# National Disability Services Strategic Plan 2017

The disability sector is in the midst of far-reaching change. National reforms, particularly the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), are transforming the operating environment for disability service providers and for National Disability Services (NDS). Change of this scale presents great opportunities, but also great risks.

NDS and its members led the campaign for the NDIS and we have consistently argued for reforms that would strengthen the disability sector’s capacity to deliver on its mission to people with disability and their families. The task now is to ensure that major reforms are designed and delivered well. If the opportunities and support available to Australians with disability are to improve, a strong and dynamic mission-driven disability services sector is essential.

Drawing on insights from members and other stakeholders, the NDS Board and senior management developed this strategic plan to guide NDS during the critical years ahead. This is a dynamic plan with a clear vision of what we want to achieve. The framework is designed to be sensitive to changing circumstances and will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains pertinent and on-track.

The strategic plan recognises that to represent its members well and enable the sector to grow and adapt, NDS itself must be strategically focussed, influential, vigorous in its representation of the issues, and adequately resourced.

* Joan McKenna Kerr, NDS President, and Ken Baker, NDS Chief Executive

NDS represents service providers across Australia in their work to deliver high-quality supports and life opportunities for people with disability.

## We are committed to our values

* We value members’ expertise, experience and commitment
* We champion the rights of people with disability
* We are vigorous in our pursuit of just outcomes
* Our advocacy is informed by evidence and is non-partisan

## **We have a number of priorities which drive our work**

**Policy priorities**

* Shape NDIS design and implementation
* Build large, flexible and capable disability workforce
* Expand employment opportunities for people with disability
* Strengthen government response to the National Disability Strategy
* Persuade government to reduce red tape

**Industry barometer**

NDS will build a powerful data bank to help:

* Increase the sector’s control over its own future
* Legitimise the role of service providers
* Position NDS to play a market stewardship role
* Generate data to support NDS’s advocacy
* Provide evidence to guide investments in sector development

**Organisational priorities**

* Attract and maintain a diverse, sector-wide membership
* Influence government, strategic partners & media
* Ensure members are informed and well-resourced
* Secure the revenue required to meet objectives
* Utilise the knowledge, skills and influence of NDS’s Board and Committees

## **We have a clear purpose and role**

We support members by:

* Ensuring they have a strong voice
* Enabling them to position their services in a dynamic industry
* Equipping them to identify the determinants of success
* Enhancing their decision-making

**We strive to build a robust disability sector by:**

* Advocating for sound public policies
* Ensuring the sector is funded and supported
* Promoting the value of a diverse, sustainable and mission-driven sector
* Maintaining a national focus on disability issues

We do all of this in the interest of life opportunities for people with disability.

## Organisational Priorities

| **Priority** | **Objective** | **Strategic actions** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Membership | Attract and maintain a growing and diverse sector-wide membership that values NDS | * Develop offers that reflect market segmentation and demand * Review membership criteria (mission or legal structure?) * Increase engagement with members * Resolve brand confusion between NDS and similar acronyms |
| Influence | Government, strategic partners and media recognise NDS as the authoritative and credible voice of the disability services sector | * Develop an industry barometer that generates evidence for advocacy * Build and maintain relationships across parliaments, governments and media * Forge strategic alliances with other peak bodies and research entities * Utilise the standing and connections of members to promote objectives * Promote NDS as an independent voice |
| Members’ capacity | Members are informed and well-resourced to provide quality supports | * Provide practical tools to build organisational capability so members can deliver on their mission * Enable industry benchmarking * Provide evidence-based advice on innovation and good practice in the provision of disability supports * Make available professional development for the disability workforce * Supply accurate, accessible and timely information on matters relevant to members’ operating environment |
| Resources | NDS has the revenue required to meet its strategic and organisational objectives | * Forecast resource requirements over the life of the strategic plan * Explore business opportunities that are consistent with NDS’s purpose * Maintain an efficient structure that is affordable and enables NDS to respond to members’ needs * Position NDS to be an indispensable source of advice for governments in the NDIS world |
| Governance | NDS Board and committees make maximum use of members’ knowledge, skills and influence | * Review governance processes and organisational structure and ensure they align with NDS’s strategic purposes and governance best practice * Implement Board development plan |

## Industry Barometer

NDS will develop an industry barometer to increase the sector’s influence over its future and the development of the disability system in Australia. It will help the sector describe its preferred future for the disability services sector, pathways to get there and risks. The barometer will build on NDS’s existing data collections – eg the Business Confidence Survey, Workforce Wizard, the Financial Sustainability Study (with Curtin University), the Supported Employment Social Impact Measurement Tool.

**The Industry Barometer will:**

* Increase the sector’s control over its own future, strengthening its engagement in the design and implementation of disability system reforms
* Legitimise the role of service providers
* Position NDS to play a market stewardship role
* Generate data to support NDS’s advocacy
* Provide evidence to guide investments in sector development
* Test directions and assumptions about the connection between market design and outcomes for people with disability
* Enable forecasting reports and analysis of sector-wide trends and risks
* Provide benchmarking products to service providers that contribute data

## Policy Priorities

* Shape NDIS design and implementation, including pricing policy
* Promote regulation and investment that enable the building of a sufficiently large, flexible and capable disability workforce
* Expand open and supported employment opportunities for people with disability
* Strengthen governments’ response to the National Disability Strategy
* Persuade government to reduce red tape