

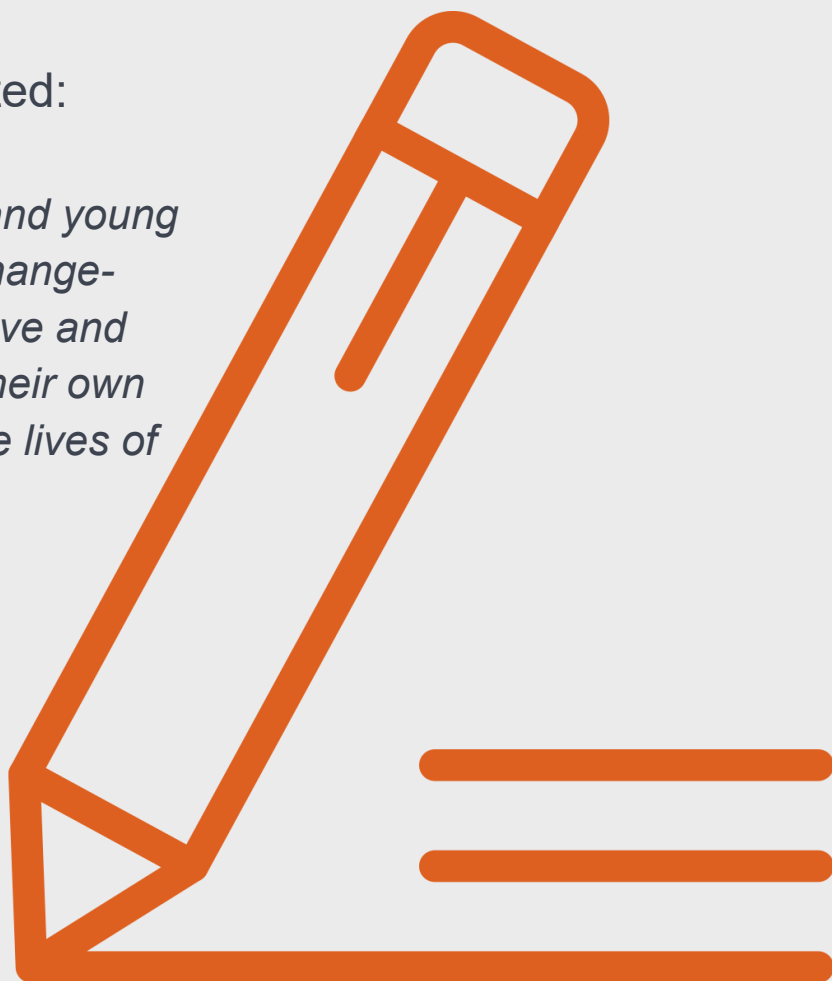
Australia's Disability Strategy: *Full of potential but...*

CYDA's submission to the review of
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

10 years ago CYDA noted:

“Participation by children and young people in advocacy and change-making can not only improve and foster positive change in their own lives, but also influence the lives of others.”

September 2024



**Authorised by:**

Skye Kakoschke-Moore, Chief Executive Officer

Contact details:

Children and Young People with Disability Australia

E. skye@cyda.org.au

P. 03 9417 1025

W. www.cyda.org.au

Authors:

Sue Tape, external consultant

Reviewer: Dr Liz Hudson, Policy and Research Manager

Quote from the cover of this submission:

Dr Simmons in 2014 summarised on CYDA's behalf "*Participation by children and young people in advocacy and change-making can not only improve and foster positive change in their own lives, but also influence the lives of others. When young people's participation is supported, meaningful and engaged, multiple benefits accrue. Their perspectives and experiences bring a unique contribution and can result in rights-based empowerment, enacted citizenship and improved relationships. This has the potential to shape policy, to increase the relevance and responsiveness of organisations they use, and to influence change in their communities in positive ways*".¹

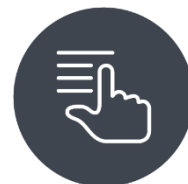
A note on terminology:**Children and young people with disability**

Using inclusive language and terminology has been recognised by the disability community for decades. Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) uses person-first language, e.g., person with disability. However, CYDA recognise many people with disability choose to use identity-first language, e.g., disabled person.

Acknowledgements:

Children and Young People with Disability Australia would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which this report has been written, reviewed and produced, whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present. This is, was, and always will be First Nations land.

¹ Simmons, C., Robinson, S. (2014) Strengthening Participation of Children and Young People with Disability in Advocacy. Report prepared for Children and Young People with Disability Australia. <https://cyda.org.au/strengthening-participation-of-children-and-young-people-with-disability-in-advocacy/> p. 4



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Executive Summary

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2023 (ADS) is like all of Australia's children and young people, full of potential, but needing support, leadership and nurturing.

The experiences of children and young people with disability do not match the well intentioned priorities, actions and proposed outcomes detailed in ADS. More than three years on from its effective date, and many years on from its design, hand in hand with Australia's disability community, the deeper goals of this strategy and the targeted actions are struggling to be realised. "*The Australian system of government*"², is acknowledged in ADS but it is not its friend, it is not an ally for its delivery nor ultimate success. The substance is there but the delivery is not happening.

CYDA strongly supports the intent and actions of ADS. However, we believe there is room for improvement in delivering these efforts consistently and sustainably to ensure they lead to better outcomes and effectively address the inequities and discrimination faced by children and young people with disability, both now and in the future.

CYDA is deeply saddened that, despite the efforts of children and young people with disability and their families in contributing their voices and energy to numerous inquiries and reviews over the past decade, there has been so little tangible progress in advancing ADS and other key policies and programs. This lack of progress has done little to change the experiences of discrimination, inequity, violence and neglect they continue to face. As one family member explained, during consultation for this submission:

"Where does all the money go? What do all these pieces of paper really do? The stories of people with disability are the same today as they were in the SHUT OUT report in 2009. My child is only 13 and I'm sick of talking about what needs to change. Is that they want? Do they want us to just shut up and go away? They know what needs to change, because it's been written in the strategy and in the many reports. Why won't they make the changes, why won't they make sure it gets better? Nothing will change until someone takes responsibility for making change. Who will step up and make this happen?"

ADS Outcomes Framework has a list of 85 measures, of which only 32 are currently reported on. Of the 22 measures with updated post-baseline data, 7 show progress.³ Change to the delivery and accountability for the outcomes of ADS, is what is needed most.

² [Infosheet 20 - The Australian system of government, Parliament of Australia](#)

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 Outcomes Framework: Second annual report](#)



Summary of recommendations

Below is a summary of recommendations CYDA believes would ensure ADS addresses inequalities that drive the exclusion of children and young people. We call on all governments facilitated through ADS to:

Recommendation 1: Amplify the voices of children and young people

- Invest in employment for young people
- Create dedicated engagement channels
- Demonstrate how feedback has been incorporated into policy decisions
- Increase representation in decision making bodies
- Use accessible communication strategies

Recommendation 2: Drive transformational change in inclusive education and early intervention through;

- Comprehensive training for educators
- Additional training and resources for educators
- Co-design post school transition framework
- Encourage capacity building in higher education

Recommendation 3: Embed accountability measures

- Link funding to impact
- Replicate and scale successful initiatives
- Embed accountability across governments
- Systematic data collection and integration

Recommendation 4: Prioritise cross-government collaboration

- Clarify the national coordination body
- Develop joint policy frameworks
- Facilitate resource sharing
- Standardise accessibility and service delivery
- Encourage local innovation

CYDA calls on all involved to ensure that this review results in:

- a. renewed commitment to the implementation of ADS by all levels of government,
- b. greater investment in data gathering, sharing and reporting, and
- c. improved accountability and transparency for actions and outcomes for all levels of government.



Introduction

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0–25 years. Since 2020 alone, CYDA has engaged with more than 4,500 children and young people with disability and their families through our project and systemic advocacy work. Our vision is that children and young people with disability are valued and living empowered lives with equality of opportunity; and our purpose is to ensure governments, communities, and families, are empowering children and young people with disability to fully exercise their rights and aspirations.

We do this by:

- Driving inclusion
- Creating equitable life pathways and opportunities
- Leading change in community attitudes and aspirations
- Supporting young people to take control
- Calling out discrimination, abuse, and neglect.

This submission

We are pleased to be able to provide a submission to the review of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (ADS).

This submission builds on our previous work and evidence by emphasising what children and families in Australia need from Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS). This submission highlights CYDA's vision for children and young people with disability that they are given a lifetime of choices and opportunities and that they are included from the earliest age. We have outlined the data sources for this submission at Appendix A.

Our submission is structured as follows:

- Context and evidence for our submission including how ADS could support children and young people
- The impact of ADS with a focus on education and employment
- Our responses to the questions raised in the Discussion Paper
- A case study of a child born in 2005 and one born in 2015
- CYDA's detailed recommendations to the Review of ADS
- Conclusion asking signatories to Australia's Disability Strategy to imagine if...



ADS and young people in Australia

There are more than 645,000 0-25 year olds with disability in Australia.⁴ That is the equivalent of 5 federal electorates, or the population of the ACT and the Northern Territory combined.

- 21% of all children live in the lowest socioeconomic areas
- 8.9% of all children were born overseas
- 7.4% of all children had some level of disability
- 5.9% of all children are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- 2% of all children live in remote and very remote areas⁵

Age group	Persons ⁶	Prevalence of disability ⁷	Prevalence applied (calculation)	NDIS participants ⁸
0-4 years	1,463,817	3.7%	54,161	104,039
5-9 years	1,586,138	9.2%	145,925	173,388
10-14 years	1,588,051	10.2%	161,981	
15-19 years	1,457,812	10.8%	157,444	59,507
20-24 years	1,579,539	8.0%	126,363	54,087
Total	7,675,357		645,874	391,021

Australian children with disability should feel healthy, safe, connected, supported, challenged, and engaged. This is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child⁹, and the Charter on the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD).

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 16 August 2024.

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) [Australia's children](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 16 August 2024.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), [Population: Census](#), ABS Website, accessed 16 August 2024.

⁷ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 16 August 2024.

⁸ NDIS, (2024), Q3 FY23/24 [Active participants by Age Group](#), NDIS Data Research Website, accessed 16 August 2024. Age groupings are 0-6, 7-14, 15-18, 19-24.

⁹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text>

The potential of ADS

Over recent years, the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and other inquiries have provided an extensive and detailed body of evidence, highlighting the challenges and systemic barriers faced by people with disability, especially children and young people. These findings have been meticulously documented and offer a clear, comprehensive understanding of what needs to change. The government has at its disposal the most thorough and informed insights ever gathered on these issues.

The Australian Government's acceptance of Recommendation 5.2¹⁰ from the Disability Royal Commission (DRC)¹¹ marks a significant and promising step in reshaping the future for children and young people with disability and in truly honouring the energy and effort people with disability put into the design of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. It is therefore baffling and distressing to note that the DRC recommendation 5.1 that calls for a framework for intergovernmental collaboration on the implementation of ADS, has been met by the Commonwealth government with '*Subject to further consideration*'.

Any commitment to review and update Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 must recognise the importance of ensuring that the strategy is not only impactful but also a key driver of the critical issues raised by the DRC.

Missing in action

CYDA is concerned about the repeated overlooking of ADS in key policy reforms. Despite its significance as a national framework intended to guide policies and reforms for people with disability, ADS has been conspicuously absent, in substance and mention, from several key reports and reform initiatives that directly could improve the experience of children and young people with disability. Notably, in recent discussions and publications, ADS has not been a key element or even mentioned in, including but not limited to:

- the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Early Childhood Education and Care¹²
- the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034¹³

¹⁰ "Recommendation 5.2 The signatories to Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (ADS) (the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association) should review and update the ADS to ensure it reflects the issues raised and recommendations made by this Royal Commission."

¹¹ Commonwealth of Australia, (2024), Australian Government Response to the Disability Royal Commission, Department of Social Services.

¹² Productivity Commission, (2023), A path to universal early childhood education and care, Draft Report, Canberra, November.

¹³ Commonwealth of Australia, (2024), [Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034](#), Department of Education.

- the Australian Universities Accord Final Report¹⁴

Early childhood and ADS

ADS sets out a plan to change the lives of people with disability over ten years and includes under 'Education and Learning' Policy Priority 1: *Children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care*". CYDA was encouraged to see that the Productivity Commission's Draft Report into early childhood education and care, made several important references in relation to the Closing the Gap agreement but failed to mention Australia's Disability Strategy nor the [Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan](#). The Productivity Commission's inquiry report was submitted to the Australian Government on 28 June 2024. The Government has yet to table the final report in Parliament.

CYDA is hopeful that the Productivity Commission will reference the important role of ADS in its final report to ensure the Australian Government continues to align its work in the early years to the existing frameworks and strategies.

13 years of school and ADS

ADS also includes under 'Education and Learning' Policy Priority 2: *Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability*.

Given the clear intersectionality between many of the key issues and challenges faced by students with disability, CYDA strongly urged the Australian government to consider the outcome areas in the strategy to guide policy and programs including the new national agreement in creating better outcomes for students. The Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 (the Agreement) is an agreement between the Commonwealth, states and territories and indicates it "...sets out the shared intention of the Parties to work in partnership to improve education outcomes for all Australian students and build on the capability and capacity of the education workforce." Details of the connection to ADS and the stated aim of creating a better and fairer education system for all students is missing in action.

The intent is there, with the sole mention in Preliminaries number 12 "*The Parties also affirm their continued commitment to the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31.*" The Agreement fails to address key recommendations made by CYDA in August 2023.¹⁵ School students with disability are referenced only four times

¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, (2024), [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#), Department of Education.

¹⁵ CYDA's [submission](#) to the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, September 18, 2023

throughout the 38-page, 106-clause document. Students with disability are the only priority equity cohort conspicuously excluded from Improvement Measurements, extending to critical areas such as Year 12 attainment and school attendance targets.

Further education and ADS

ADS also includes under 'Education and Learning' Policy Priority 3: *Improve pathways and accessibility to further education and training for people with disability.*

CYDA was disappointed by the lack of recommendations addressing students with disability in the Australian Universities Accords' final report.¹⁶ ADS is not mentioned at all despite a focus on reducing inequality, recommendations for a research and development target strategy, a national research workforce development strategy, mentions of the Australian Government's Migration Strategy, the National Medical Workforce Strategy, Australia's Education Strategy for India, the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy, and the National Regional, Rural and Remote Education Strategy.

These recent examples of omissions raise serious concerns about the integration of disability considerations into broader policymaking and highlights a missed opportunity to align these reforms with the objectives of ADS. The absence of ADS in these critical discussions underscores a disconnect between the commitments made under ADS and the actual policy development processes. It also reflects a broader issue of ADS not being leveraged to its full potential in driving systemic change.

Use of the term 'priority cohort'

Many of Australia's strategies use the term 'priority cohort', or 'priority equity cohort', or 'priority groups' as a reference to children and young people with disability.

For example, the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 states:

"For the purpose of this Agreement, priority equity cohorts include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students living in regional, rural and remote locations, students with a disability and students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds."

While several national strategies¹⁷ and policies have adopted mechanisms to include these priority groups, and hence children and young people with disability, the

¹⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, (2024), [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#), Department of Education.

¹⁷ The Australian Disability Strategy acknowledges the intersectionality and diversity of children and young people with disability, the Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan sets out actions to ensure these children are supported to reach their full potential, the [NDIS First Nations Strategy](#), and the [NDIS CaLD Strategy](#)

effectiveness of these segmented approaches remains to be seen and as mentioned later in our submission, is coupled with ADS not referenced, included or for some strategies, considered.

Framing children and young people as ‘priority equity groups’ can create distance that serves to relegate people with disability to the category of ‘other’, making it easier to discriminate against them, casting them as outside the norm and problematising them. This is particularly true where they are excluded from specific actions or measures to address the inequity the use of the term seeks to rectify.

When all levels of government fail to incorporate ADS into their work, the potential for meaningful progress is lost. When ADS is not consistently referenced or integrated into government policies and programs, children and young people with disability miss out on the full benefits of coordinated, inclusive approaches. This oversight leads to fragmented efforts, where the needs of children and young people with disability may be acknowledged in theory but not addressed effectively in practice.

Missing data, lost opportunities

ADS Outcomes Framework has a list of 85 measures, of which only 32 are currently reported on. Of the 22 measures with updated post-baseline data, 7 show progress.¹⁸

Without high-quality data, there are limited opportunities to develop evidence-based approaches to protect children and young people and monitor existing and new interventions.¹⁹ The direct experience of children and young people with disability and the policy experience of CYDA demonstrates that there is a significant need to improve the collection and use of data at a range of levels across all systems.

As highlighted in the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)'s report²⁰ on Australia's children, there are limited instances of gathering children's opinions or experiences as evidence. While national-level monitoring exists, it mainly involves administrative data from service delivery and surveys targeting adults, exclusively. Further, “*there are currently no national indicators to measure how children transition through major development stages, or how children interact with services and move through different systems...[and] ... there is limited ability to track children through different data sources to assess their outcomes*”. – This is a significant gap.

There is an urgent need to examine how data is used to inform policy and practice in the NDIS, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), education and employment

¹⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 Outcomes Framework: Second annual report](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 20 August 2024.

¹⁹ Wayland, S & Hindmarsh, G. (2017). Understanding safeguarding practices for children with disability when engaging with organisations. Available at [Understanding safeguarding practices for children with disability when engaging with organisations | Child Family Community Australia](#) (aifs.gov.au)

²⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australia's children, web report, last updated 25 February 2022. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/data-gaps>

support systems. CYDA advocates for the improvement and refinement of data collection to strengthen the evidence base and improve outcomes, as “...*society cannot be equitable unless all children are included, and children with disability cannot be included unless sound data collection and analysis render them visible.*”²¹

²¹ United Nations Children’s Fund 2013, *State of the World’s Children 2013: Children with Disability*, United Nations, New York, p. 63.



The impact of ADS on children and young people with disability

CYDA's focus on the impact of the Australian Disability Strategy (ADS) on children and young people is best demonstrated through two key areas: education and learning, and employment and financial security. These areas are vital for ADS and all levels of government to prioritise, given their importance to children and young people with disability.

Area 1: Education and learning

Early childhood

CYDA introduced an ECEC-specific survey (as part of a suite of education surveys undertaken in 2022) to understand whether the same kinds of issues are experienced in early childhood education and care settings.

The results of CYDA's ECEC Survey 2022 are shared in the [report](#): "*Taking the first step in an inclusive life - experiences of Australian early childhood education and care*".²²

Despite the majority of respondents (83%) indicating that their child was welcomed in ECEC settings, such positive experiences are overshadowed by concerning reports of bullying, exclusion and limitations to engagement activities as the following results indicate:

- Nearly 30% reported exclusion from excursions, events or activities and about the same number reported bullying from other children or staff
- One in five reported that their child had been refused enrolment
- Nearly a quarter said their child had been limited in the number of hours they were allowed to attend.

13 years of school education

What is clear is that despite 14 years of national strategies for people with disability and the 19 years (and multiple reviews) of the Disability Standards for Education, the rights of children and young people with disability to experience an education on the equal basis as others continues to be grossly violated. The intentions of ADS will never be achieved until governments, systems and education settings are accountable for providing inclusive education settings where all students' potential to thrive in their education is fostered.

²² Dickinson, H., Smith, C., Yates, S., Faulkner, A. (2022) Taking the first step in an inclusive life – experiences of Australian early childhood education and care. Report prepared for Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), Melbourne.

Research evidence consistently demonstrates that children and young people with disability fare less well than their peers in education. School aged students with disability are segregated, suspended, and expelled at higher rates. Over the last fifteen years, the highest level of educational attainment for people with disability has improved, but this level still remains lower than children and young people without disability. These inequities can have lifelong implications.

CYDA has been gathering feedback on educational experiences from its members via formal surveys since 2010. These surveys have consistently found that students with disability are excluded in their education. The meaning of inclusive education is explained in (General Comment No.4, 2016) and states that ‘segregated models of education, which exclude students with disability from mainstream and inclusive education on the basis of disability’, contravenes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) (General Comment No.6, 2018).

Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021- 2031 is a nationally agreed commitment to undertake actions to realise CRPD, Priority 2- Education and Learning, to “Build capability in the delivery of inclusive education to improve educational outcomes for school students with disability:

“Students with disability have a right to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability, in an environment free from bullying, harassment or exclusion.”²³

Segregation is discrimination. However, we know from our research,²⁴ that of the 231 students surveyed, 70% face significant levels of exclusion from school activities and an alarming, 65% of students reported experiencing bullying in schools.

Students don’t feel supported to learn and engage in activities at school.

- Only half (54%) reported feeling welcome and included
- 70% of students reported being excluded from events or activities at school
- 65% of students reported experiencing bullying and 13% preferred not to answer
- Only 27% reported feeling supported to learn at school
- Only 35% of families felt teachers and support staff have adequate training and knowledge to support the student

Further detail is available in CYDA’s [Report: Disappointment and discrimination CYDA’s surveys of the learning experiences of children and young people with disability in 2022 and 2023.](#)

²³ [Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021- 2031](#)

²⁴ Dickinson, H., Smith, C., Faulkner, A. (2023) “I think the teachers need more help” Voices of experience from students with disability in Australia. CYDA Youth Education Survey 2022. Report prepared for Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), Melbourne.

Reporting from ADS, the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the PISA index of disciplinary climate and NAPLAN results fail to give relevant insights for students with disability in Australia. These measures also fail to give insight as to the impact of:

- inadequate support for teachers to plan and develop adjustments as required under the [Disability Standards for Education](#) and in comparison, to those reported under the [Nationally Consistent Collection of Data](#)
- absence of student voice, as per our [submission](#) to the Disability Royal Commission (DRC)
- restrictive practices use in schools as per CYDA's contribution to the DRC research paper [Restrictive practices: A pathway to elimination](#)
- lack of student absence data interpretation for students with disability, refer to [Report](#) on Government Services 2023
- complaints mechanisms, as per CYDA's contribution to the DRC research [report](#) '*Complaint mechanisms: Reporting pathways for violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation*'²⁵
- prioritising attendance at school over engagement of students as per in our [submission](#) to the Senate Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal

Further education

Young people with disability are not accessing education, including university and Vocational Education and Training (VET), on an equal basis to their peers without disability²⁶.

The Australian Universities Accord Final Report²⁷ had 47 recommendations across 400 pages but so few adequately address the lived experience and needs of students with disability. Where it does mention disability, it does so in ways that are ableist, based on offensively low expectations of students with disability.

While it is encouraging to see that the enrolment rates of students with disability as a whole in tertiary education have increased²⁸, the group remains grossly underrepresented when compared with the proportion of people with disability in the general population (Figure 1).²⁹

²⁵ Wadiwel, D., Spivakovsky, C., and Steele, L., (2022) *Complaint mechanisms: Reporting pathways for violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation*, Disability Royal Commission Available at: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/complaint-mechanisms-reporting-pathways-violence-abuse-neglect-and-exploitation>

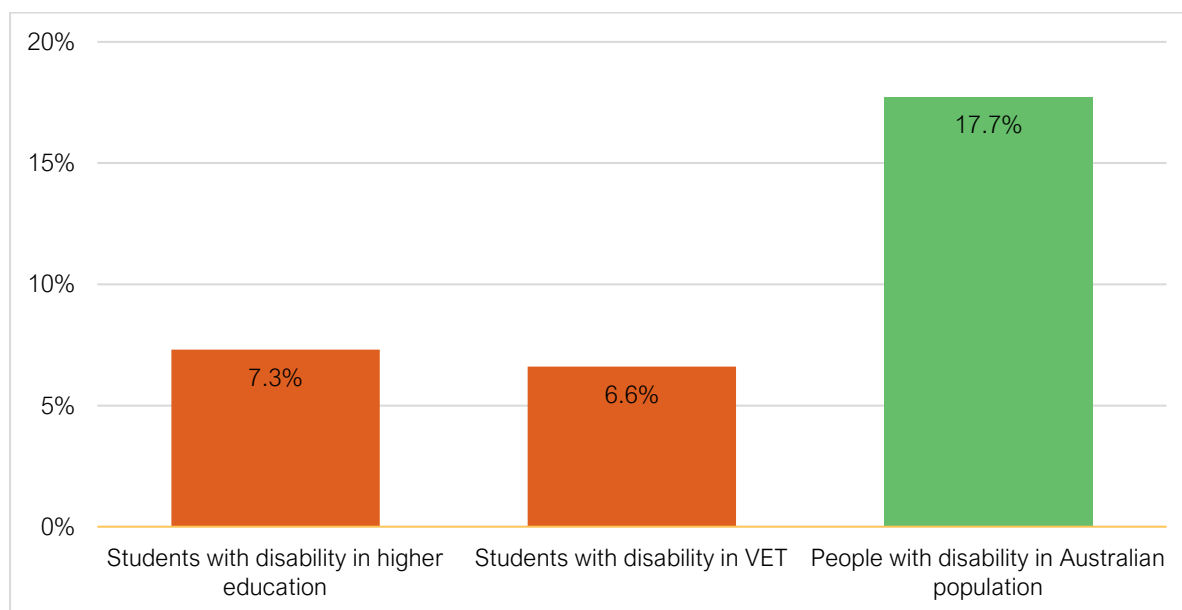
²⁶ AIHW. (2022). *People with disability in Australia*. Available at: [Engagement in Education \(aihw.gov.au\)](#)

²⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, (2024), [Australian Universities Accord Final Report](#), Department of Education.

²⁸ Koshy, P. (2020). *Equity Student Participation in Australian Higher Education: 2014–2019*. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE), Perth: Curtin University. Available at: [NCSEHE Briefing Note \(ncsehe.edu.au\)](#); Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training. (2020). *Higher Education Statistics & VET Statistics*. Available at: [Understanding disability \(adcet.edu.au\)](#)

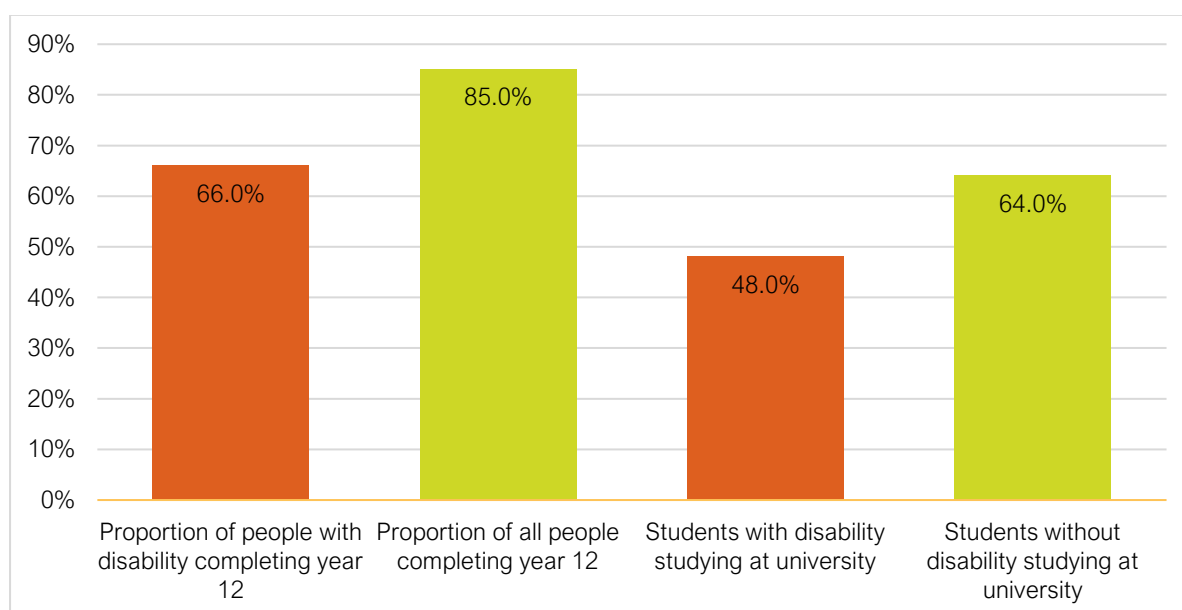
²⁹ *ibid*; ABS. (2018). *Disability, Ageing, and Carers Australia*. Available at: [Summary of findings \(abs.gov.au\)](#); Adapted from Ford, E., & Swayn, D. (2021). National Disability Coordination Officer Program: DRAFT tertiary education policy advocacy paper

Figure 1: Proportion of people with disability in tertiary education settings and the proportion of people with disability in the general population



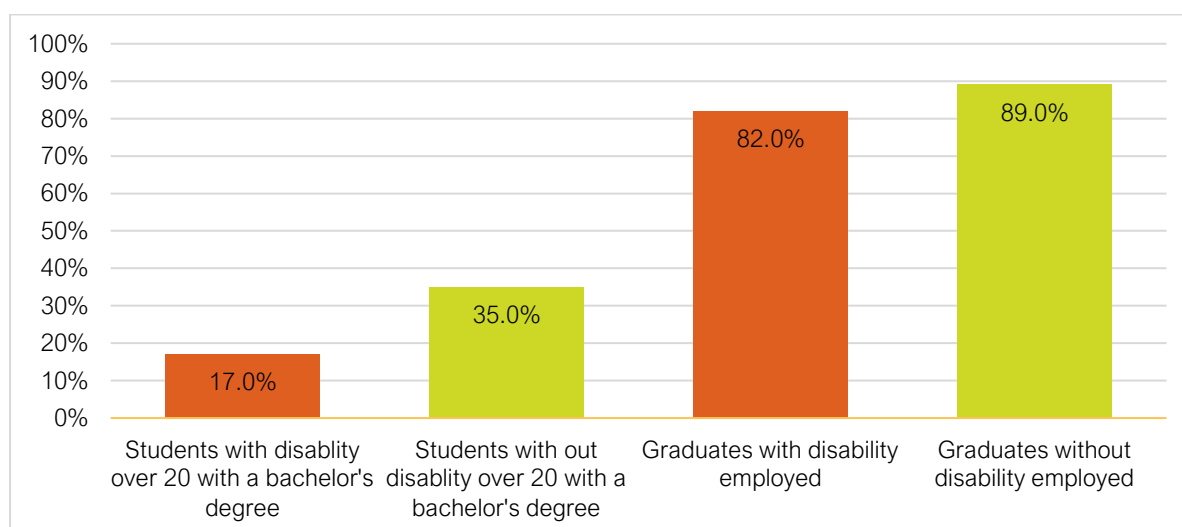
Below Figure 2 compares completion of year 12 and studying at university for students with and without disability. Figure 3 compares outcomes from higher education for the same groups. Rates are significantly lower across indicators and point to a need for ADS to continue to address the gaps.

Figure 2: Completion rates for people with and without disability for year 12 and studying at university³⁰



³⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 30 August 2024.

Figure 3: Higher education outcomes for students with and without disability³¹



A major barrier preventing students with disability from participating in tertiary education is the inadequate funding and effort allocated to providing educational supports and reasonable adjustments. Despite the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the accompanying *Disability Standards for Education 2005* requiring providers to take reasonable steps to enable students with disability to participate in education on an equal basis as their peers without disability, many students' rights are not being upheld.

In addition to this, students with disability who do access tertiary education are not experiencing improved employment outcomes on an equal basis to their peers without disability.

Area 2: Employment and financial security

Young people with disability are one of the most disadvantaged cohorts in the labour market and the barriers they experience in finding quality and stable work are complex and multi-faceted. The group are three times as likely to be unemployed than older adults³² with disability (24.7 per cent compared to 7.9 per cent).³³ Young people with disability are also more than three times as likely to be underemployed³⁴ — meaning they have the capacity and desire to work more hours, beyond the level to which they are currently employed.

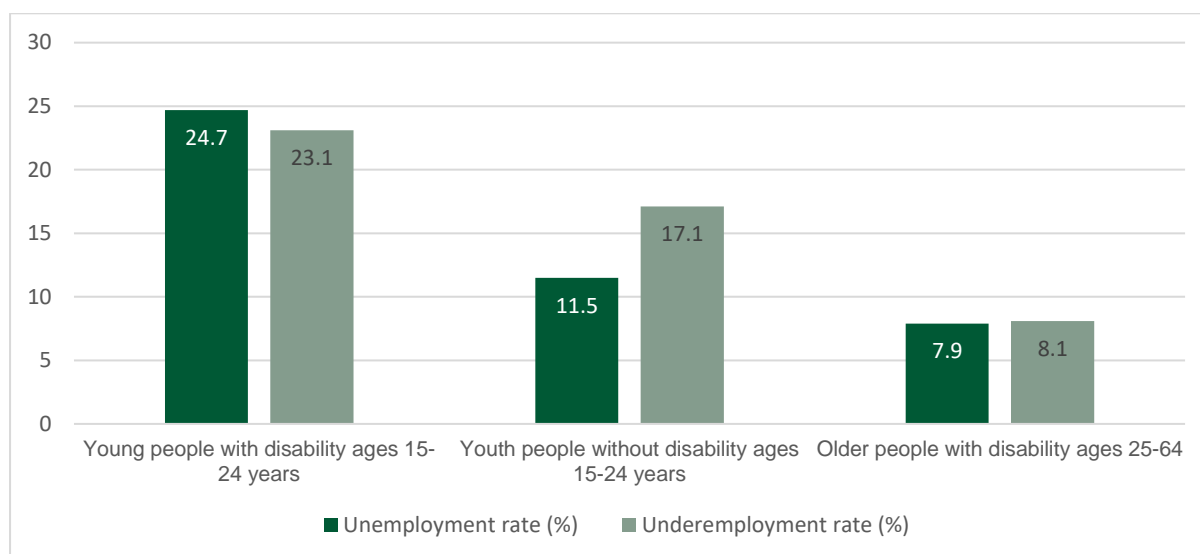
³¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 30 August 2024.

³² Aged 26-64 years old

³³ AIHW. (2020). *People with disability*. Available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/employment/unemployment>

³⁴ 23.1% per cent rate of underemployment compared to 8.3 per cent of older adults with disability; AIHW (2020).

Figure 2*: Underutilisation rates in Australia by age and disability status, 2018



*Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022)

Young people are more likely to bear the brunt of economic downturn, with employers more reluctant to hire or retain younger workers due to their limited experience and lower skills during periods of cyclical weakness.³⁵ This is evident in the ongoing COVID-19 economic crisis, with young workers being disproportionately impacted³⁶. According to the Productivity Commission³⁷, people who experience negative shocks in the labour market go on to experience ‘scarring’ effects on their longer-term employment and earnings prospects.

As a person with disability, young people are also more disadvantaged in the labour market because of the systemic discrimination they experience from employers and the employment environment, and the lack of reasonable adjustments that would enable young people to participate on an equal basis to their non-disabled peers.

In CYDA’s submission (2022) to the consultation of the New Disability Employment Support Model we highlighted that young people with disability face a fragmented national employment service system when attempting to find work. CYDA maintains that Disability Employment Services (DES) remain only one aspect of this system and that it should not be addressed in isolation from other systemic barriers to employment.³⁸ Young people with disability describe DES employees as having minimal disability-specific knowledge and being challenged by the prospect of

³⁵ Dhillon, Z., & Cassidy, N. (2018). *Labour market outcomes for younger people*. Available at [Labour Market Outcomes for Younger People | Bulletin – June Quarter 2018 | RBA](#)

³⁶ Youth Affairs Council Victoria. (2020). *A COVID-19 recovery plan for young people*. Available at <https://www.yacvic.org.au/advocacy/covid-19-recovery/#TOC-1>

³⁷ de Fontenay, C., Lampe, B., Nugent, J. and Jomini, P. (2020). *Climbing the jobs ladder slower: Young people in a weak labour market*. Available at <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/supporting/jobs-ladder/jobs-ladder.pdf>

³⁸ CYDA (2022) [Submission to the consultation of the New Disability Employment Support Model - CYDA](#)

appropriately meeting the needs of young people who have completed tertiary education.³⁹

“The disability employment service provider has been a constant headache. They have no understanding. They're not used to dealing with people in higher education trying to get jobs. ... I am very close to finishing a bachelor with honours and they referred to it as a diploma and they tell me it's about just getting my foot in the door and that I need to accept work as a receptionist and I tried to explain if I'm going to be an engineer, I need to spend that time doing engineering and doing engineering skills.” (Young person with disability, 2021).

The impact of unemployment on the cost of living pressures for young people with disability is profound. Consistent employment is not only a source of income but also a means to financial stability. The lack of employment opportunities exacerbates the existing financial strain, limiting the capacity of individuals to lead independent lives and contribute actively to society.

³⁹ CYDA (2022) [Submission to the Disability Royal Commission: Targeted Engagement with young people with disability - CYDA](#)



Response to the Discussion Paper

The table below outlines CYDA’s responses to the questions raised in the Discussion Paper.⁴⁰ Below is the order we have responded to the Discussion Paper questions:

- Implementation Mechanisms
- Outcome Areas and Policy Priorities
- Draft Findings 1- 5
- Education and learning
- Health and well being
- Community attitudes
- Safety, rights and justice
- Economic and financial security
- Inclusive homes and communities
- Personal and community support

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
Implementation Mechanisms	Do you think the current implementation of ADS is effective?	CYDA does not believe that the implementation of ADS is effective for addressing the inequities faced by children and young people, as detailed in the section of this submission titled ‘ <i>The impact of ADS on children and young people with disability</i> ’(p.13).
	How could we improve implementation of ADS?	<p>Accountability measures need to be included in all national agreements relating to children and young people, to ensure (1) change is measurable (2) data is gathered (3) investment is directed to areas of impact and (4) positive change is replicated to other areas of concern.</p> <p>This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool Reform Agreement • Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034

⁴⁰ Review of Australia’s Disability Strategy (ADS) – Discussion paper. Available at: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/ads-review/review-of-australias-disability-strategy-ads-discussion-paper/>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Agreement on Closing the Gap • National Housing and Homelessness Agreement • National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement • National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development
	How could people with disability be more involved in the implementation of ADS?	Greater investment in the employment of young people with disability in the parts of government that are responsible for implementation of ADS via (1) agreed and documented quotas for employment (2) investment in capability and capacity of existing teams to provide workplace accommodations and adjustments (3) reporting and transparency of employment numbers and feedback from employees on experience (4) replicate successful paid engagement and co-design models across all levels of government to lift the participation of people with disability in design and delivery of implementation activities.
Outcome Areas and Policy Priorities	ADS has 7 Outcome Areas. Do you think the Outcome Areas still represent what is most important to people with disability?	CYDA agrees that the 7 outcomes areas as designed with people with disability, prior to 2021, are still appropriate.
	How could we improve the Outcome Areas of ADS?	Build more capability, amongst teams responsible for implementation of ADS, to deliver policies and programs that support children and young people with disability as a whole person with intersecting identities and needs, including consideration of who they live with, where they live and how they want to live their lives.
	How could people with disability be more involved in ADS	Greater investment in the employment of young people with disability in the

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	Outcome Areas and Policy Priorities?	parts of government that are responsible for implementation of ADS.
	We have identified a list of topics related to ADS Outcome Areas. Do you agree these topics should be priorities for future work under ADS?	<p>Based on CYDA's work and engagement with children and young people with disability and their families, we agree that the list of outcome areas and priorities, noted in the Discussion Paper, is appropriate. Below, we also draw ADS' attention to a shorter list, in order of priority, for the greatest impact for children and young people, which aligns with the order CYDA has used to answer the Discussion Paper questions:</p> <p>Children:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and Learning - Inclusive education 2. Health and Wellbeing - Accessible and inclusive health, allied health and mental health services 3. Community Attitudes - Community attitudes and disability awareness <p>Young people:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety, Rights and Justice - Criminal justice system 2. Employment - Transition from school to work and barriers to employment 3. Inclusive Homes and Communities - Housing
	How should ADS take action on these topics?	<p>CYDA recommends that ADS outcomes and priorities be noted, actioned and reported in all national agreements. This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool Reform Agreement • Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 • National Agreement on Closing the Gap • National Housing and Homelessness Agreement

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement • National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development <p>For some areas this will mean new or amended agreements and reviewed models for reporting. This will require resource investment.</p> <p>CYDA also recommends that a more action-oriented approach should be driven by national leadership. The work of the Independent NDIS Review and the DRC have surfaced and reported the details, examples and wishes of people with disability and more reviews or consultations continue to delay actions on agreed priorities.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Draft findings Draft Finding 1</p>	<p>What do you think about how governments are working together to deliver ADS?</p>	<p>CYDA understands the challenges faced by all levels of government to coordinate policy and programs to action the outcomes of ADS. However, CYDA is increasingly concerned that these challenges are often used to excuse inaction and lack of leadership, ultimately leaving little or no tangible change.</p>
	<p>ADS is made up of lots of parts; do some parts of ADS need more coordination?</p>	<p>Yes. This is not a challenge particular to ADS and other examples of better coordination could be investigated rather than reducing the number of priorities or TAPs. For example the National Immunisation Program, Safe Work Australia, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and Australian Consumer Law.</p>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	<p>Do you agree with our draft Recommendation and how we might do it? What would you change?</p>	<p>CYDA does not agree with any recommendation that would remove or pause any existing TAPs or actions. Streamlining new TAPs may well bring greater clarity but must be accompanied by greater specificity on actions and responsibility and transparency and reporting that will prioritise change.</p>
<p>Draft Finding 2</p>	<p>How effective are the current TAPs?</p>	<p>Both the Early Childhood and Employment TAPs have been key focus areas for CYDA over the past few years and our work has identified considerable effort by successive government – state and federal – to improve areas covered under the TAPs. However, as outlined in the second Annual Report, both TAPs include actions and measures that have no baseline data, or have regressed, or have made no progress. CYDA believes that the issue does not sit with the TAPS, nor the actions, but with the link of ADS to the other areas of government policy and programs. Please refer to the section of the submission detailed ADS <i>Missing in action</i>, (p.8).</p>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	<p>Do you agree that the proposed TAPs represent priorities for action?</p>	<p>CYDA strongly urges all governments to prioritise a Targeted Action Plan (TAP) for inclusive education, and youth justice, recognising these areas as significant and essential for immediate action</p> <p>CYDA believes the other proposed TAPs (Inclusive Homes and Communities, Safety, Rights and Justice and Community Attitudes) are integral to the effectiveness and realisation to have any chance of real change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Agreement on Closing the Gap • National Housing and Homelessness Agreement • National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement • National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	<p>Do you agree with our draft Recommendation and how we might do it? What would you change?</p>	<p>CYDA supports the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to support best practice approaches on accessible communications. • Extend ADS data and reporting to improve visibility of intersectional experiences. • Embed mechanisms that will support the early identification of delayed and undelivered TAPs actions. <p>CYDA seeks greater clarity on how 'Develop and implement an ADS Community Engagement Plan, in addition to the existing ADS engagement commitments.', will ensure that all levels of government, as the primary responsibility holders for action, will deliver on TAPs. CYDA offered detailed input in 2020 as to how children and young people with disability must be meaningfully engaged.⁴¹ This included recommendations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure ADS is underpinned by the life course approach and incorporates priority areas that reflect different needs across the lifespan • Form and evaluate priority areas and consequential policies and programs with the meaningful inclusion of young people with disability and families and caregivers of children with disability • Engage with disability advocacy and representative organisations to ensure young people and families and caregivers are engaged in consultation and co-design processes that are safe and inclusive.

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
Draft Finding 3	Do you agree that accessible communications is a priority for long-term action?	CYDA agrees that this a priority action but urges this be considered a short term action as the issues of lack of accessibility and need for accessible communication are well documented.
	Do you agree with our draft Recommendation? What would you change?	Whilst CYDA supports this recommendation, we also recommend that ADS refer to the extensive feedback and solutions already offered by children and young people with disability and their families during the Covid-19 pandemic, about the lack of accessible communication to ensure safety. ⁴²
Draft Finding 4	What do you think about how we currently report on ADS?	The reporting currently is clear and accessible. The lack of action and accountability is what is missing from reporting, not the reporting framework itself.
	We report on lots of things; what reporting do you think should be the priority to lead improvement?	CYDA questions whether changing reporting would drive improvement in implementation when all levels of government are the primary responsibility holders for action, data collection and reporting.

⁴¹ CYDA, (2020), Submission to the National Disability Strategy beyond 2020. Available at: <https://cyda.org.au/national-disability-strategy-beyond-2020/>

⁴² [Report](#) "More than isolated: The experience of children and young people with disability and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. See page 28-30. [Response](#) to the Disability Royal Commission's Omicron issues paper. See page 3 [Submission](#) to the Inquiry into the Australian Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. See pages 2 and 3.

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	<p>Do you agree with our draft Recommendations and how we could do it? What would you change?</p>	<p>At this stage, CYDA supports more focus on driving implementation and would be keen to hear from governments what type of reporting would drive them to deliver on the already agreed TAPs and outcomes.</p> <p>The National Disability Data Asset and the National Disability Research Partnership must be critical elements involved in and invested in ADS. CYDA notes that neither of these critical tools are referenced in the Discussion Paper.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Draft Finding 5</p>	<p>What do you think about how we currently engage with people with disability about ADS?</p>	<p>An ADS community engagement plan is only as effective as the commitment to act on what people with disability have consistently communicated through countless inquiries and reviews. While community engagement is crucial for understanding the needs and experiences of people with disability, it must be accompanied by a genuine willingness to implement the changes they have long called for. Without action, engagement risks becoming a token gesture rather than a meaningful process for driving real change. The voices of people with disability have been clear and consistent across multiple forums; what is needed now is a concerted effort to translate these insights into concrete actions that address the systemic issues and inequities they continue to face.</p>
	<p>How could people with disability be more engaged about ADS?</p>	<p>CYDA believes to effectively engage people in ADS, it's crucial to recognise that children and young people with disability and their families must be acknowledged as key stakeholders. Their unique perspectives and experiences need to be at the forefront of any engagement efforts. Without explicitly valuing their input and tailoring engagement</p>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	<p>Do you agree with our draft Recommendation and how we could do it? What would you change?</p>	<p>strategies to include them, it's unrealistic to expect meaningful participation from this group.</p> <p>CYDA is wary of additional engagement on ADS, that comes straight after the Independent NDIS Review and the DRC, when so few of the recommendations are being accepted or actioned as people with disability have asked for. There is a growing trust deficit in the disability community, along with consultation fatigue, as their voices continue to go unheard. Engagement should be accessible, inclusive, and relevant to their lives, using platforms and methods that resonate with children and young people. This must include digital tools, creative mediums, and peer-led initiatives that empower them to share their voices in ways that feel authentic and impactful to them. By ensuring that children and young people with disability are central to the conversation, ADS could foster deeper, more meaningful engagement that reflects the true diversity of the disability community.</p>
<p>Education and learning</p>	<p>Do you agree that inclusive education should be a priority for future work under ADS?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
	<p>How should ADS take action towards achieving inclusive education?</p>	<p>The phasing out of segregated education and the realisation of inclusive education (as defined by the CPRD which Australia has endorsed, but not fulfilled) for students with disability must be a priority.</p> <p>ADS should include a TAP for Inclusive Education that implements a roadmap to inclusive education to ensure sustained momentum and a pathway to transform into an Inclusive Education model. For more detailed actions of short, medium and long-term outcomes required to achieve inclusive education, please see</p>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		<p>Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia.⁴³</p> <p>The Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education, of which CYDA is a member, has developed a 10-year plan (<i>Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia</i>) to help realise inclusive education and prevent the violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of students with disability. This plan has been endorsed by disability advocacy and youth-led organisations across the country.</p> <p>ADS should recommend and endorse practices that help educators better identify and support children with developmental differences, fostering environments where children with disability and their families can thrive.</p>
	<p>In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?</p>	<p>Ensure actions that co-design a nationally consistent framework for post-school transition supports in collaboration with young people with disability, their families, and stakeholders. This framework should focus on career progression from school and provide early and ongoing employment assistance and career planning to support young people with disability, ensuring they have the necessary tools and opportunities to succeed in the workforce.</p> <p>Encourage higher education institutions to invest in both immediate support and long-term capacity building to better include students with disability. ADS should advocate for strategies that enhance universities' ability to support students with disability, aiming to improve academic achievement and increase completion</p>

⁴³ The Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education's '[Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia](#)'

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		rates through more inclusive and accessible learning environments.
Health and well being	Do you agree that the health, allied health, and mental health services should be a priority for future work under ADS?	Yes
	How should ADS take action towards improving health, allied health, and mental health services?	CYDA would like to see ADS address barriers faced by children and young people with disability and their families in accessing quality healthcare and disability supports, with the goal of lowering their cost of living pressures and improving outcomes.
	In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?	Due to the limited timeline for consultation, we have no specific comment at this time.
Community attitudes	Do you agree that discrimination and disability awareness, authentic representation, and leadership should be priorities for future work under ADS?	Yes
	How should ADS take action towards eliminating discrimination?	<p>Young people with disability have told CYDA⁴⁴ that we can achieve an inclusive future through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making our physical environments more accessible through ensuring the principles of universal design are enforced across all domains of our society. • This will make sure that people with a disability can go to the same places as everyone else. • Evolving community attitudes towards disability, encouraging people to understand disability as

⁴⁴ CYDA, (2022), Submission to the Disability Royal Commission; Quest for Inclusion: A vision for an Inclusive Australia. Available at: <https://cyda.org.au/submission-to-the-disability-royal-commission-quest-for-inclusion-a-vision-for-an-inclusive-australia/>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		<p>a strength. This includes normalising disability, educating people about disability and ensuring people with a disability have prominent roles in our society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing more opportunities to people with disability, including support to engage in education and employment. • Making it easy to access the support that people need (this includes meeting their basic needs, asking for help at school or being able to afford a wheelchair).
	<p>How should ADS take action towards promoting authentic representation?</p>	<p>First and foremost, it's essential that ADS explicitly recognises children and young people with disability as critical stakeholders. This acknowledgment should be reflected in all communication, policies, and engagement strategies. Without this recognition, it's unreasonable to expect meaningful engagement from this group.</p> <p>Establish dedicated channels and platforms tailored specifically for engaging children and young people with disability. This could include age-appropriate consultation processes, interactive online platforms, and the further involvement of youth representatives on decision-making bodies.</p> <p>Ensure that the feedback provided by children and young people with disability is not only heard but visibly incorporated into policy decisions and actions within ADS. Demonstrating how their input directly influences outcomes will encourage continued and deeper engagement.</p>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
	How should ADS take action towards increasing leadership by people with disability?	<p>Create a Youth Advisory Council specifically for ADS, comprised of children and young people with disability. This council should have direct input into the development, implementation, and review of ADS, ensuring that their perspectives are authentically represented at every stage.</p> <p>Invest in leadership development programs for children and young people with disability, equipping them with the skills and confidence to advocate for themselves and others. This could include mentorship programs, workshops, and opportunities to participate in public speaking and advocacy campaigns for ADS.</p>
	In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?	<p>Employ communication strategies that are accessible and relatable to children and young people with disability. This includes using simple language, visual aids, and formats that cater to various types of disability, ensuring that engagement is not hindered by communication barriers.</p> <p>Support peer-led initiatives where young people with disability can lead discussions, share experiences, and advocate for their needs. These initiatives could be facilitated through schools, community groups, and online platforms, providing a space where young voices are amplified and respected.</p>
Safety, rights and justice	Do you agree that addressing disability rights, violence against women and girls with disability, and the criminal justice system should be priorities for future work under ADS?	Yes
	How should ADS take action on improving disability rights?	

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		ADS needs to support the enactment of national human rights legislation that upholds the rights of all Australians, including people with disability, and ensures the full protection of the human rights of children and young people with disability. ⁴⁵ This legislation needs to expressly incorporate immediate rights in the CRPD, by individually listing each CRPD right or by reference to incorporation of the CRPD into the legislation, including the right to an inclusive education.
	How should ADS take action towards eliminating violence against women and girls with disability?	ADS should coordinate closely with existing national and state-based strategies, such as the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, to ensure that the specific needs of women and girls with disability are addressed.
	How should ADS take action to address the criminal justice system response to people with disability?	Due to the limited timeline for consultation, we have no specific comment at this time.
	In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?	Refer to CYDA’s work on rights, recognition and attitudes listed in Appendix A
Economic and financial security	Do you agree that addressing employment barriers and post-school transitions should be priorities for future work under ADS?	Yes
	How should ADS take action to decrease employment barriers?	Actions should include the co-design and implementation of a nationally consistent post school transition supports framework which focuses on career progression from school and

⁴⁵ People with Disability Australia, (2023), Submission: A Human Rights Act for All. Available at: <https://pwd.org.au/submission-a-human-rights-act-for-all/>

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		provides earlier employment support to young people.
	How should ADS take action to improve post-school transitions?	<p>Include actions and measures on early transition pathways from education to employment</p> <p>Drive transformation to an inclusive employment pathway where young people, including those with an intellectual disability are respected, included, and valued before closing models of segregated employment, such as Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs).</p> <p>Include actions that remove unhelpful and harmful income support compliance requirements by uncoupling mutual obligation requirements and sanctions from income support.</p>
	In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?	Refer to CYDA's work on employment listed in Appendix A
Inclusive homes and communities	Do you agree that addressing housing should be a priority for future work under ADS?	Yes
	How should ADS take action towards improving housing outcomes?	Align ADS to the targets and outcomes of the National Housing and Homelessness Plan
	In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?	Due to the limited timeline for consultation, we have no specific comment at this time.
Personal and community support	Do you agree that the disability ecosystem should be a priority for future work under ADS?	Yes, the disability ecosystem should be a priority for future work under ADS. A robust and well-integrated disability ecosystem is essential for ensuring that all people with disability, regardless of their eligibility for the

Area	Discussion questions	CYDA response
		<p>NDIS, have access to the support they need to for fulfilling lives. The current gaps in mainstream service accessibility and inclusivity, as well as the lack of adequate support for those not covered by the NDIS, highlight the urgent need to strengthen and expand the ecosystem. ADS should ensure that the entire spectrum of disability supports—formal, informal, foundational and mainstream—is accessible, coordinated, and responsive to the diverse needs of children and young people with disability across Australia.</p>
	<p>How could ADS take action towards improving the disability ecosystem?</p>	<p>Due to the limited timeline for consultation, we have no specific comment at this time.</p>
	<p>In what other ways could we improve this Outcome Area?</p>	<p>Due to the limited timeline for consultation, we have no specific comment at this time.</p>



Case study: a child born in 2005

The table below outlines key milestones and initiatives in Australia that have shaped the landscape for children and young people with disability. The table specifically details activities from 2005, i.e. for a young person who will turn 20 years of age in 2025. Despite these developments, the statistics noted after the table, highlight persistent inequities, demonstrating that many of the challenges identified over the years remain unaddressed, affecting their education, inclusion in their local communities, and overall well-being. This contrast underscores the need for more effective and accountable action to bridge the gap between ADS priorities and outcomes experienced by children and young people.

A child born in 2005 has witnessed...

Year	A child born in 2005 has witnessed:	Age
2005	Disability Standards for Education into effect ⁴⁶	0
2006	Enhancements to Disability Employment Services (DES) ⁴⁷	1
2007	Development of the Early Years Learning Framework ⁴⁸	2
2008	Closing The Gap, ⁴⁹ Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians ⁵⁰ and NAPLAN ⁵¹ began	3
2009	DDA amended introducing 'reasonable adjustments' ⁵² and National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 ⁵³	4
2010	1st national disability strategy launched ⁵⁴	5
2011	Australian Child Rights Taskforce report Listen to Children ⁵⁵ on child's rights in Australia	6
2012	National Quality Framework (NQF) was introduced ⁵⁶	7
2013	NDIS launched ⁵⁷	8
2014	First Closing the Gap Report Delivered to Parliament ⁵⁸	9

⁴⁶ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>

⁴⁷ Australian National Audit Office, (2009), ANAO Audit Report No.11 2008–09 Disability Employment Services.

⁴⁸ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/resources/early-years-learning-framework>

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/sites/default/files/reports/closing-the-gap-2019/introduction.html>

⁵⁰ Available at: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4560588>

⁵¹ Available at: <https://www.nap.edu.au/about>

⁵² Available at: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/improved-rights-protection-people-disability-2009>

⁵³ Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/publications-articles/protecting-children-is-everyones-business>

⁵⁴ Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-disability-strategy/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020>

⁵⁵ Available at: <https://childrightstaskforce.org.au/child-rights/the-reporting-process/listen-to-children-report/>

⁵⁶ Available at: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about>

⁵⁷ NDIS history available at: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/history-ndis>

⁵⁸ Closing the Gap history available at: <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/resources/history>

Year	A child born in 2005 has witnessed:	Age
2015	Australian Human Rights Commission 'Willing to Work' inquiry into employment discrimination ⁵⁹ and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy 2015 ⁶⁰	10
2016	Inclusion Support Program (ISP) launched ⁶¹	11
2017	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations began ⁶²	12
2018	1 st National School Reform Agreement ⁶³ and National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) began ⁶⁴	13
2019	The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration ⁶⁵ Disability Royal Commission established ⁶⁶	14
2020	National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020-2030 ⁶⁷	15
2021	Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 (2 nd), Safe and Supported: The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031 ⁶⁸ , and Launch of National Construction Code's Housing Design Guidelines ⁶⁹	16
2022	Launch of the National Skills Agreement ⁷⁰ , Launch of the Universities Accord Process ⁷¹ , and Evaluation of the ISP ⁷²	17
2023	DRC Final Report ⁷³ and NDIS Review Final Report issued ⁷⁴	18
2024	Early Years Strategy 2024-2034 launched ⁷⁵ , Engage! Youth Engagement Strategy launched ⁷⁶ , and Review of Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention began ⁷⁷	19
2025	Better and Fairer Schools Agreement 2025-2034 (2 nd)	20

⁵⁹ Available at: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/age-discrimination/projects/willing-work-national-inquiry-employment-discrimination>

⁶⁰ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/indigenous-education/resources/national-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-education-strategy-2015>

⁶¹ AIFS, (2022), Evaluation of the Inclusion Support Program. Available at: <https://aifs.gov.au/research/research-reports/evaluation-inclusion-support-program>

⁶² Child Safe Organisations Available at: <https://childsafefromhumanrights.gov.au/national-principles/about-national-principles>

⁶³ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/national-school-reform-agreement>

⁶⁴ Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/housing-support-programs-services-homelessness/national-agreement-on-social-housing-and-homelessness>

⁶⁵ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration/resources/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>

⁶⁶ Available at: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/about-royal-commission>

⁶⁷ Available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-action-plan-for-the-health-of-children-and-young-people-2020-2030?language=en>

⁶⁸ Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/protecting-australias-children>

⁶⁹ Available at: <https://livablehousingaustralia.org.au/design-guidelines/>

⁷⁰ Available at: <https://www.dewr.gov.au/skills-reform/national-skills-agreement>

⁷¹ Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord>

⁷² Available at: <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/inclusion-support-program/inclusion-support-program-review>

⁷³ Available at: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>

⁷⁴ NDIS Review, (2023), Working Together to deliver the NDIS. Available at:

<https://www.ndisreview.gov.au/resources/reports/working-together-deliver-ndis>

⁷⁵ Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/programs-services/early-years-strategy>

⁷⁶ Available at: <https://www.youth.gov.au/engage/resources/engage-our-new-strategy-include-young-people-decisions-we-make>

⁷⁷ Available at: https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programs-services-for-people-with-disability/early-childhood-targeted-action-plan-early-childhood-tap?mc_cid=f4a7939fb3&mc_eid=08f12c3621

But a child with disability born in 2005
has experienced...

- ✘ Lack of access: In 2005, children with disability were less likely to access early childhood education and care (ECEC) compared to their non-disabled peers, with barriers including lack of accessible facilities and inadequate support services.
- ✘ Segregation: By 2009, around 66% of students with disability were in regular classes in mainstream schools, 24% in segregated classes in mainstream schools and 10% in segregated schools.
- ✘ Gaps in services: The introduction of the NDIS began in 2013, but as of 2017, there were still significant gaps in access, with many children experiencing delays in receiving services.
- ✘ Bullying and discrimination: Reports in 2015 indicated that children with disability were two to three times more likely to experience bullying and discrimination in school settings compared to non-disabled peers.
- ✘ Lower attainment: In 2018, the proportion of people with disability who had completed Year 12 was 45%, compared with 42% in 2015, and 37% in 2012.⁸²

And a child with disability born in 2015
has experienced...

- ✘ The 2015 AEDC found that 22% of children in Australia were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains. This was the same as in 2012 and a decrease from 2009 (24%)⁷⁸
- ✘ By 2018, 70% of students with disability were in regular classes in mainstream schools, 18% in segregated classes in mainstream school and 12% in segregated schools.⁷⁹
- ✘ In 2018, those who cared for a child with disability reported lower than average satisfaction with their choice and control and a quarter reported that their choice and control had declined with longer time in the NDIS.⁸⁰
- ✘ In 2023, CYDA's survey work, 50% of respondents reported that their child has experienced bullying within school that may be physical or psychological nature.⁸¹
- ✘ By 2020, students with disability were still significantly less likely to complete Year 12 compared to their non-disabled peers, with only around 50% achieving this milestone.

⁷⁸ ACECQA, (2017), National Partnership Annual Performance Report 2017, p45.

⁷⁹ AIHW, (2024) People with disability in Australia, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 30 August 2024.

⁸⁰ NLS, (2018) Evaluation of the NDIS, Final Report. Available at [link](#)

⁸¹ CYDA, (2023), Disappointment and discrimination: CYDA's surveys of the learning experiences of children and young people with disability

⁸² Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2018), Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)

- ✘ Higher unemployment: In 2018, the unemployment rate of people aged 15–64 with disability was 10%, twice that of those without disability 4.6%.⁸³ The labour force participation rate for was 53.4% compared to people without disability of 84.1%.
- ✘ Anxiety and depression: In 2020, 33% of adults with disability experienced high or very high psychological distress, compared with 12% of those without disability.⁸⁵
- ✘ Exclusion: In 2022, among people with disability aged 15 to 24, 43.5% are not satisfied with their community, compared with 27.3% of those without disability. Also in 2022, CYDA’s survey about school reported 54% feeling welcome and included, 70% reported being excluded from events or activities at school, 65% experienced bullying and 13% preferred not to answer.⁸⁷
- ✘ In 2022, the labour force participation rate for people aged 15-64 years with disability, was 60.5%, compared to the participation rate for people without disability of 84.9%.⁸⁴
- ✘ In 2022, 48% people with severe or profound disability, and 37% of people with other forms of disability, self-reported anxiety disorders, compared with 14% of people without disability.⁸⁶
- ✘ In 2022, CYDA’s survey of families, 83% indicated their child was made to feel welcome in early childhood settings, but 29% reported exclusion from excursions, events or activities, 28% reported bullying from other children or staff, one in five reported that their child had been refused enrolment and nearly a quarter said their child had been limited in the number of hours they were allowed to attend⁸⁸

These high level statistics, provide a snapshot of the challenges and barriers faced by a child with a disability born in 2005 or in 2015, reflecting broader systemic issues in education, social inclusion, and support services, that must be addressed via more through and timely implementation of Australia’s Disability Strategy.

⁸³ AIHW, (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 31 August 2024.

⁸⁴ ABS, (2022) [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia](#): Summary of Findings, 2022

⁸⁵ AIHW, (2024) [People with disability in Australia](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 31 August 2024.

⁸⁶ AIHW, (2024) [Health of people with disability](#), AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 31 August 2024.

⁸⁷ CYDA, (2023), Disappointment and discrimination: CYDA’s surveys of the learning experiences of children and young people with disability

⁸⁸ Dickinson, H., Smith, C., Yates, S., Faulkner, A. (2022) Taking the first step in an inclusive life – experiences of Australian early childhood education and care. Report prepared for CYDA.



Detailed recommendations

CYDA recommends the following actions to ensure the ADS effectively addresses the root inequalities that lead to the exclusion of children and young people with disability. By tackling these disparities, the ADS can help unlock their full potential, empowering them to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Recommendation 1: Amplify the voices of children and young people

It is essential that ADS explicitly recognises children and young people with disability as critical stakeholders. This acknowledgment should be reflected in all communication, policies, and engagement strategies. Without this recognition, it's unreasonable to expect meaningful engagement from this group.

Their insights and experiences should directly inform policy decisions, ensuring that their voices are not only heard but acted upon. Invest in national and state and territory level mechanisms that collect, prioritise and action the voices and views of children and young people with disability:

- Invest in employment for young people
- Create dedicated engagement channels
- Demonstrate how feedback has been incorporated into policy decisions
- Representation in decision making bodies
- Use accessible communication strategies

- a) Greater investment in the employment of young people with disability in the parts of government that are responsible for implementation of ADS via:
 - investment in capability and capacity of existing teams to provide workplace accommodations and adjustments
 - reporting and transparency of employment numbers and feedback from employees on experience.
- b) Establish dedicated channels and platforms tailored specifically for engaging children and young people with disability. This could include age-appropriate consultation processes, interactive online platforms, and the involvement of youth representatives in decision-making bodies.
- c) Ensure that the feedback provided by children and young people with disability is not only heard but visibly incorporated into policy decisions and actions within

ADS. Demonstrating how their input directly influences outcomes will encourage continued and deeper engagement.

- d) Ensure that young people with disability are represented in key decision-making bodies related to ADS, such as advisory committees and steering groups. This representation should be genuine, with these young people having a real voice and influence over decisions.
- e) Employ communication strategies that are accessible and relatable to children and young people with disability. This includes using simple language, visual aids, and formats that cater to various types of disability, ensuring that engagement is not hindered by communication barriers.
- f) Support peer-led initiatives where young people with disability can lead discussions, share experiences, and advocate for their needs. These initiatives could be facilitated through schools, community groups, and online platforms, providing a space where young voices are amplified and respected.

Recommendation 2: Drive transformational change in inclusive education and early intervention

To realise the outcome areas, the phasing out of segregated education and the realisation of inclusive education (as defined by the CPRD which Australia has endorsed, but not fulfilled) for students with disability must be a priority. Actions are needed in ADS to strengthen support for early intervention and inclusive education by providing teams with the necessary resources, training, and funding to accommodate children with disability from early childhood through to post-secondary education:

- Comprehensive training for educators
- Additional training and resources for educators
- Co-design post school transition framework
- Encourage capacity building in higher education

Outcomes of ADS and its predecessor, National Disability Strategy 2010-2020⁸⁹, - particularly Education and learning outcome – cannot and will not be realised until education settings and systems include students with a disability on an equal basis and ensure all students are valued as contributors and learners.

⁸⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, (2011), National Disability Strategy, <https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/NDS%20PDF.pdf>

Achieving inclusive education “*requires recognising the right of every child (without exception) to be included and adapting the environment and teaching approaches in order to ensure the valued participation of all children.*”⁹⁰ Inclusive education is more than a student with disability simply being present in early education, school or tertiary education settings, but rather entails the full participation and full membership of all students within the school community.

- a) Advocate for the inclusion of comprehensive initial teacher education and related professional and specialist staff development in all life stages of education. ADS should encourage educational institutions and professional bodies to prioritise ongoing professional development focused on inclusive teaching practices, disability awareness, and the practical skills necessary to effectively support students with disability.
- b) Promote the need for additional ongoing training and resource provision for educators and support staff through public and private education providers. ADS should recommend and endorse practices that help educators better identify and support children with developmental differences, fostering environments where children with disability and their families can thrive.
- c) Ensure actions that co-design a nationally consistent framework for post-school transition supports in collaboration with young people with disability, their families, and stakeholders. This framework should focus on career progression from school and provide early and ongoing employment support to young people with disability, ensuring they have the necessary tools and opportunities to succeed in the workforce.
- d) Determine actions to encourage higher education institutions to invest in both immediate support and long-term capacity building to better include students with disability, aiming to improve academic achievement and increase completion rates through more inclusive and accessible learning environments.

⁹⁰ Cologon, K. (2013) *Inclusion in Education: Towards Equality for Students with Disability*, Children with Disability Australia, Melbourne, p.3.

Recommendation 3: Embed accountability measures

Accountability measures need to be included in all national agreements relating to children and young people, to ensure (1) change is measurable (2) data is gathered (3) investment is directed to areas of impact and (4) positive change is replicated to other areas of concern. ADS needs to:

- Link funding to impact
- Replicate and scale successful initiatives
- Embed accountability across governments
- Systematic data collection and integration

Regular reporting, independent audits, and public transparency should be integral to these measures. Introduce strong accountability mechanisms within ADS that hold all levels of government responsible for achieving outcomes related to the inclusion and support of children and young people with disability, specifically improved education and learning outcomes lead to better employment and financial security outcomes and improved outcomes in safety, rights and justice leads to better health and wellbeing outcomes. This will require all levels of government to:

- a) Ensure that funding allocations within ADS and related national agreements are directly linked to areas where they will have the greatest impact. Establish criteria for investment that prioritises high-impact initiatives and interventions. ADS should require regular financial reporting that shows how investments are being used to achieve specific outcomes for children and young people with disability. For example, via the Preschool Reform Agreement⁹¹, allocating funds specifically for expanding accessible early childhood education programs. By directing resources toward ensuring that early childhood education centres are equipped with the necessary accessibility features, trained staff, and inclusive curricula, the funding directly supports the developmental needs of children with disability at a critical stage in their lives. This targeted investment can have a long-term impact by setting a strong foundation for inclusive education, helping to reduce educational disparities from the outset.
- b) Develop mechanisms within ADS to identify, replicate, and scale successful initiatives that have demonstrated positive change for children and young people with disability. This could involve links to the National Disability Research Partnership in creating a best practices collection and promoting

⁹¹ Preschool Reform Agreement, (2022), <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/preschool/preschool-reform-agreement>

knowledge sharing among governments and service providers. ADS should also facilitate partnerships that help expand effective programs to other areas of concern.

- c) Embed accountability measures across all levels of government—federal, state, and local. This includes ensuring that all jurisdictions are responsible for meeting their specific obligations under ADS.
- d) Establish systematic data collection through interlinking various data sources. Adopt the AIHW Children's Report⁹², recommendation of integrating data from multiple sources to improve understanding of:
 - i. How children transition between key developmental stages and their outcomes at different stages of their life
 - ii. The pathways children take through different services and the points where intervention would be most effective.

Recommendation 4: Prioritise cross-government collaboration

To ensure that Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) achieves its full impact, it is essential to prioritise and enhance cross-government collaboration. ADS needs to:

- Clarify the national coordination body
- Develop joint policy frameworks
- Facilitate resource sharing
- Standardise accessibility and service delivery
- Encourage local innovation

Effective implementation of ADS requires a unified and coordinated effort among federal, state, and local governments. By aligning policies, sharing resources, and adopting best practices, governments at all levels can work together to create a cohesive approach to disability inclusion.

- a) Identify clearly for all stakeholders which national coordination body is tasked with overseeing the alignment and integration of ADS across all levels of government. More regular communication, joint planning sessions, and the accountability for shared goals among federal, state, and local governments, is

⁹² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022) Children with disability in Australia. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/data-gaps>

needed, ensuring a consistent and unified approach to disability inclusion nationwide.

- b) Encourage the development of joint policy frameworks that align with the goals of ADS, allowing for the integration of strategies across different jurisdictions. These frameworks should be designed to ensure that policies at every level of government are mutually supportive and work together to eliminate barriers for people with disability.
- c) Facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and data among federal, state, and local governments to maximise the effectiveness and reach of disability initiatives.
- d) Advocate for standardising accessibility requirements, service delivery models, and outcome measurement tools, ensuring that people with disability receive the same high level of support regardless of where they live.
- e) While promoting national consistency, ADS should also encourage local governments to innovate and develop tailored solutions that address the unique needs of their communities.



Conclusion, imagine if.....

To effectively influence change, Australia's Disability Strategy must be more than a set of well-intentioned goals—it needs to actively drive transformative action across all levels of government and society. This conclusion envisions a future where children and young people with disability are fully included, supported, and valued in every aspect of their lives. To turn this vision into reality, ADS must focus on implementing concrete, actionable steps that address the persistent barriers faced by this group. Imagine if children and young people were supported in their local communities to enjoy and fully participate in the everyday – embracing new life, starting school, finding a career path, moving out of home....

Imagine if when a baby is born, their family opens a *welcome baby box* that includes a story book about inclusion and diversity, a roadmap to supports in their local community, a message of support... **AND** a pre-populated NDIS access form based on their health record....

Imagine if when a child begins school, day 1 starts with a warm welcome, supports in place, a connection to children they know from local places – pool, park, pre-school, shops etc... **AND** an agreed approach to balancing learning, inclusion and intervention/therapy...

Imagine if all children, with or without disability, were asked what they want to be when they grow up and supported to explore those dreams as they develop and learn... **AND** a NDIA that actively partners with employers to create a diverse and accessible job market that values the skills and contributions of all young people with disability in economic life...

Imagine if when a young person with disability decides they want to leave home they have the same options as their friends... **AND** these options inherently address accessibility and community connection, enabling independent lives with the necessary support in place....

CYDA believes the future for children with disability should include:

- ✓ From birth or when disability is first identified, families are encouraged and supported to strive for inclusion in their local community and to make early childhood education and care the first step of an inclusive education alongside their nondisabled peers
- ✓ Non-disabled peers playing and learning alongside children with disability understand that disability is something to be welcomed as part of our society
- ✓ The presence of language and cultural adjustments, along with supportive mentors, enabling all children to access language and literacy including, through Auslan, Braille, or augmentative and alternative communication
- ✓ The voice and views of children with disability are sought after, encouraged by families, and routinely included in location and system feedback processes and evaluations
- ✓ Families, educators, professionals, clinicians, and stakeholders have high expectations and believe all children can flourish with universal access, adjustments that support engagement, attendance, and participation.
- ✓ Children with disability and their families experience a collaborative and focused transition to their school education, supported before, during and after by skilled, local professionals
- ✓ During 13 years of schooling, students with disability receive the necessary adjustments, accommodations and support to fully participate in both academic and extracurricular activities, preparing them for life beyond school. Inclusive education remains a priority, with a focus on equipping students with the skills and confidence to pursue their goals
- ✓ Upon leaving school, young people with disability are supported in accessing higher education, vocational training, or other further education opportunities. This support includes tailored career guidance, mentorship, and work experience placements, ensuring they have the tools to succeed in the workforce
- ✓ As they transition into adulthood, young people with disability have access to the resources and support they need to live independently. This includes access to affordable and accessible housing, personal support services, and transportation options, enabling them to lead fulfilling lives on their terms.
- ✓ The social and emotional development of young people with disability is prioritised, with access to a full suite of services that promote mental health, well-being, and the formation of meaningful relationships. They are supported to build and maintain friendships, pursue interests, and enjoy all aspects of social life.
- ✓ Young people with disability are fully included into all aspects of society—socially, economically, and culturally—living lives that are rich with opportunity, purpose, and fulfillment.



Appendix A

CYDA's previous submissions on Australia's Disability Strategy

- [Response](#) to the consultation papers for ADS: A Guide to the Guiding Principles and A Guide to involving people with disability in evaluation
- [Submission](#) to National Disability Advocacy Framework 2022-2025 consultation
- [Submission](#) to National Disability Strategy & NDIS Outcomes Framework Introductory Paper
- [Submission](#) to the National Disability Strategy Beyond 2020
- National disability strategy implementation plan – exposure draft [submission](#)

Data sources for shaping this submission

- This submission draws on CYDA's engagement with the work of the Disability Royal Commission (DRC), having made a total of 22 submissions to the DRC, and note that CYDA's work has been cited 34 times in the DRC final report.⁹³
- This submission draws on data gathered via our **LivedX Consultation Series**⁹⁴, a component of CYDA's Our Voices Our Visions: Youth Advocacy project 2021. Focus groups were co-designed and delivered with the assistance of young people with disability seeking the insights and experiences of children and young people.
- Data is also drawn from three surveys conducted by CYDA in 2022 – 2023 to understand the education related experiences of children and young people with disability and their families. Across the three surveys, 561 responses were from family members or caregivers of a child or young person with disability and 231 responses were from young people with disability.⁹⁵
- This submission also draws on the voices of children and young people as gathered during our work on the Independent NDIS Review Report and recommendations. The qualitative data from work on the NDIS give insights as to how children and young people face and overcome barriers to funding the everyday supports and services needed.⁹⁶

⁹³ CYDA's DRC submissions including the submission to the Australian Government on the Response to the Disability Royal Commission available at <https://cyda.org.au/category/submissions/disability-royal-commission/>

⁹⁴ CYDA's LivedX papers and videos available at <https://cyda.org.au/advocacy/youth-led-advocacy/livedx/>

⁹⁵ [Disappointment and discrimination: CYDA's surveys of the learning experiences of children and young people with disability in 2022 and 2023](#)

⁹⁶ CYDA's NDIS submissions available at <https://cyda.org.au/category/submissions/ndis/>

CYDA supports the following positions in conjunction with this submission

- [Starting together, staying together](#): CYDA's position statement on ensuring inclusive education and phasing out segregated education, December 2023.
- Disability sector's [Position Paper](#) on Segregation In 2020, CYDA and other disability rights and advocacy organisations endorsed a position paper¹ titled 'Segregation of people with disability is discrimination and must end', calling for action toward the goal of ending the segregation of people with disability in schools, housing, and workplaces.
- The Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education's ['Driving change: A roadmap for achieving inclusive education in Australia'](#) .

CYDA's survey work and reports

- 2024 NDIS Service Provider Registration Survey - results included in this [report](#)
- 2024 Independent NDIS Review feedback survey – families [link](#)
- 2024 Independent NDIS Review feedback survey – young people [link](#)
- 2023 #UnfinishedBusiness Your voice on the Disability Royal Commission [link](#)
- 2023 NDIS survey on 8% annual growth target - results included in this [report](#)
- 2022 Early Childhood Education & Care Survey - results included in this [report](#)
- 2022 School Education Survey – for families - results included in this [report](#)
- 2022 National Youth Education Survey - results included in this [report](#)
- 2022 The impact of ending mandatory self-isolation periods COVID-19 - results included in this [report](#)
- 2021 COVID 19 Vaccination Experiences Survey - results included in this [report](#)
- 2021 NDIS Experiences - Independent Assessments Survey - results included in this [report](#)
- 2020 Experiences of children and young people with disability during COVID-19 - results included in this [report](#)

CYDA's work on rights, recognition and attitudes

- [Submission](#) to the consultation Draft National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy
- CYDA's [2024-25 Pre-Budget Submission](#): Charting an Inclusive Path
- CYDA's [2021-22 Pre-Budget submission](#): Drive inclusion and equity for children and young people with disability

- [Submission](#) to the Australian Government on the Response to the Disability Royal Commission
- [Response](#) to the Disability Royal Commission Rights and Attitudes issues paper
- [Submission](#) into the Inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension

CYDA's work on early childhood

- [Report](#): Taking the first step in an inclusive life Experiences of Australian early childhood education and care
- Productivity Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care [submission](#)
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020, [CYDA Submission](#)
- Australian Government's Early Years Strategy Discussion Paper [response](#)
- Education Department's National vision for early childhood education and care [submission](#)
- Senate Select Committee on Autism inquiry, [CYDA Submission](#)

CYDA's work on education

- [Submission](#) to the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System
- Submission to the Disability Royal Commission, Education of children and young people with disability, [Submission 1](#)
- Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, education in remote and complex environments, [Submission 1](#) and [Submission 2](#)
- 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005, [CYDA Submission](#)
- Disability Royal Commission - [Response](#) to Restrictive Practices issues paper
- [Submission](#) to the Senate Inquiry into the national trend of school refusal
- [Submission](#) to the Senate Inquiry on work and care
- [Submission](#) to the Disability Royal Commission: Targeted Engagement with young people with disability.

CYDA's work on poverty, employment and financial security

- [Response](#) to the Senate Inquiry into: The extent and nature of poverty in Australia
- 'What young people said' [Policy paper](#) - Financial security and employment
- [Submission](#) to the Senate Select Committee on Job Security Young people with disability and job insecurity
- [Submission](#) to the consultation of the New Disability Employment Support Model

CYDA's work housing, rental crisis

- [Submission](#) to the National Housing and Homelessness Plan
- [Response](#) to the inquiry into the worsening rental crisis

Children and Young People with Disability Australia

Suite 8, 134 Cambridge Street Collingwood VIC 3066

PO Box 172, Clifton Hill VIC 3068

Phone 03 9417 1025 or

1800 222 660 (regional or interstate)

Email info@cyda.org.au

ABN 42 140 529 273

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CydaAu

Twitter: @CydaAu

Instagram: cydaaus

www.cyda.org.au