



Children and Young People
with Disability Australia

MEDIA RELEASE – 3 December 2021

Release of 10-year cornerstone strategy heralds a ‘fair go’ for children and young people with a disability in Australia

Mary Sayers, Children Young People with Disability (CYDA) CEO has warmly welcomed the release of Australia’s Disability Strategy saying that it is the most promising blueprint in Australia’s history for ensuring children and young people with disability get a fair go.

The strategy, which builds on the former 10-year National Disability Strategy, was officially unveiled today (3 December) on International Day for People with Disability following two years of consultation with local, state and federal governments, the disability sector and people with disability, their families and caregivers.

In particular, CYDA has applauded targeted action to tackle systemic issues which have been identified by young people themselves around education and employment barriers which continue to prevent them from being able to actively participate and pursue the futures they want.

Mary Sayers, CYDA CEO said that the direct needs of children and young people have been traditionally overshadowed by people speaking on their behalf but having a consultation process which provided a direct seat at the table where young people and caregivers have had a direct say heralds the start of a positive new era in government consultation and community attitudes to disability.

“More than one in six people have disability and they face intersectional and compounding discrimination in our institutions, our systems and communities. Therefore, it so important we get this right and have the commitment of all levels of government as well as the community,” said Ms Sayers.

“High quality early childhood education sets children up with the foundations for success for educational inclusion and attainment, employment, and economic and social participation in their later life,” said Ms Sayers.

“Inclusion must begin from the earliest ages so we welcome the focus on access and participation of children with disability in early childhood education and care.

“CYDA’s research shows that students who feel more accepted, included and involved in their schooling are more likely to be engaged in classroom learning, in extracurricular activities, in interpersonal relationships, and in the wider school community so it is great to see that building capacity for inclusive education is a key recommendation of the strategy.

“We know many young people with disability experience poor post-school transitions and there is a focus on stronger pathways to help young people transition successfully from education to employment is imperative as there is a direct link between tertiary education attainment and improved employment rates and income,” said Ms Sayers.

The findings of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (which continues until September 2023) will further advance the ongoing development of the Strategy as a roadmap for a more inclusive and just society.

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Media case studies

Young people who are members of CYDA’s Youth Council are available for comment

Copy of strategy

Available on Australia’s Disability Strategy Hub on the Disability Gateway website

www.disabilitygateway.gov.au