# Disability Action Plan 2010 – 2014

## Chief Executive’s Message

The development of the NDS Disability Action Plan represents NDS’s commitment to align all practices and processes with its mission of developing quality life opportunities for people with disability. This will be achieved through a systematic review and modification of current practices to improve accessibility and inclusion of people with disability within the organisation and the services it delivers.

Other stakeholders in our sector and beyond will look to NDS to demonstrate leadership in implementing an effective Disability Action Plan (DAP). More than most, we need to better understand the organisational barriers to the social and economic participation of people with disability, so that NDS can continue to be an effective advocate for quality services. Moreover, the most effective way to understand these issues is to learn from the development, implementation and refinement of our own DAP.

Our Strategic Directions will ensure the DAP is linked to our aims and purpose because matters related to disability access and inclusion do not operate in isolation, but rather permeate every aspect of NDS business.

By setting this example to our members and the community at large we look forward to the implementation of Disability Action Plans becoming widespread and the subsequent elimination of all remaining barriers to the social and economic participation of people with disability.

Ken Baker

Chief Executive

National Disability Services

## NDS Overview and Context

NDS has a national office in Canberra and offices in every State and Territory, enabling it to respond to members’ issues at either State/Territory or national level. The organisation as a whole is governed by a board which includes the elected chair from each State/Territory Division, as well as representatives elected directly by members. State Committees composed of elected representatives set strategic priorities for each State or Territory Division.

## Background

NDS is the national industry association for disability services, representing over 650 not-for-profit organisations. Collectively, NDS members operate several thousand services for Australians with all types of disability. NDS’s member organisations range in size from small support groups to large multi-purpose services and are located in every State and Territory across Australia.

## Purpose

NDS’s purpose is twofold;

* to increase the capacity of its members to operate efficient and effective services – and assist members to meet relevant industry and government standards – through the provision of information and advice, networking opportunities and access to corporate support;
* to influence governments at both state/territory and federal levels to provide a policy environment that is responsive to the needs of people with disability and their service providers.

## The Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

The purpose of the NDS Disability Action Plan is to outline the strategies and actions that NDS will undertake over the next four years to eliminate discrimination and improve access, inclusion and participation for people with disability within the organisation and the services it delivers to members.

Most people’s understanding of barriers facing people with disability is limited to the physical environment ( ie steps rather than a ramp ) these however, are diverse and often subtle and unintended.

NDS’s DAP addresses both the obvious and the more subtle barriers and aims to deliver a sustainable change throughout the organisational culture. NDS is confident that changes initiated through the DAP will permeate the organisation, delivering improvements for people with disability, staff as well as members.

In developing this Disability Action Plan, NDS addressed the following key outcome areas recommended by the Australian Human Rights Commission:

* Equitable access to premises
* Accessible information
* Equitable access to activities and services
* Equitable opportunities for participation
* Staff training advice and support
* Equitable employment practices, and
* Promotion of positive community attitudes and advocacy for people with a disability.

## Policy Context and Framework

There are a number of legislative requirements, regulations and policies that guide organisations in relation to matters of disability. Development of the Disability Action Plan ensures compliance with the relevant legislation and regulations and demonstrates NDS’s commitment to the protection of the rights of NDS stakeholders.

## National context

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of disability.

The objects of the Disability Discrimination Act are:

1. To eliminate as far as possible discrimination against person on the grounds of disability in the areas of work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and the provision of goods, facilities, services and land: existing laws; and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs;

and

1. To ensure as far as practicable that persons with a disability have the same rights to equality before law as the rest of the community;

and

1. To promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disability have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

The DDA recognises that people with disability have the same fundamental rights as other people and should have equal opportunity to participate in community life.

## Global context

Australia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. The Convention marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

## Guiding Principles of the Convention

The eight guiding principles underlying The Convention and each one of its specific articles are:

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one’s own choices and independence of persons
2. Non discrimination
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
5. Equality of opportunity
6. Accessibility
7. Equality between men and women
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

## Linking and Supporting: NDS Strategic Directions

Matters related to disability, access and inclusion do not operate in isolation; rather, they permeate every aspect of NDS’s business. The Disability Action Plan is therefore, linked to other organisational strategies and plans.

The Disability Action Plan was developed with careful consideration and alignment to the NDS Strategic Directions and Ends Policy. The Strategic Directions have been reviewed in 2010 with the integration of the Disability Action Plan integral to this process.

## NDS Disability Action Plan’s Key Priority Areas 2010-2014

1. Recruitment Process
2. Learning and Development
3. Accessible Infrastructure
4. Communication
5. Products and Services Purchasing and Delivery
6. Governance and Accountability

## NDS Disability Action Plan’s Key Priority Areas 2010-2014

### Recruitment Process

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS will commit to increasing employment opportunities for people with a disability within the organisation.

**Strategic Actions**

Remove all barriers that may reduce the chances for equitable opportunity to work within NDS.

Ensure there is relevant data to measure success of this strategy.

Develop measures and plans to ensure the achievement of NDS’s leadership aspiration of having an inclusive employment environment for people with a disability.

**Foundation Tasks**

Analysis of recruitment process:

* Advertising and branding
* Candidate sourcing
* Job design
* Recruitment
* Selection process
* Integration

Carry out survey of all staff.

Review new recruitment process from end to end utilising the findings from the analysis.

Identify NDS’s current employment rate of people with disability.

Develop a formal retention plan.

Review and amend the induction process if required.

**Performance Indicators**

Goals are set for the employment participation and retention rates for staff with disability.

**Who**

State Managers

Human Resources Officer

DAP Committee

**When**

Ongoing

### Learning and Development

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS will support staff to ensure relevant awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills about the disability sector, DDA, disabilities, supporting people with a disability, human rights convention and charters.

**Strategic Actions**

Develop a suite of programs for delivery to NDS staff and management to address any gaps in staff knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills relating to disability.

Develop a training program relevant to the organisation and its capacity.

Develop staff personal development plans that utilise accredited training options.

**Foundation Tasks**

Analyse current ‘Learning and Development’ programs, organisational competency and knowledge around disability.

Obtain quotations from suppliers and partners to provide a strategic approach to delivery of desired programs.

Ascertain disability knowledge and competency among staff.

From this design appropriate programs and set budget.

Where required, build a personal development plan for staff members that will be assessed each year.

**Performance Indicators**

Targeted disability awareness training conducted for all staff when required.

Selection personnel will be appropriately trained and aware of disability issues.

Training provided for staff with disability when required.

**Who**

State Managers

HR personnel

DAP Committee

**When**

Ongoing

### Accessible Infrastructure

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS will strive to ensure a process of continual improvement across all sites and infrastructure to increase accessibility

**Strategic Actions**

All NDS facilities and infrastructure and venues used for major NDS events will comply with the agreed level of accessibility where possible.

Develop a plan to address any known gaps in our facilities and infrastructure.

**Foundation Tasks**

Initial Access Audits performed by certified auditors will be conducted across NDS facilities and infrastructure.

Establish and review accessibility check list guidelines for future NDS activities, purchases, renovations and capital works.

Carry out annual site and infrastructure audits with recommendations and critical issues/incident reports.

**Performance Indicators**

NDS’s buildings and facilities will be accessible to people with disability.

Continual improvement access plans will be implemented for all buildings and facilities.

**Who**

State Managers

DAP Committee

**When**

Commencing within 12 months and ongoing.

### Communication

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS will strengthen communication to ensure internal and external stakeholders receive accessible information.

**Strategic Actions**

Ensure all communication activities are according to best practice methods and resources.

Ensure style guides incorporate contemporary knowledge of accessibility.

**Foundation Tasks**

Review all current communication activities, identifying any gaps or opportunities for improvement.

Review communication policy and style guide to identify potential improvements in mediums and methodology.

Implement communication policy, guidelines and style guide.

**Performance Indicators**

NDS communication practices will demonstrate best practice methods.

Style guides and associated policy are reviewed and implemented.

NDS staff are trained in the use of communication style guides.

**Who**

State Managers

DAP Committee

**When**

Ongoing

### Products and Services

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS will strengthen its purchasing processes to ensure it has accessible assets, products and services while supporting employment opportunities for people with disability

**Strategic Actions**

All activities, services and products of NDS will follow agreed guidelines in accessibility for people with disability.

NDS purchasing policies will support employment opportunities for people with disability.

**Foundation Tasks**

Develop a management checklist for sign off approval prior to financial investment or commencement of NDS sanctioned activity.

Develop post event report to comment or recommend future adjustment to checklist.

Develop procurement guidelines and criteria.

Develop a list of preferred suppliers based on agreed criteria.

Review all suppliers based on new guidelines.

**Performance Indicators**

NDS activities, products and services will comply with agreed guidelines on accessibility.

NDS procurement practices will support employment opportunities for people with disability.

**Who**

State Managers

Financial

Controller

HR personnel

DAP Committee

**When**

Ongoing

### Governance and Accountability

**OBJECTIVE:** NDS commits to ensuring that the Disability Action Plan becomes ingrained in its organisational culture and the way it does business

**Strategic Actions**

Establish key measures and reporting for all lines of the organisation to measure implementation of the DAP.

Establish a review and governance process or committee to oversee the DAP implementation and manage corrective action.

**Foundation Tasks**

Design and gain agreement for the reporting format and guidelines.

Establish KPIs and measures that are related to DAP implementation.

Align actions and KPIs to management responsibilities.

Seek approval for the committee.

Establish the committee with a cross section of staff and management and external partners.

Establish the committee charter.

Announce its role and responsibilities.

**Performance Indicators**

DAP launch.

Staff DAP awareness training completed in each State and Territory.

Measure DAP activities and report achievements.

The DAP is integrated into NDS governance structure and aligned with NDS’ Strategic Directions.

**Who**

CE

State Managers

DAP Committee

**When**

TBC

Within 2 months of DAP launch

Ongoing