund local support organisations

Medium priority

Develop initiatives/activities that build on and complement the NDIS

Low priority

Greater support for families and carers

Medium priority

Accessing information

15. How easy or difficult do you think it is to find information about:

Policies, programs or supports available to help people with disability?

Somewhat difficult

Rights of people with disability?

Somewhat difficult

(Very difficult, Somewhat difficult, Neither easy nor difficult, Somewhat easy, Very easy)

***16. The next question is about using technology and the internet.**

How satisfied are you with the access you, or someone you know with disability, have to the equipment, aids or assistive devices needed to access information online and use technology?

If you, or someone you know, do not use these types of equipment, aids or devices, please select 'not applicable'.

(Very dissatisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Very satisfied, I'm not sure, Not applicable)

Very dissatisfied

17. Before we move on to the last set of questions, do you have any additional comments or feedback about the National Disability Strategy?

It is acknowledged that a significant part of the first NDS was to roll out the NDIS to full scheme and Vision2020 Australia and its members support the NDIS, particularly for those who are eligible for the scheme.

However, now that the first 10-year NDS is coming to an end, Vision2020 Australia and its members are concerned that there are still a wide range of challenges

experienced by people who are blind or have low vision, some of which are specific to the challenges associated with living with vision loss.

As a relatively small proportion of the overall population of people living with disability in Australia, it has proven challenging to make progress on a range of fronts for people who are blind or have low vision.

It is acknowledged that the current NDS recognises that not all people with disability are alike and that the diversity of experiences of people with disability underpins the outcome areas of the NDS. This related primarily to people with disability from diverse backgrounds. It will be imperative that the next NDS also recognises the importance of ensuring that the specific needs of people with different kinds of *disabilities* are acknowledged and addressed and that a 'one size fits all' approach will not achieve this.

About You

So that we can better understand the different perspectives we are gaining through this survey, we have a few final questions about you.

***18. What is your gender?**

NA

***19. How old are you?**

NA

***20. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

NA

***21. Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?**

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

***22. Are you from a culturally or linguistically diverse background?**

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

***23. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQI+ community?**

NA

***24. Are you, or someone you care for, an NDIS participant?**

NA

***25. Which state or territory do you live in?**

NA

26. What is your postcode?

27. If you are unsure, please provide your suburb or town in the box below, or leave blank.

NA

28. Can we include quotes from your responses in the report summarising the findings from this survey?

Yes