

National Disability Strategy

Communications approach

January 2017

Purpose

The aim of the communications approach is to raise awareness of the intent, vision and outcomes areas of the *National Disability Strategy 2010-2020* (the Strategy) amongst all Australians. This includes mainstream organisations, the broader community, businesses, people with disability, their families and carers and government agencies.

The secondary aim of the communications approach is to increase awareness of the Strategy itself consistent with the broader governmental reinvigoration agenda.

Background

The vision of the Strategy is for '*an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens*'. The Strategy is based on the belief that all Australians should have fair and equitable access to the full range of mainstream programs and services available: whether it is employment, healthcare, education, transport, housing or public facilities and infrastructure.

The Strategy's six outcome areas were developed in consultation with people with disability and reflect the principles of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* to which Australia is a signatory. The Strategy was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2011 and represents a shared national approach to improving the lives of Australians with disability, their families and carers.

At its 2 September 2016 meeting, the Disability Reform Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Strategy and agreed to reinvigorate all governments' efforts to drive progress under the Strategy. Successful implementation of the Strategy is very much reliant on influencing mainstream agencies to consider the needs of people with disability when developing services and support. This means that, as the Strategy progresses, a stronger commitment is needed if we are to see a significant improvement in the responsiveness of the mainstream support system to the needs of people with disability.

Communication objectives

- Drive communication activities to raise awareness of the intent, vision and outcome areas of the Strategy by targeting a range of stakeholders, including mainstream organisations, the broader community, businesses, people with disability, their families and carers, and government agencies.

- Positively influence, attitudinal and behavioural change towards people with disability across the broader community, mainstream organisations and support systems, including the promotion of best practice and inclusion.
- Focus on the abilities of people with disability and the benefits this can bring to the Australian community and economy.
- Raise awareness of the rights of people with disability under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
- Consistent with the broader governmental reinvigoration agenda and, where appropriate, raise awareness of the Strategy itself amongst mainstream organisations, the broader community, people with disability and government agencies.

A whole-of-government commitment – implementation of communications approach

This communications approach demonstrates a whole-of-government commitment to raising awareness of the intent, vision and outcome areas of the Strategy.

States and territories are vital partners to the communications approach. The Communications Approach will build on, rather than replace, existing communications already underway in states and territories to raise awareness of the Strategy's outcome areas (for example, as identified in individual disability action plans).

To ensure the success of the communications approach it will be important that National Disability Strategy State and Territory Working Group members develop mechanisms for jurisdictional participation in a collaborative communications approach, engaging external stakeholders as appropriate.

Further information about ways in which states and territories may do this has been included under the heading 'Communications activities' below.

Target audiences

Primary

Primary target audiences include:

- the broader Australian community;
- mainstream organisations; and
- businesses.

Secondary

The secondary audience includes:

- people with disability, their families and carers; and
- Commonwealth, state territory and local governments.

Influencers

- disability service providers/sector;
- peak organisations;

- National Disability Insurance Agency (including Local Area Coordinators);
- media;
- online and social media commentators;
- MPs and Senators;
- state and territory governments;
- local governments; and
- state, territory and national advisory groups.

Stakeholders

- people with disability, their families and carers;
- Australian Government: Prime Minister, Australian Government Ministers, Senators and Members of Parliament'
- state and territory government disability ministers;
- Local Government Associations in all states and territories;
- Australian Local Government Association;
- Australian Government agencies;
- peak disability organisations, including state, territory and national advisory groups;
- disability service providers;
- businesses;]
- media, including online and social media commentators;
- mainstream organisations and service providers; and
- the broader Australian Community.

The way forward—Key messages

Detailed key messages will be developed in collaboration with the National Disability Strategy State and Territory Working Group. While messaging will be tailored to specific audiences, there will also be some key overarching messages targeted to all audiences. This will include messages which support the development of positive attitudes and behaviour towards people with disability.

Strategy outcomes

Messaging link to the six key 'outcomes' of the Strategy, as listed below:

1. Inclusive and accessible communities

Outcome: People with disability live in accessible and well-designed communities with opportunity for full inclusion in social, economic, sporting and cultural life.

2. Rights protection, justice and legislation

Outcome: People with disability have their rights promoted, upheld and protected.

3. Economic security

Outcome: People with disability, their families and carers have economic security, enabling them to plan for the future and exercise choice and control over their lives.

4. Personal and community support

Outcome: People with disability, their families and carers have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and actively engage in their communities.

5. Learning and skills

Outcome: People with disability achieve their full potential through their participation in an inclusive high quality education system that is responsive to their needs. People with disability have opportunities to continue learning throughout their lives.

6. Health and wellbeing

Outcome: People with disability attain highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives.

Good news stories

Where possible, key messages will be supported by good news stories. Good news stories, featuring real stories of people with disability, would demonstrate how the vision and intent of the Strategy is being realised and, the subsequent positive impact for people with disability, their families and carers. Where possible, good news stories should include photos or images, to be used on social media platforms and when pitching the story to publications and media. Good news stories should include links to further information and resources.

Communication activities

Existing resources and communication channels will be used, and new resources developed, which will aim to reach the broad target audience.

In developing the communication activities, a number of factors were considered, including resources, the effectiveness of communication options and the capacity of jurisdictions to participate, as joint partners, in the communication approach.

Possible communication activities are to be considered further, but could include:

- targeting of a variety of newsletters (such as e-newsletters) across a range of fields, showcasing personal stories of people with disability;
- an increased web presence, including links to disability-related national events;
- the use of existing social media channels to highlight the intent of the strategy;
- development of high level message kit resources including fact sheets, talking points, imagery and information about where to seek further assistance;
- if feasible, broadcasting social change promotional activities and real life stories of people with disability on television;
- training modules to promote mainstream inclusion principles;
- using well-known national/international events to increase awareness of the intent of the Strategy; and
- including messaging about the Strategy in speeches and talking points for Ministers, MPs and Senators.

Jurisdictions may assist by:

- providing detail on the implementation of the Strategy within their state or territory;
- leveraging media coverage by pitching editorials, proactively securing coverage in local media, and promoting the use of spokespeople;
- leveraging social media, to ensure both a proactive presence and proactive monitoring of discussions online;
- collecting personal/'real life' stories of people with disability, so that the voice of people with disability is heard;
- ensuring participation in disability awareness weeks/months (such as International Day of People with Disability) at the state, territory and local levels.

Opportunities for Ministers, MPs and Senators to promote the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of community life may be explored and developed. These could include at events, speeches or media opportunities.

Further Information

For further information regarding the Strategy's Communications Approach, please email nationaldisabilityst@dss.gov.au.