CYDA commentary
Australian Disability Strategy 2024 Update

**CYDA welcomes the 2024 Update of the Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031, released on Wednesday 29 January, 2025.**

CYDA is pleased to see our overarching recommendations acknowledged in changes such as ensuring diverse people with disability can better participate and engage with the ADS through developing a Community Engagement Plan, more accessible information about the ADS, an increased focus on intersectionality and diversity, and the introduction of further accountability measures coordinated between governments including three new Targeted Action Plans and an Associated Plan for accessible information and communication.

However, CYDA notes that:

* There are no specific provisions for meaningful engagement with children and young people with disability in the new Community Engagement Plan, apart from considering young people in the membership of the Strategy Advisory Council.
* There is no detail given on how information provision will be tailored to the needs and preferences of children and young people with disability.
* There is no mention of how existing government policies, programs, and services relating to children and young people will responsively incorporate the updated ADS.

CYDA is heartened to see some of our recommendations incorporated for children and young people with disability, with CYDA mentioned five times in the updated ADS. These relate to building capability in the delivery of inclusive education for students with disability, ensuring children with disability can access and participate in high-quality early childhood education and care, increasing employment of young people with disability, and promoting safety through preventing abuse of children and young people with disability.

The updated ADS acknowledges the importance of children and young people with disability in the Outcome Areas of Employment and Financial Security; Safety, Rights and Justice; and Education and Learning.

These outline the need to increase employment of young people with disability and support transitions from education to employment, promote gender equality and youth rights in the criminal justice system, prevent violence against women and children, and build capability in inclusive education while ensuring high-quality early childhood education and care.

Yet children and young people with disability are conspicuously absent from the Outcome Areas of Inclusive Homes and Communities, Personal and Community Support including NDIS and informal supports, Health and Wellbeing, and Community Attitudes.

These omissions are deeply troubling and disappointing, given that these areas are foundational to ensuring better outcomes, effectively addressing inequities and discrimination, and amplifying the voices of children and young people with disability.

CYDA is particularly concerned that children and young people with disability are not mentioned in outcomes related to NDIS supports, especially given [they make up 61% of NDIS participants.](https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/publications/quarterly-reports)

Children and young people with disability face significant societal barriers, including discrimination, inadequate mental health support, and a lack of accessible and secure housing. These systemic failures contribute to higher rates of [poor mental health, self-harm](https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/suicide-self-harm-monitoring-data), and [homelessness](https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/brief/what-2021-census-data-told-us-about-homelessness). It is vital they receive targeted and sustained support in these areas to mitigate these barriers.

CYDA looks forward to the Independent Evaluation of the updated ADS later in 2025. We hope this will provide an opportunity to address these gaps and ensure the updated ADS gives the support needed to enable children and young people with disability to thrive and reach their full potential.

CYDA’s ongoing advocacy for greater inclusion and support of children and young people with disability in the ADS can be found in our previous submissions to [the ADS Review](https://cyda.org.au/cydas-submission-to-the-australian-disability-strategy-review/), [the National Disability Strategy beyond 2020](https://cyda.org.au/national-disability-strategy-beyond-2020/), and [the Disability Royal Commission](https://cyda.org.au/submission-to-the-disability-royal-commission-cydas-summary-of-recommendations-2019-2022/).