

National Disability Services Submission Tasmanian Positive

October 2023

About National Disability Services

National Disability Services (NDS) is Australia's peak body for non-government disability service organisations, representing more than 1000 non-government service providers. Collectively, NDS members operate several thousand services for Australians with all types of disability. NDS provides information and networking opportunities to its members and policy advice to State, Territory and Commonwealth governments. We have a diverse and vibrant membership, comprised of small, medium and larger service providers, supporting thousands of people with disability. Our members collectively provide a full range of disability services, from supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation, respite and therapy, to community access and employment. NDS is committed to improving the disability service system to ensure it better supports people with disability, their families and carers, and contributes to building a more inclusive community.

About this submission

NDS welcomes the opportunity to provide input into Tasmanian Positive, the State's sustainability strategy.

Aiming to bring together feedback provided to NDS by disability service providers and people with disability, this submission responds to the consultation questions proposed by Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Executive Summary

National Disability Services' (NDS) vision is for an inclusive Tasmania where all people with disability live safely and equitably. To achieve this, people with disability need to access the right supports, at the right time, from the right people, services, and systems.

A decade ago, the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, the Scheme) transformed the lives of many people with disability in Australia. It is a landmark reform and one of the “most important global innovations in disability rights of the past few decades.”¹ The NDIS has seen issues related to Tasmanians with disability become part of the national discourse.

Now, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the soon-to-be published NDIS Review, and the Commission of Inquiry have added to our national understanding of what is needed to continue transforming the lives of Australians with disability. These comprehensive findings centre around building better outcomes for priority communities and need to be considered by the State Government in regard to Tasmania's sustainability. As the State with the highest rate of disability in the country, Tasmania cannot ignore these findings; disability inclusion policy must be developed to better inform the design and delivery of essential government services and policies for people with disability in Tasmania.

¹ Duffy S & Brown M (2023) Redesigning the NDIS: An international perspective on an Australian disability support system. Sheffield: Citizen Network Research pg 7 accessed 29 August 2023 <https://citizen-network.org/library/redesigning-the-ndis.html> .

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What are your thoughts about sustainability and what we can do to make a better future for Tasmania?

What words would you use to describe an ideal Tasmania in 2050?

An ideal Tasmania is an inclusive Tasmania where all people, especially those with disability, can:

- live safely and equitably;
- contribute to their community; and
- access the right supports, at the right time, from the right people, services, and systems.

What are the most important things we need to do to achieve a sustainable future for Tasmania?

Priority populations, such as people with disability, have the same fundamental rights as all community members including freedom, respect, equity, and dignity. For a sustainable future in Tasmania, these rights must be recognised and existing barriers to community participation must be eliminated.

We must:

- Make reasonable adjustments to mainstream supports and targeted services.
- Fund foundational supports and services for people with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS.
- Utilise disability impact assessment and co-design principles when making policy decisions.
- Develop a framework for whole of State Government disability inclusion including guidelines for remuneration for lived experience.
- Mandate Disability Inclusion Action Plans for Government entities and private business.
- Develop a social procurement framework.

[Australia's Disability Strategy Hub | Disability Gateway](#) outlines the commitment and obligations of all governments to provide and make reasonable adjustments to mainstream and targeted services as well as supports and infrastructure systems for people with disability.

Although the NDIS now funds a significant proportion of services for people with disability, it does not fund everything nor everyone with a disability. There is a critical shortfall in services for people with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS.

Additionally, gaps remain across pockets of disability service provision, advocacy, and research in Tasmania. It is critical for the State Government to commit to 'Tier 2' or 'foundational services' as well as ongoing individual and systemic disability

advocacy to ensure that inclusivity is built into foundational services and mainstream supports.

All levels of Government must collaborate and utilise disability impact assessments to understand the impacts of policy decisions on people with disability. The voice of lived experience should be heard in policy making circles and co-design principles should be utilised to ensure effective and relevant policies are developed.

Further to findings from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the establishment of a framework for a whole of government approach to accountability and transparency in relation to disability inclusion is needed. Similar to other paid employment, the framework should include clear guidelines regarding remuneration as well as recognise the importance of lived experience.

In alignment with the draft Disability Inclusion and Safeguards Bill 2023, the State Government should ensure Disability Inclusion Action Plans and Targeted Action Plans specifically articulate how entities will diversify their workforce and ensure they employ people with disability. Any identified strategies or targets should be measured and monitored.

Supporting employment of people with disability both makes financial sense and helps contribute to a more inclusive Tasmania. For example, recent research identified that National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports contribute to the economic wellbeing of Australia; more than 250,000 jobs have been created and for every dollar invested in the scheme \$2.25 flows back into the Australian economy.² In this context, it is pertinent to consider that the State Government is a significant purchaser of services and products. Through positive procurement policies applied to first tier contractors and sub-contractors the State Government can create an expectation that these companies will support disability inclusive practices such as training and employing people with disability and/or purchasing from social enterprises that specialise in employing people with disability. Proactive procurement policies send a strong message to the community that disability inclusive practices supporting the rights of people with disability is a responsibility and opportunity for everybody and every business.

What do you plan to do by 2030, 2040 and 2050 to contribute to the achievement of a sustainable Tasmania in 2050?

NDS is committed to advancing the disability sector by enabling and equipping service providers to develop and deliver high quality services as well as life opportunities to people with disability.

NDS will continue to deliver on our vision of an inclusive Australia where all people with disability live safely and equitably. We will continue to collaborate in our work,

² Per Capita (2021). False Economy: The economic benefits of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the consequences of government cost-cutting. Teamwork Works campaign. Accessed 20 December 2022.

supporting the disability sector and our members to deliver the service their clients most need in an effective, sustainable and impactful manner.

NDS has the following key roles to play in a sustainable future for Tasmania:

- Driving sector change on behalf of members through effective and smart advocacy that draws on good points of practice and strong evidence.
- Providing timely insights and analysis to service providers that they can use to inform their own decision making.
- Providing tools, resources and services to promote and drive continuous improvement in service quality and business sustainability.
- Facilitating networking, collaboration and sharing of knowledge, experience and good practice across the sector.

What is your vision for a Sustainable Tasmania and what should we aspire to?

What do you hope Tasmania looks like in 2050 - our society, economy, and natural environment?

NDS hopes that Tasmania in 2050 is a place where all people live safely and equitably. Where people, especially those with disability, can contribute to their community and where they can access the right supports, at the right time, from the right people, services and systems.

NDS hopes that Tasmania has a thriving economy, with a diverse and inclusive workforce. We hope that the percentage of people with disability who are working, has doubled from its current rate and that the State Government has embraced and actioned recommendations 7.18 – 7.22 of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, which include; to establish specific and disaggregated targets for disability employment in the public sector and public reporting on public sector disability employment strategies and targets, among other recommendations.³ NDS hopes that social enterprises are thriving, due to a State Government positive procurement policy (aligned to recommendation 7.23 of the Roal Commission - Strengthen disability employment procurement policies), which private industry has also embraced.

NDS hopes that the natural environment continues to be a jewel in the Tasmania crown and that people with disability can contribute to maintaining the natural environment by contributing to positive environment initiatives and disability inclusive eco-tourism.

What are the most important challenges we need to overcome to achieve your vision for Tasmania in 2050?

By learning from the experiences of people with disability reported in the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability,

³ [Final Report - Volume 7, Inclusive education, employment and housing | Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#)

NDIS Review, and many other initiatives, we need to ensure all Tasmanians are treated equally and have the opportunity to thrive in their community.

The Tasmania Government needs to collaborate with the Federal Government to ensure that not only are disability-specific services fit for purpose, but that foundational support is available for people with disability in mainstream services such as education, justice, health, and transport.

If we streamline the United national 17 sustainable Development Goals to around six sustainable topics or focus areas for Tasmania's sustainability goals, what would they be, or do you think we should simply align with the SDGs?

Despite obvious interactions between the sustainable development goals, the United Nations has listed them as 17 unique goals. By focusing on just a few, it undermines the premise under which they were identified. Grouping the goals into topics could have merit, however it may also reduce the broad systems thinking approach which is required to tackle the challenge of sustainability. Aligning with the goals may be a more straight forward approach, and may provide a better opportunity, to both learn from and compare our sustainability performance, to others.

In what areas of sustainability do you think Tasmania is doing well, and are there other priorities where we could do better?

The updating of the Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011 to the Disability Inclusion and Safeguarding Bill both acknowledges the changes that the NDIS has brought about and considers Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. This is a positive step for the future of the Tasmanian disability sector.

In the recent draft of the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion and Safeguarding Bill 2023, NDS welcomed the addition of the legislated Disability Inclusion Advisory Council and believes the Council has a critical role to play in ensuring that the goals and strategies of the Tasmanian Government, particularly in the area of disability policy, are informed by people with disability. NDS believes meetings held at regular intervals would provide a good opportunity to ensure strong representation from people with lived experience of disability in policy and decision making, as well as promoting the inclusion of people with disability in all levels of governance.

