



ACT
Government

ACT Disability Strategy 2024–2033

A strategy to build a more accessible and inclusive ACT, where people with disability can fully participate in all aspects of community life.



Accessibility statement

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues as accessible as possible. This document has been written in plain English and is accompanied by an Easy English summary available at:

www.act.gov.au/open/disability-strategy.

If you would like to receive this publication in another format (such as large print), please email the Office for Disability at officefordisability@act.gov.au or call us on 6207 1086.

A note on language

We recognise that people with disability have different preferences regarding how they describe their disability, and that there are differing concepts of disability. In this Strategy and action plans, we have chosen to use person-first language, which prioritises the individual over their disability – for example, ‘person with disability’. This type of language was initially used to emphasise that a person has an identity beyond their disability, and that for many, person-first language is an important part of their identity, particularly for many people with cognitive disability and self-advocates. However, we also recognise that many people with disability prefer ‘identity-first language’, such as the term ‘disabled person’, because they see their disability as a key part of their identity: a way to show disability pride and their connection to the disability community, as well to demonstrate that society is disabling (in line with the social model of disability). We acknowledge that identity-first language is important to the many people with disability who have advocated for the use of this language.

In all cases, when quoting someone, we acknowledge that person’s personal preferences and individual right to choose how their identity and experiences are described.

Acknowledgement

The ACT Government acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Full title
ACTEC	ACT Electoral Commission
ACCOs	Aboriginal-Community Controlled Organisations
ADS	<i>Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031</i>
ARG	Accessibility Reference Group
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CMTEDD	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
CSD	Community Services Directorate
DLO	Disability Liaison Officer
ED	Education Directorate
DAIP	Disability Action and Inclusion Plan
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
DFSV	Domestic Family and Sexual Violence
DPOs	Disabled People's Organisations
EPSDD	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
JACS	Justice and Community Safety Directorate
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Plus.
NDDA	National Disability Data Asset
PT&G	Public Trustee and Guardian
SLA	Suburban Land Agency
TCCS	Transport Canberra and City Services

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*Renée Heaton, Chair of the ACT Disability Reference Group
and Minister for Disability, Rachel Stephen-Smith*



Minister's foreword

The ACT is a community with strong values of respect, diversity, and inclusion. As Australia's first human rights jurisdiction, recognising the equal and inalienable rights of all people is at the core of our identity.

The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024–2033* (the Strategy) stands as a testament towards aligning our values with actionable change. It is the ACT Government's commitment to realising the vision of a community where people with disability can participate in all aspects of community life.

The ACT Government recognises the social model of disability. This means recognising that it is barriers in society that create disability — it is attitudes, structures, and practices that prevent people's participation, rather than the differences of individuals. Creating a community where everyone has full and equal access is a shared responsibility. Government, business, non-government organisations and services sectors, and individuals and communities all have a role in this Strategy.

The Strategy has been developed through extensive consultation with people with disability, their families, carers, and representative organisations. Their experiences, ideas and aspirations are reflected in this document, and ensure the Strategy embodies the principle of 'nothing about us, without us'.

I thank everyone who contributed to the development of the Strategy, including my predecessor, Ms Emma Davidson MLA, and can assure the community that the ACT Government is committed to ensuring that the voices of people with disability continue to be central to all we do as we work towards the vision of an accessible and inclusive community.

Rachael Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Disability

Chair's message

The ACT Disability Reference Group (DRG) welcomes the publication of the ACT Disability Strategy. It is our pleasure and privilege to share our views and experiences with the Minister for Disability and the ACT Government. We are united by our shared desire to build a better world for people with disability.

In 2022 the DRG led community consultations where we spoke with and listened to diverse groups within the disability community. They shared their challenges and concerns as well as their ideas for change. These voices, together with our own our experiences and expertise, have been instrumental in the development of this Strategy.

People with disability want to access quality services and supports, work in jobs we find rewarding, and to engage in education and other opportunities on an equal basis to others. We want to head out to dinner with our mates, go to a concert or footy match and experience all the things our city and community have to offer, free from barriers. What we know is that we all want a Canberra where people with disability live a life of their choosing.

Good work is already happening through the ACT Disability Justice Strategy, the ACT Disability Health Strategy, and the ACT Inclusive Education Strategy. But we aren't there yet, which means we all must take deliberate action and we expect our government to be exemplary leaders of that work and set the standard for other parts of the community. This ACT Disability Strategy brings together the important work already happening while committing us all to a future direction paved by real actions and goals.

Canberrans have benefited from a progressive and contemporary community and we want these benefits to extend to people with disability. We want to aim high and work together so that this strategy and the subsequent action plans see every Canberran doing something to make inclusion a reality.

Renée Heaton
Chair, ACT Disability Reference Group

The ACT Disability Strategy

The *ACT Disability Strategy 2024–2033* (the Strategy) is the government’s commitment to a community that welcomes and values the more than 80,000 people with disability who live in Canberra. The Strategy supports the right of people with disability to full and equal participation in all aspects of community life. It does this by setting out the core principles and approaches that will be undertaken to support better outcomes for people with disability. This Strategy will serve as the ACT Government’s social inclusion strategy for people with disability.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by the Australian Government in 2008 and defines people with disability as: “... those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

The Strategy consolidates the ACT’s commitment to the *Australian Disability Strategy 2021–2031*, guides the development of new initiatives to improve outcomes for people with disability, and brings together work already happening across the ACT Government. The *ACT Inclusive Education Strategy 2024–2034*, the *ACT Disability Health Strategy 2024–2033*, and the *ACT Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029* are all part of the ACT Government’s commitment to a community that welcomes and values people with disability.

The ACT Government calls on all Canberrans, businesses, community organisations and services to actively contribute to a welcoming and inclusive ACT for people with disability.

Responding to the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review

Two major reviews focused on systemic challenges and opportunities to support improved outcomes for people with disability were released in late 2023:

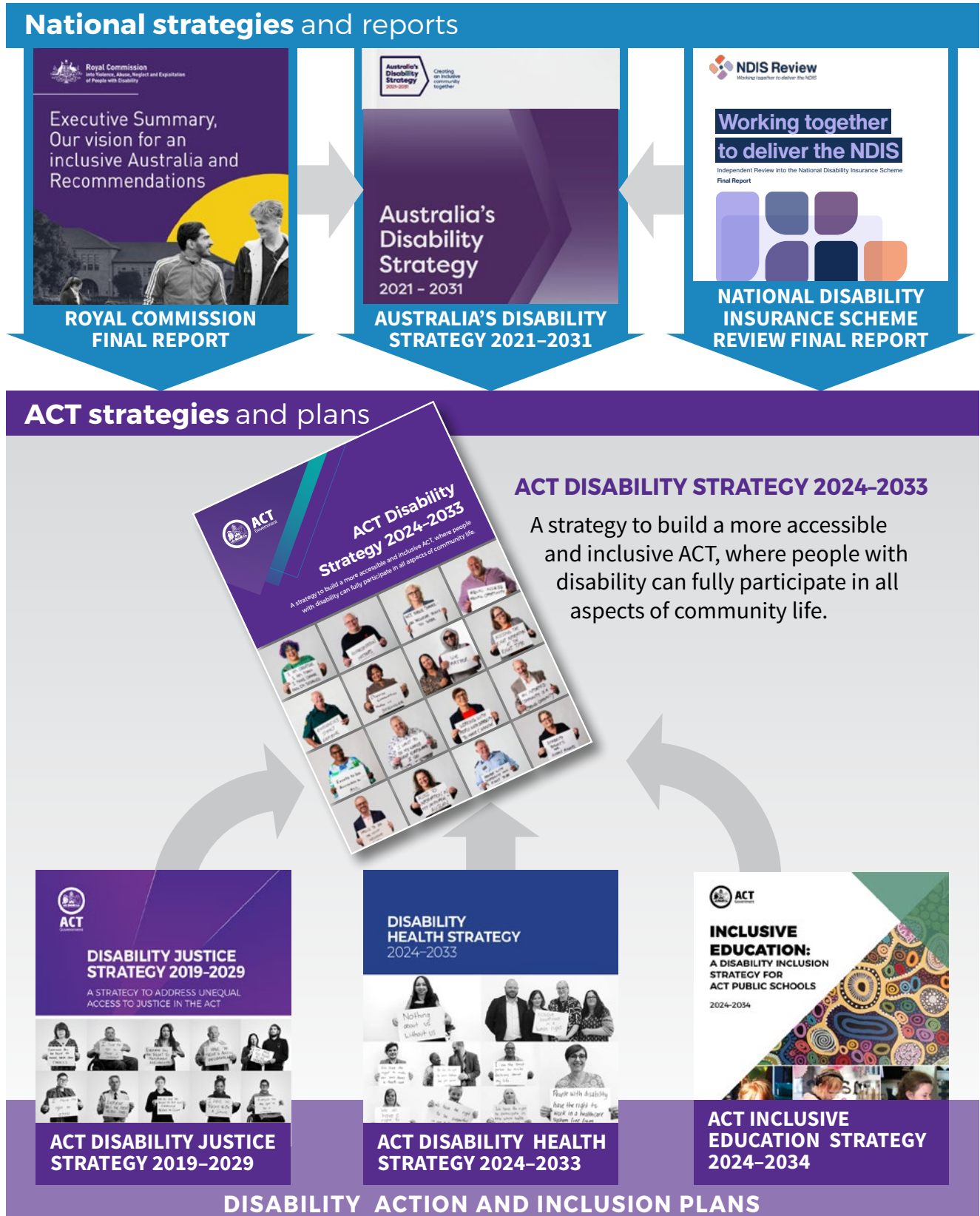
- The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (DRC) released its findings in September 2023. The DRC inquired into the impact on people with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation and what should be done to promote a more inclusive society.
- The National Disability Insurance Scheme Independent Review (NDIS Review) released in December 2023. The NDIS Review examined the design, operations and sustainability of the Scheme. It also examined how to make the market and workforce more responsive, supportive and sustainable.

Findings from both reviews are extensive and broad ranging, spanning across ACT Government with significant overlap with many of the themes of this Strategy. While the ACT and other governments are currently developing their responses to both reviews, relevant commitments and recommendations have informed the First Action Plan for this Strategy and will continue to be reflected in subsequent action plans.

The ACT Government will work in partnership with people with disability and community stakeholders to lead the implementation of the strategy through 3 action plans over the 10-year life of the Strategy.

The ACT Government also continues to participate and support the development of the National Disability Data Asset, which provides an important source of evidence to help improve the design and delivery of policies and programs for Canberrans with disability.

The Strategy in context



The Strategy at a glance

Vision

“ A strategy to build a more inclusive ACT, where people with disability can fully participate in all aspects of community life. ”



Principles

These principles will guide Strategy implementation and underpin ‘how’ we will do things:

- a human rights approach
- a person-centred approach
- shared responsibility
- the social model of disability
- systemic change
- universal design
- nothing about us without us
- a strengths-based approach
- an intersectional approach.



Wellbeing domains

The ACT’s 12 wellbeing domains provide a framework to achieve the vision of the Strategy.

Our ambition is to meet the needs of people with disability in the ACT against each of the domains.

The wellbeing domains link closely to the outcome areas of Australia’s Disability Strategy as well as the topics raised in the ACT Disability Strategy consultation.

Keeping these in focus will help us improve the lives and wellbeing of people with disability in the ACT.



Action plans

The ACT Disability Strategy will see change through 3 action plans.

FIRST Action Plan 2024–2026

Begin to address priority issues identified in the community consultation. Support the community, government and business to drive positive change, with a focus on changing attitudes, raising awareness and building capacity across the community.

SECOND Action Plan 2026–2030

Build on successful approaches by expanding effective projects and trialling new initiatives based on what we have learned. Capitalise on changing attitudes to create structural change.

THIRD Action Plan 2030–2033

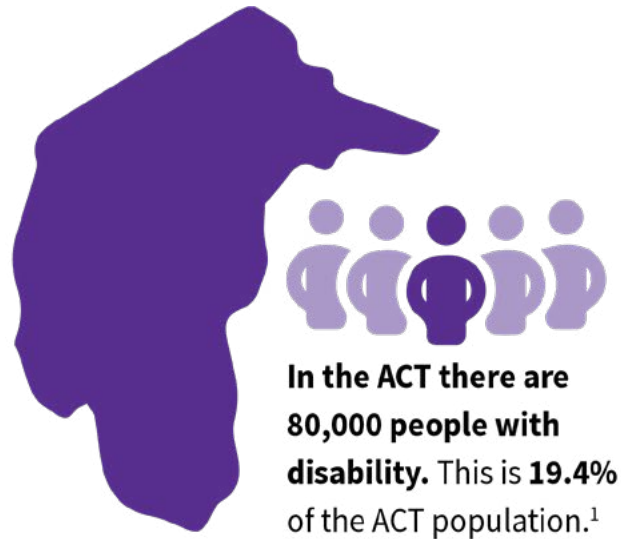
Continue to embed change across all sectors of the community and shape aspirations for the next decade.



Why do we need an ACT Disability Strategy?

People with disability face complex forms of discrimination and disadvantage and experience diverse barriers to inclusion across all areas of life. Negative community attitudes coupled with difficulty accessing services, systems and settings also restrict the full and effective participation of people with disability.

The Strategy provides a whole-of-government response to promote and protect the rights and needs of people with disability. The Strategy will also assist the ACT Government to meet its obligations under the CRPD and drive progress against Australia's Disability Strategy outcomes.



People with disability work, volunteer and take part in the community.²



59.6% of people with disability are economically disadvantaged. The average income of a person with disability is **\$700** a week compared to **\$1,343** a week for people without disability.³



36.3% of people with disability in experience financial distress compared with 16.0% without disability.⁷



When asked their satisfaction with feeling a part of the community, people with disability in the ACT reported an average of **5.1** out of **10** on the wellbeing index, compared to 7.2 out of 10 for people without disability.⁴



53.0% of public housing households in the ACT include a person with disability.



Nationally, people with disability have lower rates of labour force participation (**53%**), compared to people without disability (84%) and are twice as likely to be unemployed (**10%**) than people without disability (5%).⁵



52.0% of people with disability report poor health compared to 19.6% of people without disability.⁸



Graduates with disability take **61.5%** longer to gain full-time employment than other graduates.⁶



14.0% of the people with disability in Australia aged 5 years and over are unable to use any form of public transport.



1. ABS 2018 Survey of Disability.
2. Data from 2021 Regional Wellbeing Survey.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

5. AIHW 2022, *People with Disability in Australia*, pp. 308–11.
6. Graduate Careers Australia 2019, *Grad Stats: Employment and Salary Outcomes of Higher Education* (2017 graduates).

7. Data from 2021 Regional Wellbeing Survey.
8. Ibid.
9. AIHW 2022, *People with disability in Australia*, Australian Government.



Deborah and Sam Eades,
members of the ACT
disability community

Our consultation

The consultation was co-designed with the ACT Disability Reference Group, with the voices of people with disability at the forefront. Approximately 1,000 people took part in the consultation through workshops, an online survey, a student voice competition, written submissions and at the ACT Disability Expo. People with disability facilitated 31 events and 2 were facilitated by family carers.

The consultation was focused around 12 themes which align closely with the Outcome Areas of Australia’s Disability Strategy and the ACT Wellbeing Domains. They were:

- 1 Lifelong learning
- 2 Early childhood
- 3 Health and wellbeing
- 4 Supported decision-making
- 5 The experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability
- 6 Having a home
- 7 Supports and services
- 8 Safety
- 9 Employment
- 10 Accessible communities
- 11 Justice
- 12 Emergency and disaster management

Contributions to the consultation came from across the community. Specific workshops were held to create safe spaces for conversations focussing on issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, women, young people, people who are ageing, carers, culturally diverse people and LGBTIQ+ people.

Towards an ACT Disability Strategy – a listening report details what we heard. There is also an **Easy English version** and a **Consultation Snapshot**.

Many systemic issues were raised. We heard that people with disability and family carers often:

- find systems challenging to access and navigate
- experience social isolation and exclusion
- do not have enough of a voice in policy and decisions that affect them
- have to face the impact of negative community attitudes, stigma and discrimination
- encounter a lack of disability awareness and knowledge in many services and sectors, and
- experience financial disadvantage which limits many options in life.

The Strategy aims to address these systemic issues. People with disability told us they want to be part of, and have much to contribute to, the ACT community. To do this, they need a voice and the ability to have control over things that affect their lives, to be able to engage in meaningful paid employment, to have access to mainstream education, housing and healthcare that meets their needs, and to feel safe and secure.

“Disability has been considered something to hide, so people with disability do not get the same education, jobs, or social inclusion. We are not seen as ‘normal’ – we are not in Parliament, on boards and not represented well.”

“A good life would be being allowed to make our own decisions and being given the opportunity to experience success or take pride in learning from failures.”

“If you don’t have access to the right information at the right time to navigate the system, what you need to apply for and where, what words you need and when—if you don’t know this you are less likely to succeed.”

After the public consultation closed, ACT Government directorates worked together to shape the government’s response. The ACT Disability Reference Group and Inter-Directorate Committee on Disability Activities also directly informed strategy development.

Community and key stakeholders also provided advice on drafts of the Strategy. A roundtable brought together the ACT Disability Reference Group, people with disability and their representative organisations, advocacy groups and representatives from ACT Government directorates to consider a draft of the Strategy and provide feedback that informed this final version.

Subsequent updates have also been made to reflect the release of the DRC and NDIS Review reports, where relevant.



Tess Yvanovich, ACT Disability Reference Group member

Principles of the Strategy

These principles will guide the way the ACT Government implements the Strategy to drive holistic and systematic change for people with disability in the ACT.

- **A human rights approach.** Human rights are universal and belong to everyone. There are many International, Australian and ACT laws that protect and advance the human rights of people with disability, including the CRPD and the *ACT Human Rights Act 2004*. Discrimination laws also work to ensure everyone is treated fairly regardless of disability, race, gender, sexuality, age, or other parts of who they are.
- **The social model of disability.** Recognised under the CRPD, the social model of disability is based on the principle that society needs to change to remove attitudinal and systemic barriers, rather than changing people with disability to accommodate society.
- **Nothing about us without us.** People with disability are experts in their own lives, and all decisions and policies that impact people with disability should be made with people with disability. The government is committed to ensuring this becomes the way we do things across all directorates and portfolios.
- **Person-centred approach.** The government will place people with disability at the centre of all we do, recognising that every person is a unique individual with different needs and aspirations.
- **Systemic change.** The government will work to address the root causes of issues by transforming systems, structures and attitudes, breaking down barriers, fostering an enabling culture, and providing the tools to support this where necessary, to drive lasting change.
- **A strengths-based approach.** People with disability have diverse experience, knowledge and expertise that benefit our community. By recognising these strengths, we can build a more inclusive community for all.
- **Shared responsibility.** Everyone including governments, businesses, and the wider community has an individual, shared and collective responsibility to create a more inclusive society for people with disability.
- **Universal design.** Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without need for adaption or specialised design. Universal design supports the inclusion of people with disability across all aspects of life, including but not limited to housing and the built environment, information and communications technology, transportation, recreation (e.g. arts and culture, sports), travel and tourism. We will use the principles of universal design to adapt systems and services to work for people with disability. This includes services and systems anyone in the community might access or need to access as well as disability specific services and systems. The aim is for people with disability to have access to the same quality of service and barrier free experience as the wider ACT community.
- **An intersectional approach.** Taking an intersectional approach allows us to recognise and respond to the various and compounding forms of discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people with disability. 'Intersectionality' describes the way different types of discrimination and oppression can interact to increase disadvantage. Some people experience discrimination related to more than one part of their identity (for example, race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, class, religion, age or socioeconomic background). This discrimination can affect how people access or experience services, supports and resources.

Areas for action: ACT wellbeing domains

The *ACT Wellbeing Framework* helps us understand how we can improve the lives of all Canberrans. ACT wellbeing data shows people with disability have lower than average wellbeing in many areas of life.

The ACT Wellbeing Framework includes 12 wellbeing domains. The wellbeing domains link closely to the outcome areas of Australia's Disability Strategy as well as the topics identified in the ACT Disability Strategy consultation. The Strategy and accompanying action plans will focus on achieving outcomes against each wellbeing domain.

 <p>Governance and institutions Having a say, being heard, and working together for better outcomes.</p>	 <p>Economy We share in our city's economy.</p>
 <p>Safety Feeling safe and being safe.</p>	 <p>Living standards Having the financial resources to live life well.</p>
 <p>Access & connectivity Getting around to places we value and accessing the services we need.</p>	 <p>Identity & belonging Being able to express identity, feel a sense of belonging, and participate fully in society.</p>
 <p>Time Having time to live life well.</p>	 <p>Social connection Being connected with family, friends and community.</p>
 <p>Environment & climate The environment sustains all life now and into the future.</p>	 <p>Health Being healthy and supported with the right care.</p>
 <p>Housing & home Having a place to call home.</p>	 <p>Education & lifelong learning Gaining the skills and education needed at all stages of life.</p>



ACT wellbeing domain 1: Governance and institutions

Having a say, being heard, and working together for better outcomes

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government, business and community are equipped to see the value and benefits of people with disability. • People with disability have a voice in and are part of decision-making processes, including the development of policy, services, infrastructure, and program design and delivery. • People with disability have equal access to justice. • People with disability, family and carers feel confident navigating systems and services. • The human rights of people with disability are promoted, upheld and considered in all decision-making. • People with disability understand their rights, can participate in decision-making and have their wishes and preferences respected and acted upon. • The development of policy, services, infrastructure, and program design and delivery is evidence-based and responds to the experiences of people with disability. 	<p>“ People doing things to us or for us and not with us.”</p> <p>“ People with disability don’t want to disclose their disability because of stigma and bullying. They may not even be aware that they have disability.”</p> <p>“ Lawyers have limited awareness and understanding of disability and, even if they do have some understanding, they are not allocated enough time to cater and adjust.”</p> <p>“ Many young people don’t get diagnosed until they are in Bimberi.”</p> <p>“ I like having support people help me understand what the implications of a decision might be, and respect my opinion of that decision.”</p> <p>“ Mum and Dad don’t think I can make decisions that are right.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring people with disability are involved in government planning and decision-making processes and that engagement is accessible and inclusive. • Capacity building across government, community and business to support, foster and embed co-design with people with disability, and decisions made by people with disability. • Continuing to work towards equal access to justice for people with disability through the second action plan for the <i>Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029</i>. • Enhancing the rights of people with disability by supporting individual and systemic advocacy and helping people with disability build self-advocacy skills. • Embedding supported decision-making rather than substitute decision-making approaches across our community. • Ensuring diverse communities are resourced to support community members with disability. • Developing a robust evaluation and motoring framework for the Strategy and enhancing data to make sure the experiences of people with disability are visible and understood.



ACT wellbeing domain 2: **Safety**

Feeling safe and being safe.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability are safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. • Domestic and family violence services are accessible and inclusive for people with disability. • Child, youth and family services are disability aware and respectful of children and parents with disability. • People with disability are included in community disaster preparedness and are resilient to emergencies and disasters. 	<p>“Family safety and family violence services are not designed to act for people with disability.”</p> <p>“The attitude of police. There should be additional awareness and service for people with disability.”</p> <p>“Some support workers are outing other trans clients to me — that makes me think they are probably doing that with me too.”</p> <p>“If you are vision impaired and using a cane, you are identified as a person with disability which makes you visible and vulnerable.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring mainstream systems and services including community and individual safety, are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with disability. • Working with all levels of government and the community, to better prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. • Prioritising cultural safety in mainstream services and as well disability supports and services.

Nic Stuart, ACT Disability Reference Group member



ACT wellbeing domain 3: Access and connectivity

Getting around to places we value and accessing the services we need.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability can get where they need to go in a way that meets their needs. • People with disability can use all spaces, including public, private and commercial. • People with disability have access to information about services and activities in the community. • People with disability have access to quality services that meet their needs. • Businesses and community organisations consider and respond to the needs of people with disability. • Adoption and implementation of universal design is the norm. • People with disability are connected, welcome, included and valued. 	<p>“I am neurodivergent and at times have had no choice but to use public transport, but I find it totally exhausting, with confusing timetables, sitting with lots of different people, different smells, bus drivers’ taste in music etc. It is literally painful, getting home at the end of the day.”</p> <p>“Lack of affordable transport limits our access to social outings and means getting to and from basic appointments can take hours.”</p> <p>“I am not disabled if my environment is designed well — if it is designed well, I don’t have a disability and I can do exactly what you do.”</p> <p>“I would like to have accessibility to buildings as I often feel excluded. I want to be able to live in a society that is fully accessible to everyone. My disability should not be an after-thought, ugly thought or retrofit.”</p> <p>“I am vision impaired and trees hanging over the front fence of houses along the footpath means I hit my head a lot.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sure there is equal access to transport and to the built environment. • Promoting universal design. • Enhancing the accessibility of ACT Government communications. • Encouraging government, businesses and other sectors to improve digital accessibility. • Providing tools for government, businesses and the community sector to take action to be more inclusive. • Enhancing the accessibility of ACT Government services, activities and programs. • Ensuring people with disability have access to the same quality of service and barrier free experience as the wider ACT community. • Looking at ACT Government systems to make them more streamlined, user friendly and less complex.



ACT wellbeing domain 4: **Time**

Having time to live life well.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability, families and carers can navigate through systems and services within reasonable timeframes. • People with disability have time to live life well, and the autonomy to choose what to do with their time. 	<p>“When you first get a diagnosis, you don’t know what services are available, or what options are out there.”</p> <p>“New parents who have no experience with disability are juggling all the new parent challenges along with supporting a child with disability.”</p> <p>“The system doesn’t understand the system. GPs, psychologists and paediatricians need to understand their role and the next steps. So much money and time is lost navigating the system.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support for people to navigate systems and to reduce feelings of uncertainty and overwhelm. • Connecting peers so people can share experiences and guidance. • People with disability having timely access to services and supports.

Karen Toohey, Discrimination, Health Services, Disability and Community Services Commissioner



ACT wellbeing domain 5: **Environment and climate**

The environment sustains all life now and into the future.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability are included in responses to climate change. • People with disability have access to the natural environment. 	<p>“Sometimes I feel that climate change initiatives don’t account for how I need to live my life.”</p> <p>“My local park isn’t accessible so I can’t take my kids there to play.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with and acting on the needs of people with disability in responding to climate change. • Ensuring natural public spaces such as parks and nature reserves are accessible to people with disability.

Rona Lazo, member of the ACT disability community



ACT wellbeing domain 6: Housing and home

Having a place to call home.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People with disability can find safe, suitable and affordable housing to call home. ● People with disability can access the homes of friends and relatives. ● People with disability at risk of homelessness can access disability informed services including emergency, crisis and temporary accommodation. 	<p>“Waiting lists for public housing is ridiculous and they should not be rented anymore because they have no heating, very run down and not suitable to live in.”</p> <p>“My search for an accessible house in the private market in the ACT has been a struggle.”</p> <p>“Homelessness services are not accessible.”</p> <p>“The cost to build fully accessible housing is a barrier.”</p> <p>“It is very hard for women with disability to access shelters and a lot of the services to help people escaping from violence are not accessible.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working across sectors to improve housing outcomes and opportunities for people with disability. ● Implementing National Construction Code requirements on new builds. ● Accessibility and of public housing services and crisis accommodation services.

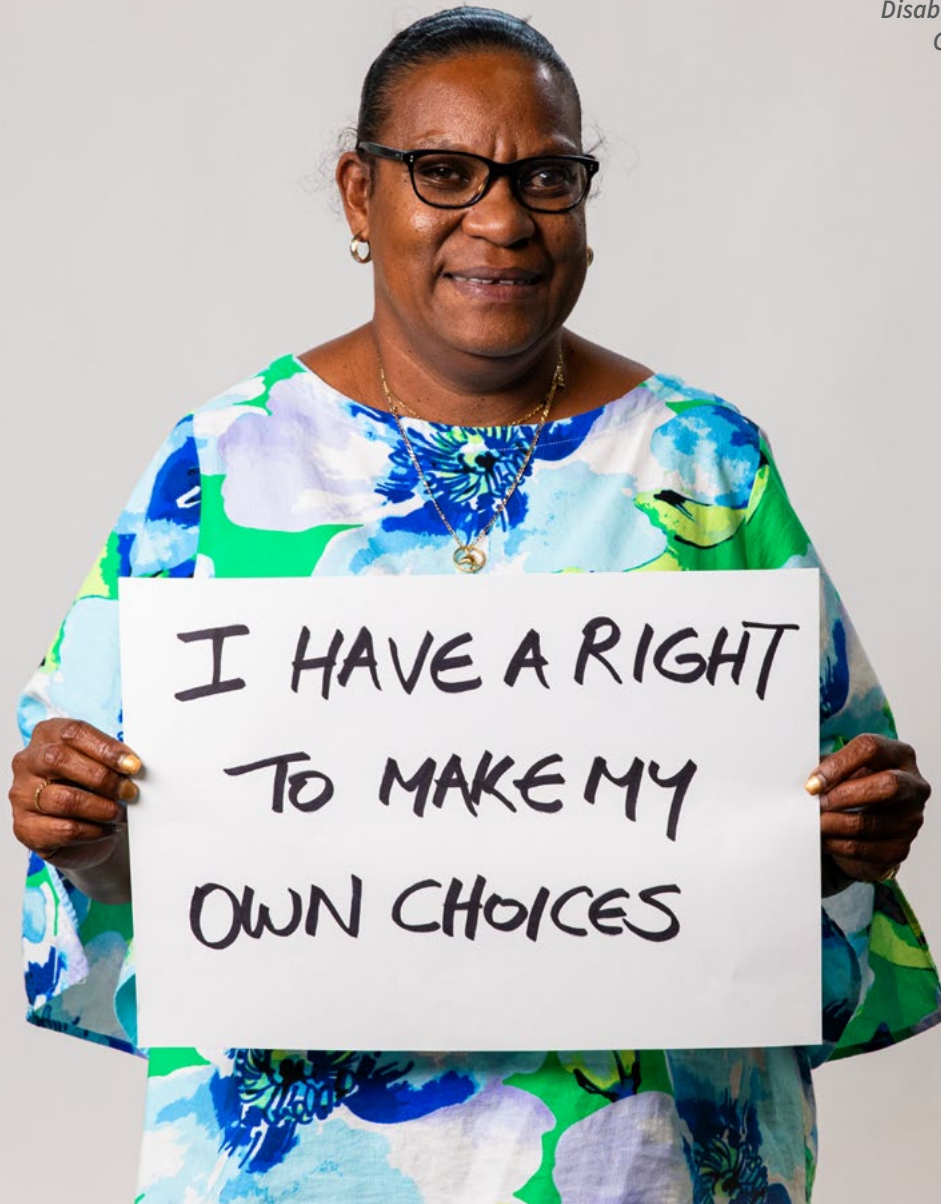


ACT wellbeing domain 7: **Economy**

We share in our city's economy.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplaces value and are inclusive of people with disability. • Workplaces understand the benefits of being more inclusive of people with disability. • Workplace practices support people with disability to gain employment and achieve career goals. • Employment of people with disability increases. 	<p>“If you disclose you have a disability you are immediately put in the ‘too hard basket’!”</p> <p>“While most employers are open and even eager to create more inclusivity, many are unaware of where to start.”</p> <p>“It was quite a process to have to re-explain my disability experience; to disclose every time my manager changed and explain what assistance I need.”</p> <p>“I have missed out on opportunities because of my disability. Others see the walking stick and have biases you can’t do the job you are applying for.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting employers to be disability confident with the aim of providing people with disability with more opportunities for employment and career advancement. • Encouraging universal design and reasonable adjustments to bring about improved outcomes in the workplace. • Finding more ways to connect people with disability, including school leavers, with opportunities for employment. • Building a culture of inclusive employment and disability leadership across all sectors.

Patricia Songoro, ACT Disability Reference Group member



ACT wellbeing domain 8: Living standards

Having the financial resources to live life well.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability and their families have the resources they need to live life well. • People with disability experience living standards on par with the community they live in. • People with disability experience less income disadvantage. 	<p>“I have to keep working to be able to pay for my medical bills including medication. The cost of my disability significantly impairs my ability to make any financial headway anywhere else.”</p> <p>“As a parent, I haven’t been able to go back to work because I need to be available to navigate health support for my child.”</p> <p>“I cannot afford holidays or fun experiences that aren’t free.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising living with disability can be costly, and can lead to reduced disposable income, which can be a barrier to full and equal participation. • How government policy can ease the cost-of-living pressure for people with disability.

Deborah and Sam Eades,
members of the ACT
disability community



ACT Wellbeing domain 9: Identity and belonging

Being able to express identity, feel a sense of belonging, and participate fully in society.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability are visible in the public domain as valued members of the ACT community. • People with disability are, and feel, connected, welcome, included and valued. • People with disability feel and are valued and affirmed in all aspects of their identity, strengths and diversity. 	<p>“Peoples’ attitudes to disability are archaic. Little things chip away at you all day.”</p> <p>“Role models — seeing someone like me who is living their best life so that my expectations for my own life are raised.”</p> <p>“You need to divide parts of yourself — you can be either in a disability space or a Queer space. Queer spaces just don’t care about disabled people — it’s heart-breaking and it hasn’t happened just once.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting social inclusion by encouraging everyone to identify and remove barriers which can make it harder or prevent people with disability of all ages from participating in community life, pursuing study and/or careers, and having social connections. • Encouraging all parts of the community to work towards inclusion and providing guidance and resources to be more inclusive. • Promoting disability inclusion and disability pride. • Supporting diverse, intersectional communities to include and actively engage community members with disability.

Lauren Reid and Sheree Murray,
members of the ACT disability
community



ACT wellbeing domain 10: **Social connection**

Being connected with family, friends and community.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability are, and feel, connected, welcome, included and valued. • People with disability are supported to be parents in ways that recognise their strengths and capability. • Recreation and community organisations are inclusive of people with disability. 	<p>“Living with a disability is a lonely life.”</p> <p>“I wanted to join a touch football group, and my brother offered to help so it could be a joint activity. I was told I couldn’t do it and therefore was unable to participate.”</p> <p>“Lack of friends because of inability to find low cost or free opportunities to meet other people with intellectual disability.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting social inclusion. • Supporting connections between people with disability who share experiences. • Supporting connections between people with disability and their neighbourhoods and communities. • Supporting parents with disability to access services and to care for their children.

Glenn Noonan,
paramedic



ACT wellbeing domain 11: **Health**

Being healthy and supported with the right care.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with disability attain the best possible health outcomes. • People with disability can access services that are free from discrimination and on equal terms with all people in the ACT. • Children with disability and their and carers have access to the early supports they need to support the child's best start to life. 	<p>“A healthcare system in which people with disability have the same potential outcomes as everyone else in the community, so that having a disability does not mean that I am penalised either financially or from a decision-making perspective.”</p> <p>“I need respect from healthcare workers about my knowledge about myself and work in partnership with me so I can get the best possible health for me. Listen to what I say. Don't belittle me.”</p> <p>“My daughter is on a wait list for an autism diagnosis, and she is 11, it is only free up to aged 13 but by the time she gets to the top of the wait list it may be too late to get it through that system.”</p> <p>“Doctors need to speak to me and not my mum.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the <i>ACT Disability Health Strategy 2023–2033</i> and its First Action Plan, which aim to ensure people with disability have equitable and appropriate access to healthcare in the ACT. • Implementing <i>Canberra Health Services Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2022–2025</i> to achieve accessibility for team members, consumers, their families and carers, and stakeholders.

Sharon Ding, member
of the ACT disability
community



ACT wellbeing domain 12: Education and lifelong learning

Gaining the skills and education needed at all stages of life.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	WHAT WE HEARD	ACTIONS WILL FOCUS ON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with disability feel welcome, safe, and engaged at school and early childhood education. • Students with disability have pathways to tertiary education, training and employment that enable access to the same post-school opportunities as their peers. • People with disability can gain skills and access education at all stages of life. • All educational settings are inclusive of people with disability. 	<p>“I want my child to have access to the reasonable adjustments she needs in the school setting to help her succeed, such as being able to use a laptop rather than handwriting, flexibility with assignments.”</p> <p>“After School Care is a massive problem in terms of sensory overwhelming, etc... it’s frustrating because there is nowhere to go.”</p> <p>“Parents of children with hearing loss find it difficult to access the community. School students can feel isolated and not included.”</p> <p>“Diversity training in the school curriculum, so children learn about different disabilities and how to interact with people with different disabilities.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving outcomes in Early Childhood Education and Care settings for students with disability. • Implementing the ACT Inclusive Education Strategy, which outlines how all ACT public schools will be supported to strengthen inclusive practice to ensure students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as their peers. • Strengthening post-school transition supports for students with disability in ACT public schools.

How the action plans link to the Strategy

The Strategy action plans describe the work and the commitments made to improve outcomes for people with disability. There will be 3 action plans over the 10 years.

Plans will list actions to be taken under each wellbeing domain and will include who is responsible for each action.

The First Action Plan is based on the priority issues identified in community consultations and will build broad foundations for future government responses to DRC and NDIS Review findings. It will focus on equipping government, community and business with the knowledge and tools to drive meaningful change, including through: awareness raising and improving understanding of inclusion to drive attitudinal change across the community, and building capacity across all sectors to engage better with people with disability.

Future action plans will be developed in consultation with the ACT Disability Strategy Governance Group, other stakeholders and the community. Success will be measured by the outcomes and impacts the action has on individuals and the community. This will be supported by a robust evaluation framework.

Implementing the action plans can also be supported through education, development of tools, resources and data. For example, one tool for change is a Disability Action and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) — a simple and practical short-term plan on how to reduce barriers faced by people with disability. We will support government, community organisations and businesses to create their own DAIPs as well as providing other training, toolkits and resources.

Data and evidence will help us improve the design and delivery of policies and programs. We will learn about the experiences of people with disability when interacting with our systems and supports, identify areas for improvement and help monitor and evaluate the impact of changes.

One way we will do this is by supporting the development of the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA). The NDDA will give insight into the life experiences of people with disability in Australia. The NDDA will connect information from different government agencies, allow benchmarking of performance between jurisdictions and help to improve policy, supports and services. NDDA information will be used by disability advocacy organisations, services, researchers and governments.

Governance of the Strategy

The Strategy will be governed in partnership between the ACT Government, people with disability and community stakeholders, through the ACT Disability Strategy Governance Group (the Governance Group). Members of the Governance Group will be people with disability, carers of people with disability, representatives of community organisations and ACT Government officials. A majority of non-government members will be people with disability.

The Governance Group will be responsible for the Strategy, including development, implementation and evaluation of future action plans.

The Governance Group will review the progress of the actions plans every year and report to the Minister for Disability. These reviews will be made publicly available so the ACT community can also monitor progress.

An evaluation framework will be developed during the first four years of the strategy. This will provide a framework for reporting on the progress of the Strategy and mapping the outcomes against the ACT's wellbeing indicators.

Life of the Strategy

Over the next 10 years the Strategy will create the change needed to deliver improved outcomes for people with disability and their families in the ACT.

We will continue to listen to people with disability and their families and involve them at every stage.

The ACT Disability Strategy will see change through 3 action plans

- **First Action Plan 2024–26:** Begin to address priority issues identified in the community consultation. Support the community, government and business to drive positive change, with a focus on changing attitudes, raising awareness and building capacity across the community.
- **Second Action Plan 2026–2030:** Build on successful approaches by expanding effective projects and trialling new initiatives based on what we have learned. Capitalise on changing attitudes to create structural change.
- **Third Action Plan 2030–2033:** Continue to embed change across all sectors of the community and shape aspirations for the next decade.



Justin Ray, member of the ACT disability community

ACT Disability Strategy

First Action Plan 2024–2026

The First Action Plan sits under the *ACT Disability Strategy 2024–2033* (the Strategy) and sets out the first 2 years of work under the Strategy. It outlines the ACT Government and community's shared commitment and responsibility to working towards the Strategy's vision to build a more inclusive ACT, where people with disability can fully participate in all aspects of community life.

The action plan is the first of 3 action plans to be delivered over the 10 years of the Strategy. It is guided by the principles of the Strategy and aims to take the first steps towards addressing issues raised by the community — namely: mainstream systems are too challenging to navigate; people with disability often do not have a voice in policy and decisions impacting their lives; people with disability are impacted by poor community attitudes, stigma and lack of disability knowledge in the wider community; and people with disability face greater financial disadvantage than the wider community.

The First Action Plan tackles these issues with a multi-pronged approach by responding to both specific priority issues and working towards systemic change. The overarching goal of the plan is to address the priorities identified in the community consultation, test approaches and support the community, government and business to drive positive change.

This action plan is the next step of our commitment to improve the lives of people with disability — it is clearly not the end. In developing the action plan, we have focused on these key guiding principles:

- a human rights approach
- the social model of disability
- nothing about us without us
- person-centred approach
- systemic change
- a strengths-based approach
- shared responsibility
- universal design
- an intersectional approach.

A time of change

At the time of publishing the Disability Strategy and First Action Plan, the ACT and all governments are considering the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) and the Independent Review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS Review). The First Action Plan has been developed as a 2-year plan in recognition of the significant work currently occurring in disability reform. While it draws on key themes from the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review, it does not form the ACT Government's response — rather, it is intended to build lasting foundations to support future work. The ACT Government will consider and respond to recommendations through a separate process, and future action plans provide one mechanism to enact these responses.

Importantly, as an early response to the NDIS Review, the National Cabinet has agreed to implement foundational supports, to be jointly commissioned by the Commonwealth and states and territories for all people with disability, including those who do not have access to the NDIS. This will include general supports that are available to all people with disability and where appropriate, their families and carers. Examples of general supports include navigation support, information, advice and capacity building for individuals, families and communities, and low intensity support needs, as well as peer support, self-advocacy and disability employment supports.

Foundational supports will also include targeted supports for people who are not eligible for an individualised budget through the NDIS, including home and community care, domestic and personal assistance, aids and equipment, and psychosocial supports. For children experiencing developmental delay and their families, it is expected that foundational supports will include early intervention

and therapeutic programs. In addition, they will include supports for adolescents and young adults, particularly in programs and initiatives to support adolescents and young adults with disability aged 9 to 21 years to prepare for and manage key life transition points such as secondary school, employment and living independently. Several of these foundational supports touch on themes raised through the Listening Report for the Disability Strategy and will form part of future action plans.

How will we know

An ACT Disability Strategy Governance Group (the Governance Group) will be established to oversee the Strategy, including implementation and evaluation of action plans and development of subsequent action plans. A majority of members will be people with disability (not including government representatives). The group will also include carers of people with disability, representatives of community organisations, and ACT Government representatives.

The Governance Group will review the progress of the action plans every year and report to the Minister for Disability. These reviews will be made available to the ACT community. At the end of the second year the ACT Government will hold targeted review consultations with the Governance Group, including people with disability and their representative to identify successes, key gaps or missed elements of this plan and to inform the development of the Second Action Plan.

Community consultations conducted for the development of this strategy indicated needs across all the ACT's 12 Wellbeing Domains. These are areas that have been identified by the community that contribute to the overall quality of life for Canberrans. Because many of the domain areas have close connection with each other, and outcomes in one area may depend on outcomes achieved in other areas, the action plan groups some domains together. The plan contains activities to be undertaken under each domain.

The ACT Disability Strategy and this action plan are part of a suite of interconnected strategies, including the *ACT Inclusive Education Strategy 2024–2034*, the *ACT Disability Health Strategy 2024–2033*, and the *ACT Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029*. Taken together, these strategies aim for the ACT be a more accessible and inclusive society where people with disability can fully participate in all aspects of community life. These strategies provide a whole-of-government response to promote and protect the rights and needs of people with disability. The Strategies also assist the ACT Government to meet its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and drive progress against Australia's Disability Strategy outcomes.

The Strategy will see change through 3 action plans:

FIRST Action Plan 2024–2026

Begin to address priority issues identified in the community consultation. Support the community, government and business to drive positive change, with a focus on changing attitudes, raising awareness and building capacity across the community.

SECOND Action Plan 2026–2030

Build on successful approaches by expanding effective projects and trialling new initiatives based on what we have learned. Capitalise on changing attitudes to create structural change.

THIRD Action Plan 2030–2033

Continue to embed change across all sectors of the community and shape aspirations for the next decade.



1 Governance and institutions

Having a say, being heard, and working together for better outcomes.

Under the governance and institutions wellbeing domain, we aim to ensure that all Canberrans can have their say, connect with and be part of key government processes. We heard that people with disability and family carers wanted more of a voice in policy and decisions that affect them and for it to be easier for people with disability to be involved in planning and decision-making processes.

A key part of ensuring people with disability have a say is embedding supported decision-making rather than substitute decision-making approaches across our community. We want people with disability to

understand their rights, participate in decision-making and have their wishes and preferences respected and acted upon. We will continue to:

- provide access to resources to strengthen the capacity of privately appointed guardians to deliver supported decision-making
- progress the second stage of reforms to enhance supported decision-making across the ACT, seeking to address systemic issues and structural barriers, including enabling institutions and service providers to reduce reliance on substitute decision-making.

To ensure that people with people with disability have a voice in the development of policy, services, infrastructure, and program design and delivery, and that it meets their needs, we will also continue to:

- participate in the development of the National Disability Data Asset to help to improve policy, supports and services for people with lived experience of disability
- engage people with disability as part of Suburban Land Agency’s place-led community engagement and co-design approach.

In the ACT it is against the law for someone to discriminate against you because of certain characteristics (protected attributes) that you have, or that someone thinks you have, in an area of public life such as employment, education, provision of goods and services and accommodation. This includes discrimination because of someone's disability.

From April 2024, recent amendments to the ACT Discrimination Act will commence. Consistent with these changes, ACT directorates and agencies will:

- Take steps to comply with the positive duty to provide reasonable adjustments to accommodate a person's particular needs arising from any protected attributes. The positive duty should be reflected in policies, procedures, and programs relevant to people with disability.

From April 2025 government agencies will have an additional positive duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination and vilification from their workplaces and services delivery.

- If a discrimination complaint is made against an agency, the steps taken to comply with the positive duty may be considered by the Human Rights Commission and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Action	Lead directorate
1.1 Establish an ACT Disability Strategy Governance Group, led by people with disability to advise and monitor Strategy and action plan implementation.	Community Services
1.2 Investigate options to deliver a self-advocacy program to enable people with disability to better understand and assert their human rights, and establish a systemic self-advocacy program for people with intellectual disability.	Community Services
1.3 Review of the YourSay platforms and research services to ensure more people with disability can take part in consultation and engagement.	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
1.4 Develop a whole-of-government disability data standard and policy that governs when and how data about disability experience is collected, shared, and used by ACT Government directorates.	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
1.5 Develop an ACT Neurodiversity Strategy in close consultation with neurodivergent Canberrans, their families and carers, and relevant stakeholders, that upholds the social model of disability and human rights principles and aligns with other relevant strategies and policies.	Community Services



2 Safety and health

Feeling safe and being safe, being healthy and finding the right care.

The safety and health wellbeing domains engage 2 of our fundamental human rights—the ability to be and feel safe, and to have access to the services they need to lead healthier lives and manage illness. We want to ensure mainstream systems and services that support community and individual safety, are inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with disability, and people with disability are safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Disability Royal Commission (DRC) has clearly shown us what needs to change to ensure people with disability are safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. Given the scale and complexity of reform recommended, significant work is needed to identify how best to respond to the recommendations of the DRC final report. The ACT Government is closely considering the DRC recommendations and is committed to working in partnership with people with disability, their families and carers, other governments and the wider community to ensure reform delivers meaningful and lasting change.

The ACT Disability Justice Strategy 2019–2029 (DJS) aims to achieve equity and inclusion for people with disability in the justice system. The DJS has 3 goals:

- People with disability are safe and their rights are respected.
- The ACT has a disability responsive justice system.
- Change is measured and achieved.

The DJS is a key mechanism that acts to support better access to justice, to promote the safety of people with disability, and for the justice system to see and support people with disability. ACT Government is currently developing the DJS Second Action Plan, which provides an opportunity to build on the successes of the first 4 years of DJS implementation, and progress a range of actions that promote equality before the law. The DJS has been foundational in preparing the ACT justice system to be in a position to support a government response to the Disability Royal Commission.

To make domestic and family violence services more inclusive and accessible for people with disability, we will continue to work with other jurisdictions to develop action plans under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–32* which are inclusive, meaningful, and measurable.

The *Disability Health Strategy 2023–2033* is a 10-year overarching plan to ensure people with disability have equitable and appropriate access to healthcare in the ACT and improved health outcomes. It sets out our commitment to improve the health of people with disability across its 5 focus areas:

- health information and literacy
- service access, design, and delivery
- emergency planning, preparedness and management
- workforce
- data and research.

We also want to support people with disability to be resilient to emergencies and disasters, as well as considering their needs in community disaster preparedness. This domain also links to the ‘environment and climate domain’ as we see how climate change will impact our local region and our wellbeing and resilience are challenged. We will continue to:

- Provide disability awareness training to JACS Security and Emergency Management, ACT Emergency Services Agency and the Public Information Coordination Centre staff.
- Engage with and consider the needs of people with disability in the development of the ACT Resilience Strategy and the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategic Action Plan.
- Create a one-stop online resilience hub accessible to all Canberrans, including people with disability.

Action	Lead directorate
<p>2.1 Fund training to upskill Domestic Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) sector workers in supporting people with intellectual and cognitive disabilities who have experienced DFSV.</p>	Community Services
<p>2.2 Support frontline crisis services to build disability understanding and responsiveness through Disability Access and Inclusion Plan development.</p>	Community Services
<p>2.3 Scope work for a disaster preparedness toolkit to meet the needs of people with disability and assist people with disability and community organisations to ensure disaster preparedness.</p>	Community Services, Justice and Community Safety



Brendan Moyle, Executive Branch Manager, ACT Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs



3 Social connection, Identity and belonging

Being connected with family, friends and community, being able to express identity, feel a sense of belonging, and participate fully in society.

The social connection, identity and belonging domains speak to our commitment to ensure that people with disability can participate in our society on equal terms — having access to the same quality of service and barrier-free experience as the wider community.

As part of this domain, we want Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to be able to have a strong voice, be decision makers on issues that impact them, and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes. We will continue to prioritise cultural

safety in mainstream services, but we recognise the importance of having Aboriginal Community-Controlled disability supports and services.

We know that having a sense of belonging and identity is important to all people, especially people with disability. Through this domain, we want to ensure that people with disability feel welcomed and affirmed in all aspects of their identity and are visible in the public domain as valued members of the ACT community.

Action	Lead directorate
3.1 Support Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to deliver culturally safe and inclusive services supporting First Nations people with disability.	Community Services
3.2 Work with the community sector to deliver a peer support program to improve the wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people with disability.	Community Services, Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs
3.3 Increase the Disability Inclusion Grant funding pool to enable more community groups, organisations and small businesses to receive financial support to address attitudinal, communication, and physical barriers to access and inclusion.	Community Services
3.4 Expand the International Day of People with Disability grants to fund people with disability and their representative organisations to run disability-led events, initiatives and activities that deliver positive change for people with disability and the wider community.	Community Services
3.5 Explore options to transition ACT Government engagement with the International Day of People with Disability to ensure the annual celebration of disability pride is community-led and controlled.	Community Services
3.6 Review the ACT Companion Card program to identify possible improvements including the application process and expiry period.	Community Services



4 Access and connectivity, Time

Getting around to places we value, accessing the services we need, having time to live life well.

As we engaged with the community, we heard about the importance of timely and effective access to services, as well as the importance of planning and being able to get around Canberra easily. This is particularly relevant for Canberrans who have higher needs for inter-related government and non-government services or regular and more complex commuting needs, which is often the case for many people living with disability.

Access also includes how we connect online. These actions also link to the social connection domain, as a key purpose is to enhance the accessibility of ACT Government communications and systems, making them more streamlined and inclusive. We also want to encourage other businesses and organisations to consider and respond to the needs of people with disability.

Action	Lead directorate
<p>4.1 Strengthen ACT Government accessible communications and information provision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernising digital and other communications across ACT Government, including through improved accessibility for assistive devices, simpler language, consistent and clear design, and better searchability. • Employing a full-time Easy English specialist and an Auslan interpreter. • Promoting Easy English editions of all issues of <i>Our Canberra</i> in print and online and provide printed copies at ACT libraries. • Improve accessibility of ACT Government events and communications by including accessibility information in all event listings and trialling several methods for communicating information in accessible ways (e.g. audio description of designs, video tours, tactile maps). • Progress actions under the government response to Auslan Inquiry. 	Community Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
<p>4.2 Work with the community sector to grow Easy English understanding and capability across the community sector and increase the availability of Easy English resources in the ACT.</p>	Community Services
<p>4.3 Co-design a Community Participation Framework for Libraries ACT that enables people with disability to have input into planning through <i>Imagine Libraries 2030 Strategy</i>.</p>	Transport Canberra and City Services (Libraries ACT)
<p>4.4 Establish a disability liaison officer position for Access Canberra to provide whole-of-government accessible information and reasonable adjustment support to callers, and to foster a cultural shift to supporting people with disability engaging with Access Canberra.</p>	Access Canberra

Renée Heaton, Chair
of the ACT Disability
Reference Group



Transport and the built environment

These actions aim to make sure there is equal access to transport and the built environment so that people with disability can use and move around public spaces, as well as access quality services that meet their needs, so they have time to live life well and the autonomy to choose what to do with their time.

We will continue to:

- Deliver the ACT Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) to provide financial assistance to ACT residents with disability.

This includes a 15 per cent increase to the TSS payment cap announced in the 2023–24 Budget, enabling TSS members to access up to 854 trips per year without needing to apply for additional trips.

- Require all new homes in the ACT to meet minimum liveable housing (accessibility) standards.
- Develop a case study on the consultation approach undertaken with people with disability as part of the Canberra Theatre Redevelopment project.

Action	Lead directorate
4.5 Ensure all Transport Canberra operational employees (including bus drivers, special needs and flexible transport attendants, and those customer facing positions), as well as all customer-facing Light Rail staff, complete Disability Awareness training.	Transport Canberra and City Services
4.6 Explore options to ensure that taxi and rideshare services are safe, responsive, reliable and efficient to meet community expectations.	Transport Canberra and City Services
4.7 Require all City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency public projects to meet the AS1428 Accessibility Standard.	City Renewal Authority, Suburban Land Agency
4.8 Support people with disability and their families to access public spaces and events by delivering one temporary and 4 permanent adult Changing Places facilities in the ACT.	Community Services, Major Projects, Events ACT



5 Housing and home, Environment and climate

Having a place to call home, in an environment that sustains all life now and into the future.

We know it is important for all Canberrans have access to secure, suitable and affordable housing throughout their lives. We heard, however, that securing and maintaining housing can also be accompanied by significant financial stress for people with disability. We also heard how access to the natural environment is important for the wellbeing of people with disability.

We will continue to: monitor the impacts of housing initiatives on the wellbeing of key target groups, which includes people with disability, and use this to inform policy proposals for consideration; and make it easier for people to purchase homes through the Disability Duty Concession Scheme, the Special Disability Trust Duty Exemption, and the Pensioner Duty Deferral Scheme.

Action	Lead directorate
<p>5.1 Investigate options to establish a disability housing information and advisory service to provide a one stop housing hub for people with disability.</p>	Community Services
<p>5.2 Enhance the experience for people with disability engaging with Housing ACT by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishing a disability liaison officer position in Housing ACT to support enhanced communication, reasonable adjustments and staff confidence in supporting people with disability. ● Ensuring all Housing ACT officers attend training on engagement with people with disability. ● Ensuring new Housing ACT housing stock meets or exceeds the minimum accessibility standards under the National Construction Code for all new builds. 	Community Services, Housing ACT
<p>5.3 ACT Parks and Conservation Service will enhance the accessibility of ACT parks and reserves by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● upgrading Namadgi Visitor Information Centre to improve wheelchair accessibility and more accessible recreation areas in the vicinity ● upgrading visitor areas at Woods Reserve and Honeysuckle Campground, including providing accessible toilets at both sites ● undertaking accessibility upgrades to paths and toilet facilities within the Sanctuary and Koala enclosure at Tidbinbilla ● upgrading and/or enhancement of access points into nature reserves that are challenging for wheelchairs, prams and motorised pushbikes. 	Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development
<p>5.4 Address the needs of people with accessibility needs in the move to zero-emissions public transport. Ensure all new buses are procured subject to applicable DDA standards and people with disability are engaged through the TCCS Accessibility Reference Group, ensuring that ARG members are consulted throughout Transport Canberra's transition to Zero Emissions.</p>	Transport Canberra and City Services

Kathy Leigh, Head of Service,
Director-General of Chief
Minister, Treasury and Economic
Development Directorate



6 Economy, living standards, education and lifelong learning

Gaining the skills and education needed at all stages of life, sharing in our city's economy, and having the financial resources to live life well.

Education, employment and living standards were 3 key themes of the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review. We want to make sure that all Canberrans have equal access to employment opportunities and living standards that are on par with the broader community.

We know how important it is to support education for people with disability. That is why we developed the ACT Inclusive Education Strategy to progress a future of

education underpinned by inclusion and equity, where a universal sense of belonging is fostered and students with disability are included at school. This Strategy has key areas that we will continue to progress over its action plans.

We recognise the ACT Government should lead the way when it comes to ensuring that workplaces support and value people with disability so they can gain employment and achieve career goals.

Action	Lead directorate
<p>6.1 We will lead by example to make the ACT Public Service a more inclusive workplace by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an ACTPS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in consultation with ACTPS staff with disability and subject matter experts from across the ACTPS including Offices for Disability, Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, LGBTIQ+, Multicultural Affairs, and Seniors and Veterans. Including reasonable adjustment questions in the ACTPS staff survey. Setting an initial target of 9 per cent of ACTPS employees, including executive staff, being people with disability. Including employment targets for people with disability in ACTPS executive staff performance agreements. 	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
<p>6.2 Investigate options to deliver additional supported work experience programs for students with disability in years 10, 11 and 12.</p>	Education, Community Services, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

Thank you

The ACT Government would like to thank all the people who shared their time, experiences and ideas to create this Strategy.

This work would not have been possible without the thoughtful shaping of the consultation processes by the Disability Reference Group and colleagues that led and contributed to facilitated forums, surveys, kitchen table conversations, deep dive discussions, submissions and creative contributions.

We are grateful to people with disability, their families and allies that took time to share their stories, their experiences and their ideas for change.

We are thankful to colleagues, advocates and leaders that listened to these experiences and supported the development of the Strategy and action plan to provide the ACT with a road map for change. We are stronger together.

www.act.gov.au/open/disability-strategy

