

Why we need to hear from you.

Introduction

‘Nothing about us without us’ reflects the rights of people with disability to have a say in decisions that impact their lives. It calls for creating better outcomes by including people with disability in policy decisions, service design, planning, implementation and review.

The ACT Government is committed to having the voice of people with disability central to the development of the ACT Disability Strategy (the Strategy). This means actively seeking and supporting people to participate meaningfully in consultation activities.

What this means

To make your voice central to the Strategy's development, the ACT Government needs to ask people with disability what you want to see the Strategy achieve, in a way that suits you.

We need to listen to what you say, and turn it into action. Meaningful consultation includes empowerment and partnership. It includes:

- flexible approaches to suit individual needs;
- respecting that different people have different needs;
- providing everyone with the opportunity to contribute, regardless of their age, gender identity, culture, location and accessibility needs; and
- considering a variety of access and communication requirements.

There are benefits for everyone when the voice of people with disability is kept central to the conversation, including:

- **Better informed policies:** a diverse range of experiences and perspectives results in more informed and inclusive policies.
- **More equitable policies:** policies designed with attention to local people's needs are more likely to be equitable and fair.
- **Strengthened transparency and accountability:** inclusive consultation creates a culture of openness and accountability in government agencies.
- **Strengthened ownership:** having people involved strengthens people's sense of ownership and support resulting in more effective implementation.
- **Enhanced capacity and inclusion of marginalised groups:** having the voice of people with disability at the table empowers people to stand up for their rights and make their concerns known.
- **Enhanced government capacity:** inclusive policy design builds the capacity of decision-makers to recognise multiple views and address diverging perspectives.
- **Common understanding:** co-designed policy making promotes a common understanding of complex, misunderstood and contentious issues.

Making the Voice of People with Disability central to the ACT Disability Strategy

In the ACT, we have a history of valuing and prioritising the voice of people with disability.

The ACT Disability Reference Group (the DRG) is a long-standing advisory group who provide information and frank advice to the ACT Government and Minister for Disability on issues impacting people with disability, and on ways to make the ACT more inclusive.

The DRG has worked in partnership with the ACT Government to co-design the Strategy's consultation and will continue to provide information and advice as the Strategy is developed, implemented and evaluated.

There will be many ways people with disability can contribute to the development of the Strategy. For example, a Kitchen Table Conversation kit has been developed to support people to have a say in a comfortable, safe environment with trusted people. The Kitchen Table Conversation kit provides a framework for family, friends and small groups to have a discussion on topics of interest. The setting is your choice – it can be informal or part of a formal meeting. Kitchen Table Conversations provide another way for the ACT Government to learn about the ideas, views and opinions of our community to assist in identifying priorities and actions for improvement.

How you can contribute to the Strategy

There are a range of ways people can have their say for the future ACT Disability Strategy:

- Attend one of four public consultation sessions, which will be facilitated by people with disability;
- Attend a targeted conversation on a topic of interest to you;
- Complete an online survey; or
- Use the Kitchen Table Conversation kit to hold conversations with your networks about what you want to see reflected in the Strategy.

What we want to know from you

Through the consultation, we want to hear from people with disability, family, friends, carers, the disability sector and the broader community:

- What does good inclusion look like?
- What priorities do you want to see reflected in the strategy?
- What are your ideas for better inclusion?
- What are the challenges?
- What community attitudes are enabling, or creating barriers for people with disability?

Other related resources

[United Nations \(2008\). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.](#)

[Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-31](#)

[The ACT Disability Reference Group webpage](#)

[The Disability Justice Strategy](#)

[The Disability Justice Strategy consultation information](#)