

Key statistics



In NSW, there are 1.35 million people with disability, or 17% of the population.¹



Of people with disability aged 0 to 64 in NSW, the percentage by disability type is:

- Sensory and speech –22.9%
 - Intellectual –20.9%
 - Physical –57.8%
 - Psychosocial –31.3%.³
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In 2018, Indigenous Australians were 1.9 times as likely to have disability as non-Indigenous Australians nationally.²



Close to 12% of adults aged 18 to 64 in NSW have disability.³



Nearly half of all adults over 64 in NSW have disability.³



14% (192,668) of people with disability in NSW are supported by the NDIS.⁴



Approximately 8% of children aged under 18 in NSW have disability.³

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018

² Australian Government, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Indigenous Australians Agency website - <https://www.indigenoushpf.gov.au/measures/1-14-disability>

³ Disability Royal Commission Final Report 2023 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018)

⁴ NDIS NSW Quarterly Performance Dashboard - As at 31 December 2023

What are we doing?

This report provides an overview of the progress made during the second year of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 and Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2021-2025.

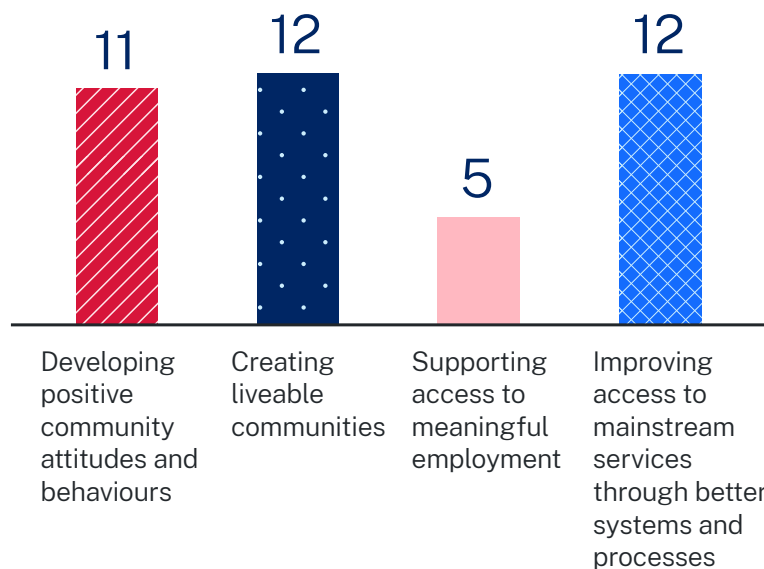
The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021-2025 (the Plan) provides a whole of government strategy, aligned to the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (the Act). The Plan has four focus areas that set out how the NSW Government will improve the lives of people with disability:

1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
2. Creating liveable communities
3. Supporting access to meaningful employment
4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

Under the focus areas, there are 40 actions being delivered by NSW government agencies. Thirty-eight actions are being led by individual agencies. Two actions are being delivered by all agencies.

Public authorities (NSW government departments, local councils and some other agencies) also have individual Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs). The progress of these DIAPs is reported separately.

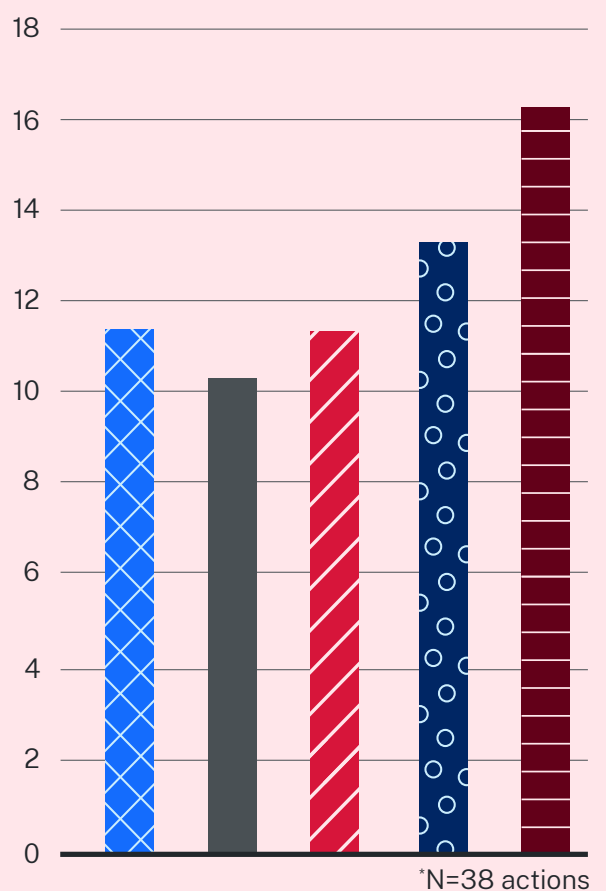
Number of actions in each focus area




Priority populations

The Act recognises that some people with disability experience multiple disadvantage and/or additional barriers to accessing services and supports. Agencies were asked if their action had specific mechanisms for including any of the priority populations. As the chart below illustrates, each priority population is being targeted by at least some actions.

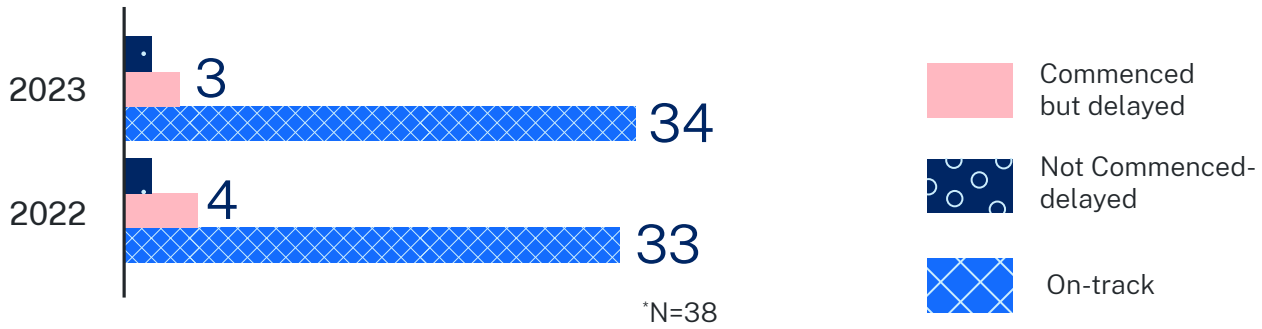
Priority population inclusion*



-  Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTIQ+) people with disability
-  Children and young people with disability
-  Women with disability
-  People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
-  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

What have we achieved so far?

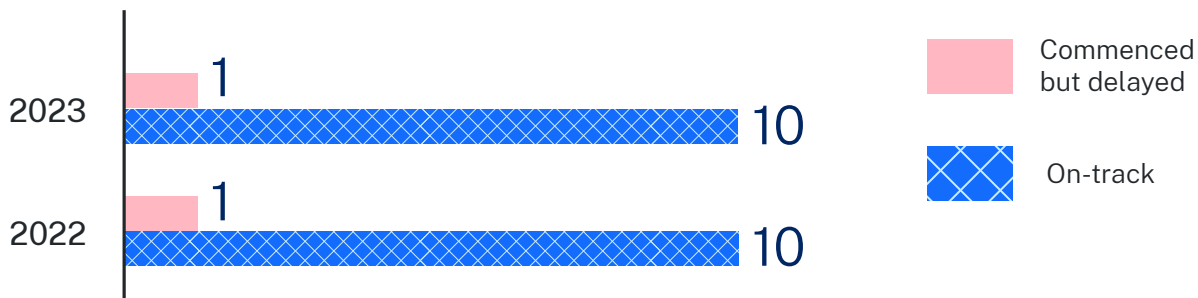
Status of actions* in 2022, 2023



In 2022-2023, 34 of the 38 actions were on-track with three commenced but delayed. One of the actions that was delayed in 2021-2022 is now on-track.

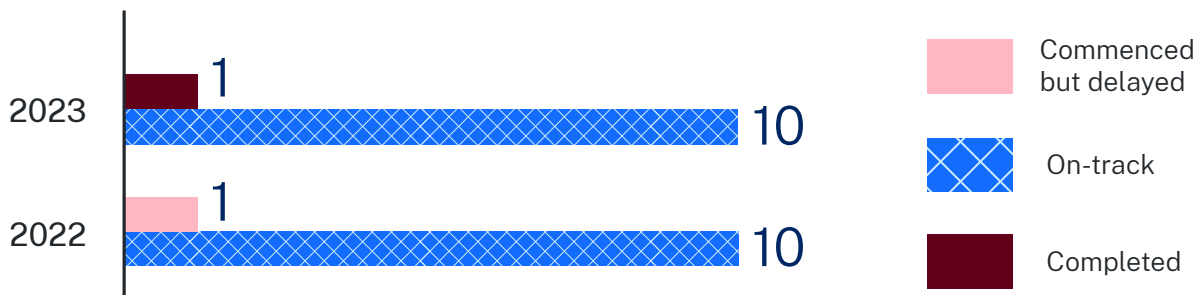
Status of the actions delivered by all 11 agencies

! ACTION: Ensure departmental buildings, facilities and services are accessible and inclusive for all people.



10 of the 11 agencies were on-track in 2022-2023. One agency has commenced the action but it is delayed.

! ACTION: Agencies to identify and remove barriers caused by our systems and processes to provide accessibility to employees and community.



10 of the 11 agencies were on-track in 2022-2023. One agency has completed this action.

How we are improving outcomes for people with disability in NSW

Below are some highlights of the progress made during 2022-2023 under each of the four focus areas.





1. Developing positive community attitudes and behaviours

! ACTION: Increase the visibility of Companion Card in the community.

The NSW Companion Card program is for people with significant and permanent disability who need a high level of care in the community. The Companion Card allows a cardholder's support person free entry into participating venues and events.

To increase awareness and make accessing the NSW Companion Card easier, new communication materials, a website and application form were developed in 2022-2023.

During this period, over 5,000 applications for a card were received, an increase of over 50 per cent on the previous year.



5,000

applications for a NSW Companion Card were received during 2022-2023.

! ACTION: Youth Justice, part of the Department of Communities and Justice, will provide staff with a disability resource tool kit, developed using internal strategic cultural expertise and a framework to enhance cultural understanding and responsiveness in service delivery.

The disability resource tool kit has been created and released for use via an online platform for all staff to access. The tool kit includes resources and guides such as general disability tools, life skills resources, NDIS resources and resources about supporting young people ineligible for the NDIS. It also includes disability specific tools and resources about behavioural disorders, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and psychosocial disability, plus communication tools.

! ACTION: Implementation of NSW Education Disability Strategy.

Approximately 1 in 5 (183,000) students in NSW public schools have disability. Of these, more than 144,000 receive adjustments to support their learning.

At the start of Term 4, 2022 the Inclusive Education for students with disability policy became operational. The policy clarifies roles and responsibilities for delivering inclusive education. It also outlines the rights of students with disability and their parents and carers.

To further support inclusive practice across NSW, five Inclusive Education Coordinators were employed in 2022.



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students in NSW public schools have disability.

! ACTION: Support the implementation of the NSW Government's response to the recommendations arising from the final report delivered by the Disability Royal Commission.

During 2022-2023, the NSW Government actively engaged with the Disability Royal Commission and prepared for the release of Commission's final report.

Led by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), the Government participated in Disability Royal Commission hearings, and responded to counsel assisting submissions and policy roundtables. In December 2022, the NSW Government provided a whole of government submission to the Disability Royal Commission.

(The Disability Royal Commission's final report was published in September 2023.)

! ACTION: Increase public awareness of disability inclusion at a local level.

Under the the Act, the Disability Council NSW (the Council) is responsible for providing the NSW Minister for Disability Inclusion with advice on matters that affect people with disability in NSW, their families and carers.

The Council also monitors the implementation of NSW government policy, promotes the inclusion of people with disability and advises public authorities on the content and implementation of their Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs).

In 2022-23, the Council presented at DCJ-led forums tailored for local councils and government departments, *Best practice in disability inclusion action planning*. The forums discussed the role of DIAPs and public authorities' obligations under the Act.

The Council also actively participated in a range of key government and community-led committees and forums, ad hoc consultations and government inquiries.

! ACTION: Develop and promote a culture of inclusion and customer service among Transport for NSW staff and our transport delivery partners and increase opportunities for feedback from, and ongoing engagement with, people with disability and carers.

1,396 Transport for NSW staff completed the NSW Public Service Commission's Disability Awareness Training in 2022-2023.

Transport for NSW has also set up customer partnership teams to engage with members of the community (including people with disability) at a localised level.

Transport for NSW hosted an International Day of People with Disabilities event to promote awareness of the importance of disability inclusion. 509 people attended, with an overall satisfaction rating of 93%.

! ACTION: Improve transport through consultation.

The Accessible Transport Advisory Committee (ATAC) held regular forums throughout the year, involving over 20 peak disability and ageing organisations. The forums provided an opportunity for various Transport for NSW projects and policy initiatives to engage with the community and improve accessibility in a meaningful way.

In August 2022, representatives from both the ATAC and Transport for NSW's Enabled Network participated in a site visit at Central Station to provide feedback on the Sydney Terminal Building Revitalisation project in relation to accessibility and inclusive design. Enabled is a group of employees with either lived experience of disability, carers of people with disability, or allies of those with disability.

In late 2022, Transport for NSW consulted extensively with people with disability, their families and carers as well as a range of organisations representing the interests of people with disability about priorities for inclusion in the agency's next DIAP (expected to be released in early 2024). Feedback was received from over 600 people.



1,396

Transport for NSW staff completed the NSW Public Service Commission's Disability Awareness Training



2. Creating liveable communities

AIM: To increase participation of people with disability in all aspects of community life, through targeted approaches to address barriers in housing, learning, transport, health, social and cultural engagement and wellbeing.

! ACTION: Helping local councils to assist their communities to better prevent and respond to abuse.

The NSW Ageing and Disability Commission (ADC) promotes the rights of older people and adults with disability to live free from abuse in their family, home and community.

During 2022-2023, the ADC participated in 61 community engagement and training events across NSW to connect with community members and raise awareness of the ADC and its functions. This is a 93% increase compared to 2021-2022.

The number of resources distributed during the reporting period increased by 87%. The resources are designed to educate the community and adults with disability about their right to live free from abuse.

Additionally, 66 updated local community profiles were released. The profiles include data on reports to the ADC about adults with disability and older people. They are designed to inform local government engagement strategies to raise awareness of, and improve responses to, abuse of adults with disability and older people. This information has been used to inform locations for new abuse prevention collaboratives.

Abuse prevention collaboratives harness the local knowledge and expertise of community services to increase referral and reporting pathways between organisations, build capacity of organisations to respond to and raise awareness of abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people or adults with disability. In 2022-2023, the ADC supported 18 collaboratives.

The ADC continued to promote the Ending Abuse through Simple Interventions program to support local councils to drive continued and sustainable actions to prevent and protect adults with disability and older people from abuse, neglect and exploitation in their local area.

! ACTION: Creating liveable communities: NSW will continue oversight and delivery of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) and Community Living Supports (CLS) programs.

In 2022-2023, HASI and CLS supported more than 4,100 people across NSW with severe mental illness to live and participate in the community. Of these, 1,859 were new consumers.

In November 2022, a three-year longitudinal evaluation of HASI and CLS was published. Results show that:

- the programs improved wellbeing, helped people better manage their mental health, enhanced aspects of consumers' physical health, and increased opportunities for social inclusion
- consumer contact with community mental health services decreased by 10% in the first year in HASI-CLS and was 63.7% less if they remained in the programs for more than one year
- hospital admissions decreased by 74% following program entry, and the average length of stay decreased by 74.8% over two years
- there is a net cost saving per person of about \$86,000 over 5 years. Over 90% of the cost offsets were for reduced inpatient hospital admissions and lower lengths of stay.



HASI and CLS supported more than

4,100 people across NSW with severe mental illness to live and participate in the community.

📌 ACTION: Creating liveable communities: Progressively increase the availability and accessibility of public and private transport options for people with disability, including people living in regional and rural areas.

The Transport Access Program continued to provide funding to deliver accessible, modern, secure and integrated transport infrastructure. During 2022-2023, upgrades to 16 railway stations were completed; construction either started or continued at a further 22 railway stations and two ferry wharves; and planning commenced or continued for an additional four ferry wharves.

The Bus Signage Rollout Program installed a further 5,611 bus stop signs across NSW, featuring raised braille and tactile elements to assist people who are blind or have low vision. Approximately 94% of the new bus stop signs installed at locations across NSW for regular route services now have braille and tactile signage.



📌 ACTION: Increase opportunities of community participation for people with disability. Ensuring all NSW government supported events are accessible and inclusive across cognitive, sensory and physical disability.

In 2022-2023 the updated Toolkit for accessible and inclusive events was published. The Toolkit aims to assist event organisers in creating an event that is accessible to all members of the community.

For Australia Day 2023, the accessibility and inclusion elements included seven safe and inclusive accessibility viewing areas for over 350 guests; two Quiet Rooms providing a safe space for guests who are neurodiverse; a Tactile Tour for guests who are blind or who have low vision; Tactile Vests allowed people who are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind to feel music; and Auslan-English interpreters at key events.

📌 ACTION: Ensure departmental buildings, facilities and services are accessible and inclusive for all people. (Delivered by all agencies).

The **Department of Communities and Justice's** central office, located at 6 Parramatta Square (6PSQ), now incorporates new technology as part of the accessibility toolkit.

BindiMaps, a mobile app that locates users precisely in indoor spaces, is being piloted. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are now available digitally to support requirements for evacuation.

Across DCJ Central Offices there are now 38 hearing loops and two infrared hearing augmentation devices installed.

In 2022, the **Department of Education** delivered \$67 million in projects to improve access to school facilities including installing lifts, ramps, accessible toilets, high-visibility markings and bollards.

In the **Department of Planning and Environment***, progress is being achieved in the development of the Accessible Office Design Self-Assessment Tool.

Architects Woods Bagot were engaged to test and provide feedback on the Self-Assessment Tool User Acceptance Testing on 6PSQ and Orange Workplace Hubs post design and build.

Workshops were held to gather feedback to review and refine the Tool in preparation for the development of the digital application.

In 2022-2023, the Accessible Office Design webpage received a total of 1,900 unique visits.

(* From 1 January 2024, the Department of Planning and Environment split into two departments: Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.)

In **Transport for NSW**, a workplace assessment audit was completed in 2021-2022 period on five key Transport for NSW offices by the Centre for Inclusive Design. The overall findings highlighted that Transport for NSW has achieved great advances in inclusivity. A continued focus on improvements will support Transport for NSW's ongoing efforts of being a preferred and inclusive employer.

📌 ACTION: Increase opportunities for community participation for people with disability

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring all NSW government supported events are accessible and inclusive of people with disability.

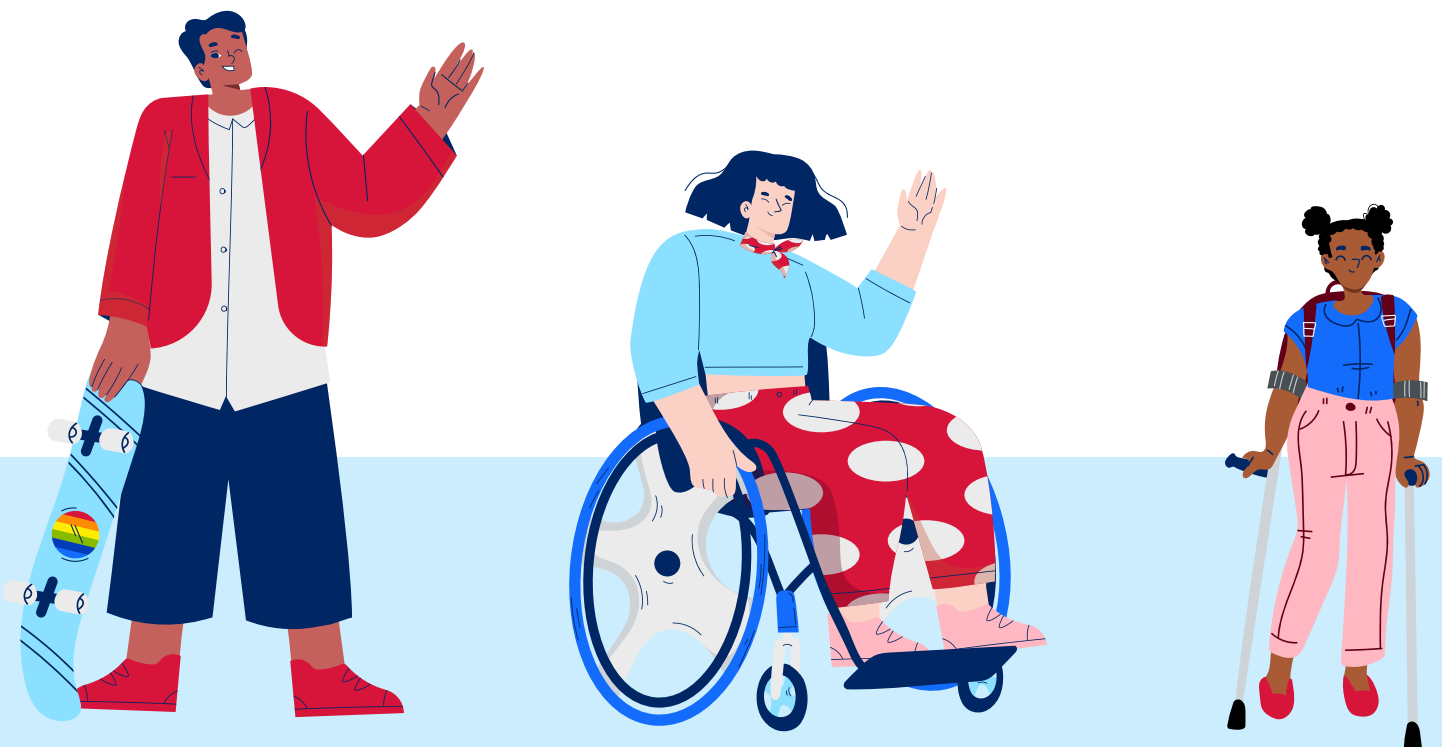
Accessibility and inclusion criteria have been built into regional funding programs including the Regional Tourist Activation Fund, Stronger Country Community Fund and the Regional Event Activation Fund. All programs provide funding to support non-fixed assets that enhance accessibility and inclusion outcomes.

📌 ACTION: Empowering people with disability to reach their full potential in life as members of inclusive communities.

DCJ coordinated a whole-of-government submission to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review, reiterating its commitment to ensuring that the NDIS is future-focused, sustainable, and is actively contributing to the work stemming from the current NDIS Review.

The NDIS Review looked at the design, operations and sustainability of the NDIS. It also examined ways to make the market and workforce more responsive, supportive and sustainable. (The NDIS Review's Final Report was published in December 2023.)

In 2022-2023, there were almost 22,000 additional participants with approved NDIS plans in NSW.





3. Supporting access to meaningful employment

AIM: To increase the number of people with disability in meaningful employment, thereby enabling people with disability to plan for their future, exercise choice and control, and increase their economic security.

! ACTION: NSW Health Recruitment policies promote disability inclusion.

The 2023 NSW Health People Matter Employee Survey showed an increase in the number people identifying as having disability from 4.9% in 2022 to 5.8% in 2023. A further 4.8% indicated that they preferred not to disclose their disability status.

! ACTION: NSW government fosters an inclusive workplace culture that increases the number of government roles held by people with disability.

Ernst and Young was engaged to identify opportunities to promote the achievement of the target that 5.6% of all government sector roles are held by people with disability by 2025. The Review was completed in July 2022.

Significant progress has been made on the Review's recommendations, including sector-wide adoption of a consistent definition of disability based on the social model of disability, and guidance to embed the new definition.

To support cross-agency collaboration, a three-tiered governance structure was put in place to provide sector-wide visibility. The governance structure was also designed to empower people with disability in the design and implementation of recommendations and strengthen senior executive accountability as workstreams move into the implementation phase:

- Steering Committee, comprising senior executives and senior employees with disability, to provide strategic direction and oversight
- Cross-portfolio Delivery Group responsible for developing the recommendation response and ensuring solutions are informed by employees with disability and fit for purpose for the sector as a whole
- Expert Reference Group, used as a key feedback mechanism to assist teams during implementation and ensure lived experience is incorporated into development of solutions. It includes representation of diverse employees with disability, work experience and grades, with at least one person with disability from each portfolio.

! ACTION: Increasing employment of people with disability in the Ageing and Disability Commission.

In 2022-2023, the ADC increased employment of people with disability in ongoing roles from 3.3% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2022-23.

People with disability were appointed to the Official Community Visitors Scheme and the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board.





4. Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes

AIM: To ensure that people with disability can make informed choices about available services and to easily and efficiently access mainstream government services and other opportunities in the community.

📌 ACTION: More Jobs More Care (MJMC).

MJMC was developed by the NSW Government to attract and retain new care sector workers (Phase One). It aimed to increase NDIS participant plan utilisation for people with psychosocial disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Phase Two).

Phase One concluded in late 2022 and it was reported as at May 2023 that over 3,000 participants had commenced the program, with over 1,500 completing training included as part of Phase One. This led to over 1,700 employment outcomes for program participants, including approximately 310 traineeships.

Yilabara Solutions were contracted to deliver Phase Two (Western NSW) which commenced in June 2022.



Over
3,000
people commenced the More Jobs More Care program.

📌 ACTION: Strengthening domestic and family violence supports for people with disability.

As part of NSW Health's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the NSW Health Sexual Assault Services and New Street Services Access Strategy for People with Disability 2021-2025 is being implemented.

The Strategy is focused on building workforce capacity to support increased service accessibility and appropriate clinical practice in NSW Health sexual assault services and New Street services.

In 2022, a time-limited statewide, multiagency disability and sexual violence standards training committee was established to guide implementation of the Strategy. They have co-drafted accessible resources for the sexual assault workforce to use when working with people with disability to improve service accessibility.

📌 ACTION: Providing patient centred models of care.

NSW Health has adopted the Australian Charter of Health Care Rights. Accessible versions have been made available including Easy English, large print, audio and Auslan versions.

Education events continue to be run, highlighting the importance of patient centred care for people with disability. More than 150 attended each of the sessions, with overwhelmingly positive feedback.

📌 ACTION: The ADC implementing effective referral arrangements for complaints about mainstream and specialist services.

The ADC streamlined processes with relevant complaint-handling and oversight bodies to make it as easy as possible for complaints to be made by people with disability.

During 2022-2023, a Memorandum of Understanding and referral arrangements with NSW Health (including affiliated bodies) was put in place. ADC also introduced a direct referral option on its Helpline system for callers to key complaints bodies (including the Health Care Complaints Commission, NDIS Commission, and Aged Care Commission) to make it easier for them to connect to the right agency.

In 2022-2023, the ADC referred:

- 116 complaints to the Aged Care Commission (111 accepted)
- 114 complaints to the NDIS Commission (all accepted)
- 33 complaints to the HCCC (28 accepted)
- 219 matters to NSW Police (216 accepted).

The ADC also made 165 other referrals, including to mainstream agencies and other complaint-handling/oversight bodies (156 accepted).

! ACTION: Within NSW Government, improve compliance with level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guide (WCAG) current standard.

Ninety-five per cent of Australians use online government services. In 2022, Accessibility NSW (part of the Department of Customer Service) developed the Accessibility and Inclusivity Toolkit to help public servants responsible for digital product delivery adhere to and test for compliance with current Web Content Accessibility Guide (WCAG) standard.

By June 2023, the Toolkit had been viewed approximately 8,000 times. Eighty services/products were reviewed, with assistance provided to fix errors.



! ACTION: Better processes for information and feedback from the disability community: DCJ will convene the NSW Stakeholder Disability Forum.

Two NSW Disability Stakeholder Forums were hosted by DCJ. The forum brings together key stakeholders in the NSW disability sector in NSW to share information and raise the issues of disability policy impacting on inclusion and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

A forum was held on Emergency Preparedness. Over 55 participants discussed the opportunities to better link people with disability, the sector and advocates with resources to prepare for the next critical event such as a flood, fire, pandemic, drought or medical emergency.

! ACTION: Agencies to identify and remove barriers caused by our systems and processes to provide accessibility to employees and community. (Delivered by all agencies)

The **Department of Communities and Justice** continued to promote and grow its Accessibility Hub and Accessible Digital Communications eLearning modules. These initiatives are designed to improve the capabilities of employees by providing tools and resources that support digital accessibility and inclusion.

The DCJ Accessibility Community of Practice was established in December 2022 so that staff can share skills, collaborate, generate ideas, solve problems and support each other to deliver accessible communications. 833 staff attended during 2022-2023.

In May 2023, DCJ launched an Easy Read Hub on its website. The Hub brings together all of DCJ's Easy Read materials in one place, providing accessible information for people not familiar with English or who have low literacy or learning disability.

During 2022-2023, highlights include:

- 4 online learning modules delivered to 2,544 staff to support a shift in the behavioural attitude from 'need to do' to 'it's the right thing to do'
- 2,313 visits to the Accessibility Hub
- 6 focus groups with people with intellectual disability to develop an Easy Read framework – a guidance tool for business areas to create Easy Read materials
- Face-to-face training for 30 staff to develop Easy Read materials
- 194 visits to the Easy Read Hub.

The **Department of Premier and Cabinet*** continued its partnership with Jigsaw, a social enterprise that trains and transitions people with disability into employment. The partnership enables Jigsaw to work alongside the People, Culture and Talent branch to support the Department's efforts to increase disability employment and to build a disability confident workforce.

Throughout 2022-2023, the Department employed a dedicated Disability Advocate to help DPC identify and remove barriers to employment for people with disability and support DPC to become a disability confident recruiter.

Two people with disability were placed into targeted roles within the department and provided with wrap-around supports.

Twelve staff attended Disability Confident Recruiter training delivered by the Australian Network on Disability and a further 65 employees attended Disability Awareness information sessions held by the Disability Advocate.

(* From 1 July 2023, the Department of Premier and Cabinet split into the Premier's Department and The Cabinet Office.)

During 2022-2023, the **Public Service Commission** released an eLearning course to help people managers embed a culture of disability inclusion in workplaces. The course aims to assist managers to develop inclusive management practices so they can support employees with disability throughout the employment life cycle.

PSC has hosted regular Inclusion Forums to connect sector diversity and inclusion practitioners, with a regular focus on disability employment.



Through a six month review and independent audit process across 12 offices, the **Department of Regional NSW** (DRNSW) identified and addressed unintended physical and technological barriers to accessibility. As part of this work, the Department's websites and intranet were reviewed against Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and improvements made to accessibility.

Over 100 hiring managers and recruiters participated in Disability Confident Recruiter (DCR) training.

The DRNSW Disability Recruitment Strategy for 2022-2023 was implemented. Targeted Talent Pools were established leading to the appointment of 31 people with disability during 2022-2023. During this period, the percentage of employees with disability rose from 2% to 3.2%.

During 2022-2023, **Treasury** received Disability Confident Recruiter accreditation. This has led to Treasury becoming more aware of ways in which to accommodate people with disability and increasing visibility internally and externally for people with disability to choose Treasury as an employer of choice.

During 2022-2023, the **Department of Planning and Environment** continued social procurement from disability enterprises including the procurement of services from 22 recognised disability enterprises, with a total spend of \$3,291,114.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service published the [Accessible Parks Policy](#), a framework for improving access to national parks by considering accessibility in the planning and management of national parks.

The Centre for Inclusive Design was commissioned to identify ways of improving disability inclusion across housing, parks, public places, planning, procurement and customer service. The Department is reviewing the recommendations which will inform the next Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2024-2028).

A Workplace Adjustment Guideline has been developed, containing best-practice support for employees with disability, injury, illness, and other support requirements. During 2022-2023, 72 Workplace Adjustment Passports were approved, with 26% disability related.

Sydney Trains, of **Transport for NSW**, is trialling an application that enables customers who are deaf or hard of hearing to receive equivalent visual information when manual announcements are made by station staff. The visual announcements appear as text on platform screen indicators at stations.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Initiative was launched across the NSW Rail network in 2022. People can choose to wear a Sunflower lanyard, which discreetly indicates to staff and others that they may need additional time, support or understanding. 15,200 Sunflower Lanyards were issued.

Over 4,000 customer service employees (85%) have completed Hidden Disabilities awareness training.



For further information

For further information about disability inclusion, please visit the [Department of Communities and Justice website](#).

