Disability Access & Inclusion Plan 2026–2029

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Government of South Australia
Department of State Development

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of State Development acknowledges and respects Aboriginal people as the state's first people and nations, and recognises Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters.

Accessing this Plan

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) is available on the Department of State Development website statedevelopment.sa.gov.au in a variety of formats, including Easy Read and a fully accessible Word version.

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What is disability?

Disability is diverse and experienced by people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures. It can include physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, psychosocial or neurological disabilities, which can be permanent or temporary and visible or invisible.

Definitions and understandings of disability can vary within and across cultures. Consistent with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* and the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025-2029, this Plan defines disability as "*in relation to a person, includes long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairment, or may experience more than one of these, which in interaction with various other barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*"

Understanding disability and intersectionality in South Australia

This plan recognises the diverse and intersecting experiences of people with disability, and is informed by the following 2022 statistics:

- 25.3% of South Australians (half a million) reported having a disability, which is higher than the national average of 21.4% (5.5 million Australians).[1]
- 10% of South Australians with disability experienced disability-related discrimination in the last 12-months, compared to the national rate of 9.9%.[2]
- Across Australia, 25.3% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people reported having a disability.[3]
- 15.2% of South Australian children and young people (aged 0-24 years) had a disability in 2022, up from 8.9% in 2018.[4] Nationally, the rate rose from 8.3% to 12.1% over the same period.[5]
- In South Australia, 52.7% of those aged 65 years and over had a disability, compared with 18.6% of those aged 0–64 years.[6] Nationally, similar patterns were observed at 52.3% (65+years) and 15% (0-64 years).[7]
- Among South Australians aged 20–64 with disability, 46% had completed Year 12 or equivalent, compared with 58% nationally.[8]
- The unemployment rate for South Australians with disability was 6.3%, compared with 3.8% of those without disability.[9]
- Of South Australians who provided unpaid, informal care (for someone with a disability and/or aged 65 years or older) in 2022, 42.6% had a disability themselves,[10] a higher proportion than the national average of 38.6%.[11]

It is important to note that these data are based on self-reported information, which may underestimate the true prevalence of disability. Cultural background and life experiences can influence whether a person identifies as having a disability or feels comfortable disclosing it. For example, while most Australians who self-identified with autism in 2022 reported having a disability, 8.9% did not.[12]

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Avery S. (2025) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability, 2022 Survey Disability Ageing and Carers. ABS, Canberra.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2018 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/2018 [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2018 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

5 Australian Bureau of Statistic, Children and young people with disability, 2022. Released 30 Apr 2025, https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/children-and-young-people-disability-2022

6 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

7 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

8 AIHW. Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Outcomes Framework, Education and learning. Last updated 24 Oct 24, https://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy/outcomes/education-and-learning/year-12-completion

9 AIHW. Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Outcomes Framework, Unemployment gap. Last updated 24 Oct 2024, https://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-disability-strategy/outcomes/employment-and-financial-security/unemployment-gap

10 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

11 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) 2022 https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release [Disability, Ageing and Carers, 2022 TableBuilder], accessed 30 December 2025.

12 Australian Bureau of Statistic, Autism in Australia, 2022. Released 11 Oct 2024, https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/autism-australia-2022#interpretation-of-results

Message from the Chief Executive

I am proud to present the Department of State Development's revised *Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026-2029* (DAIP), which reaffirms our commitment to building a strong, inclusive and accessible South Australia.

As a department, we are responsible for driving South Australia's economic growth, supporting industry, developing workforce capability and strengthening community skills. Accessibility and inclusion are central to these goals, building a diverse, dynamic workforce and ensuring everyone can reap the benefits of economic development.

In recent years, we have taken meaningful steps towards embedding access and inclusion as part of our everyday work. Initiatives such as the FORTE digital skills program, the Skills SA's Success and Wellbeing Support program, and fee-free TAFE have opened doors for people with disability to engage in training, build skills, and access emerging job opportunities.

Our new DAIP builds on this foundation, setting out clear, practical actions to improve the accessibility of our services, strengthen inclusive pathways into training and employment, and ensure our programs - whether supporting small business, shaping future industries or developing workforce capability - are designed with the needs of people with disability in mind.

Just as importantly, it commits us to fostering a workplace culture that values diversity, lived experience and the strengths that people with disability contribute to our department and to South Australia.

I acknowledge and thank the staff, stakeholders and community members - particularly people with lived experience of disability - who contributed to shaping this plan. Your insights guide us to do better, to challenge assumptions and to make meaningful, lasting change.

As we implement this DAIP, we will continue working collaboratively across government, industry and community to ensure that we create economic opportunities that are accessible to all. Together, we will help build a South Australia that is fairer, more inclusive and more prosperous for everyone.

Adam Reid
Chief Executive
Department of State Development

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About us

The Department of State Development (DSD) is South Australia's lead economic development agency. It works with industry, employers, education providers, and investors to grow the state's economy and workforce.

DSD influences outcomes for people with disability through its role in workforce development, skills and training programs, industry support, and employer engagement. This includes programs that improve access to training, pathways from education to employment, workplace capability, and inclusive employment practices.

Through these functions, DSD helps shape the conditions that enable more South Australians - including people with disability - to participate in education, training, and work.

Our approach to disability access and inclusion is supported by a range of existing strategies and plans:

- *Skilled. Thriving. Connected.* embeds access and inclusion in South Australia's vocational education and training system, including professional development, tailored learner support, barrier removal programs, inclusive work practices, and foundation skills development. It also provides free access to expanded wellbeing services and support, including for students with disability.
- *The Jobs and Skills Outlook* provides a five-year forecast of South Australia's future workforce needs, and supports industry and community understanding of and investment in accessible training pathways, including in demand occupations. It supports access and inclusion by informing system planning, qualification design and learner supports across the training system.
- Our *South Australia's Small Business Strategy 2023-2030* strengthens the capability and resilience of South Australia's 150,000 small businesses by providing mentoring, digital skills development, workforce planning and access to government support. Through the Small Business Fundamentals Program, it provides tailored capability-building services and advice to business owners with disability. One-on-one small business support officers are also available to help business owners with disability to navigate grants, services and regulatory requirements, free of charge.

Our vision for disability access and inclusion

We aim to be an accessible, inclusive and informed department, where everyone, including people with disability and carers, experiences dignity, respect, and equal opportunity, in our workplaces and in accessing our services. Our workplaces, services and public-facing environments will be free from barriers, enabling full participation and engagement. Accessibility and inclusion will be embedded in our decisions, systems, and practices, guided by universal design principles and the voices of people with lived experience.

Our workplace/staff

As of December 2025, 2% of the DSD workforce formally identify as having a disability. We recognise that this figure may understate the true level of lived experience, as some people prefer not to disclose. Our aim is to foster an inclusive, accessible and trusting environment where people feel comfortable sharing their experiences on their own terms.

Most of our employees are based in Adelaide, South Australia, but we also have overseas regional advisers located in countries including China, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and United States of America.

Although the actions in our DAIP apply specifically to DSD employees and offices within South Australia, we will promote the principles of the DAIP with our overseas advisers and implement relevant actions where possible.

Most of our offshore advisers are co-located with Austrade offices, and therefore Austrade's disability access and inclusion policies and strategies apply in those locations.

The Department of State Development (DSD) was established on 1 July 2024 through the merger of the former Department for Industry, Innovation and Science, the Department for Trade and Investment, and Skills SA. DSD has been undertaking significant policy harmonisation work to align the systems, frameworks and practices inherited from its predecessor organisations.

This Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, together with the Autism Strategy Action Plan (ASAP), provides an important opportunity to shape DSD-specific approaches to access, and inclusion. These plans will guide the development of a cohesive and inclusive employment environment across the new department, supporting consistent practices in recruitment, training, retention and workplace adjustments for people living with disability.

Strategic context

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights convention which sets out the fundamental human rights of people with disability. The purpose is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Nationally, we are led by *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*, which outlines a vision for a more inclusive and accessible Australian society where all people with disability can fulfil their potential as equal members of the community. Its purpose is to:

- provide national leadership towards greater inclusion of people with disability
- guide activity across all areas of public policy to be inclusive and responsive to people with disability
- drive mainstream services and systems to improve outcomes for people with disability
- engage, inform and involve the whole community in achieving a more inclusive society.

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* provides a legal framework to support equal access and inclusion for people living with disability in community activities and services. It requires state agencies and local councils to develop and deliver DAIPs to address barriers and foster equitable participation for people with disabilities across South Australia.

The *State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029* (State Plan) is a commitment to building a more inclusive South Australia. It outlines clear priorities and coordinates government actions to drive lasting change and create a fairer, more inclusive and accessible community for everyone. It aligns with national and international frameworks, and guides real improvements in policies, services and everyday experiences for people with disability across the state.

South Australia's Autism Strategy 2024–2029 aims to build knowledge, understanding and belonging, via a dedicated whole-of-government approach to respond to the current needs and challenges of Autistic people and their families, and to create a more inclusive state for all.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan development

Consultation

In updating our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, we built on the outcomes of previous DAIPs (known as *Department for Innovation and Skills Disability Access and Inclusion Plan* and *Department for Trade and Investment Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024*) and drew on feedback from the development of the State Plan, which captured extensive input from people with disability, their families and carers, service providers, advocacy groups, and the broader community.

Our employees were invited to respond to an online survey, submit email submissions, or participate in a confidential discussion, with the intent of actively seeking feedback on areas for improvement and areas for strengthening (where DSD is currently making progress) in both our workplace, and for the initiatives we provide to the community.

We also convened an internal working group of employees with lived experience of disability to provide insights and guide the development of the Plan.

Relationship to our policies, strategies, frameworks

This DAIP aligns with and is supported by a range of existing DSD policies, strategies, and frameworks that shape our work in skills, workforce, industry support, and organisational culture.

- *Skilled. Thriving. Connected: Our Policy Direction for Skills in South Australia*
- *Skilled. Thriving. Connected. Investment Blueprint*
- *South Australia's Small Business Strategy 2023-30*
- Corporate Policy and Procedure Management Framework
- Strategic Communications Framework
- People and Culture Roadmap
- Workforce Data Reporting
- Complaints Management Policy
- Respectful Behaviours Policy
- Performance Development Policy
- Voluntary Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure
- Induction Procedure
- Learning and Development Procedure
- South Australian Employment Disability Toolkit

Achievements

Our previous DAIPs show a strong commitment to supporting people with disability. Key achievements include:

Delivered fee-free TAFE courses in partnership with the Australian Government. As a result, participation of students reporting a disability in VET has increased by 7.4%.

Implemented the pilot FORTE (Financing of Return to Employment) program, delivering no cost digital skills training. The program was designed to grow diversity in South Australia's tech sector by specifically recruiting people with disability, as well as women, young people and Aboriginal people. As at June 2025, 138 participants have graduated (88% of total), with 63 graduates (46%) securing employment in the technology sector.

Implemented the Success and Wellbeing Support program for students, including people with disability, across Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). In 2024–25, the program delivered approximately 30,000 hours of support to nearly 1,200 students across 75 RTOs.

Within the Department of State Development, support is provided for people who need reasonable workplace adjustments, including ergonomic equipment, assistive technologies, and flexible work options that support employees managing disability, chronic health conditions, or caring responsibilities. This includes staff access to wellbeing rooms at 11 Waymouth St.

State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029 Domains & Priority areas

Our DAIP is structured around the domains identified in the State Plan. Figure 1 highlights the Priority areas we have identified for action, in line with the roles and function of our department.

DOMAIN 1:
Inclusive environments & communities

Priority areas:

1. **Active participation**
2. **Inclusive communities & attitudes**
3. **Universal design**
4. Accessible facilities
5. **Communications & information**
6. Transportation
7. **Collaboration, consultation & innovation**
8. Housing

DOMAIN 2:
Inclusive education & employment

Priority areas:

1. **Targeted knowledge, understanding & support**
2. Support & resources for children & young people
3. **Targeted transitional supports**
4. **Access to employment opportunities**
5. **Inclusive working environments**
6. **Data & reporting**

DOMAIN 3:
Personal & community support

Priority areas:

1. **Accessibility**
2. Advocacy & support
3. **Information sharing**
4. Family & carer support
5. **Programs**

DOMAIN 4:
Health & wellbeing

Priority areas:

1. Inclusive infrastructure
2. Targeted knowledge, understanding & support
3. Support & interventions

DOMAIN 5:
Safety, rights & justice

Priority areas:

1. **Targeted knowledge, understanding & support**
2. **Support & resources for children & young people**
3. Targeted transitional support
4. Access to employment opportunities

Our DAIP actions

Domain 1: Inclusive environments and communities

Outcome statement: A South Australia where all people with disability can participate as equal citizens and feel connected to their communities

Objective: To influence community attitudes to remove discrimination and build a South Australia that values difference and respects the contributions people with disability make to our society. This includes ensuring the community itself is fully accessible.

Priority area 1: Active participation

Outcome: People with disability are active participants in accessible and inclusive communities.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
1.	We will implement best-practice accessible and inclusive event management principles, consistent with recognised guidelines such as the Accessible and Inclusive Community Events Toolkit.	**1.1.2**	The number of inclusive and accessible events, both internal and external, with 50+ people following best practice event management principles. For example, the Accessible and Inclusive Community Events Toolkit.	June 2026

Priority area 2: Inclusive communities and attitudes

Outcome: People with disability are respected and included in their communities, where inclusive attitudes and behaviours are widely demonstrated.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
2.	We will develop and implement employee training on disability awareness and inclusion, which will highlight the prevalence of both visible and invisible disabilities, and include universal design and understanding neurodiversity.	**1.2.1**	The number of staff and volunteers participating in disability awareness training, including universal design.	Pilot by June 2026 then ongoing
3.	We will develop and actively promote a schedule of events to raise awareness and promote understanding of disability inclusion; e.g. International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD).		The number of workplace initiatives promoting disability inclusion.	Annually in January
4.	We will consult peak bodies on disability inclusion in the planning, implementing and evaluating of the *South Australian Aboriginal Workforce Development Plan*.	**1.2.3**	The number of actions embedded in our DAIP working towards Closing the Gap targets.	September 2026

Priority area 3: Universal design

Outcome: Everyone in South Australia can access and enjoy inclusive and accessible natural and built environments.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
5.	We will audit DSD public-facing buildings to assess and improve disability accessibility.	**1.3.2**	The number of public-facing government buildings, spaces, play spaces and infrastructure that are modified to improve accessibility. For example, by adding signage or widening doors.	December 2027
6.	Through our subleasing arrangements, we will advocate for the inclusion of universal design in new building developments.		The number of new developments that incorporate universal design.	Ongoing

Priority area 5: Communications and information

Outcome: People with disability can find the information they need in the format(s) they need it in.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
7.	We will ensure all digital information and resources are developed and updated in accessible formats, including WCAG 2.2 AA–compliant digital content, Auslan supported materials, and Easy Read versions where appropriate. We will also ensure contrast control is available on websites for vision impaired visitors. We will conduct monthly accessibility audits through our website monitoring tool (Site Improve) with regular remediation of any reported issues.	**1.5.1**	The number of resources or materials that have been developed in accessible formats. For example, websites that meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 level AA accessibility standard or above, Auslan translations and Easy Read documents.	June 2026 Monthly
8.	We will implement clear communication procedures to ensure the appropriate services are identified, arranged and promoted for communication and/or public facing activities, including during emergency or time critical communications. We will provide staff with quick-reference guidance on how to source Auslan, captioning, or AAC services for public communication and/or community engagement activities	**1.5.2**	The number of Auslan, assistive listening devices, and augmentative and alternative communication services provided to meet support needs, including at emergency presentations. For example, during hospital emergencies, crisis services, bushfires, or floods, where timely communication support is essential.	June 2026

Priority area 7: Collaboration, consultation and innovation

Outcome: People with disability are actively involved in government decisions that affect their lives.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
9.	We will seek input from people with disability and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) during public consultation, when relevant.	**1.7.1**	The number of public consultations that included and sought input from people with disability, including engagement with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).	March 2026 then ongoing
10.	We will review the Terms of Reference for our committees and working groups to include targets for the participation of people with disability, including parents and carers where appropriate. We will also strengthen our processes for identifying and supporting people with disability and carers who serve on these committees and working groups.	**1.7.2**	The number of people with disability, including parents and carers, serving on committees and working groups.	June 2026

Domain 2: Inclusive education and employment

Outcome statement: A South Australia where all people with disability benefit from inclusive educational experiences, equitable employment opportunities and financial security

Objective: To ensure equal opportunity to learning and earning is achieved by addressing the barriers and obstacles people with disability of all ages continue to face at all levels of the education and employment experience.

Priority area 1: Targeted knowledge, understanding and support

Outcome: People with disability are supported by a South Australian education workforce that has the knowledge and skills to meet their needs and help them succeed.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
11.	We will encourage and/or mandate professional development for training providers to ensure staff have the capability to support and accommodate students with disability in vocational education and training.	**2.1.1**	The number and proportion of teachers and educators that have completed training for supporting students with disability, including Disability Standards for Education training.	Annually

Priority area 3: Targeted transitional supports

Outcome: People with disability have supportive environments to learn, grow and transition throughout their life.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
12.	We will review, maintain and develop initiatives and strategies that improve transitions for people with disability from secondary school into further training and employment.	**2.3.1**	The number of initiatives taken to improve transition support from secondary school to tertiary education and/or employment for people with disability.	Annually
13.	We will collaborate with education and training providers, employers and industry partners to create inclusive training pathways for students with disability. This will include tailored support, accessible training, workplace adjustments to ensure they develop skills, succeed in employment and remain connected to their communities.	**2.3.3**	The number and proportion of people with disability undertaking apprenticeships (including school-based), vocational education and training (VET) and adult community education (ACE).	Annually

Priority area 4: Access to employment opportunities

Outcome: People with disability have opportunities to achieve, develop and succeed in their chosen fields.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
14.	We will conduct an audit of recruitment policies and practices to identify opportunities to improve inclusive recruitment.	**2.4.3**	The number of organisational changes adopted to improve inclusive recruitment for people with disability. For example, tailoring roles to fit individuals and employer incentives.	Nov 2026

Priority area 5: Inclusive working environments

Outcome: People with disability have access to supportive places to earn.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
15.	We will establish a People and Culture Committee and consult and engage DSD employees living with disability and disability allies to identify, foster and promote internal mechanisms to enable DSD employees to access support and opportunities for growth.	**2.5.1**	The number of workplace practices implemented to support people with disability to have equal opportunities for growth and success, including support to remain in employment. For example, outcome-based employment, flexible work arrangements, workplace adjustments and mentoring programs.	June 2026

Priority area 6: Data and reporting

Outcome: People with disability benefit from state authorities working to improve disability data at both state and national levels.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
16.	We will review DSD's data mechanisms to support improvements in collecting, analysing and reporting of disability-related data.	**2.6.2**	Development and implementation of data collection and reporting systems.	June 2026

Domain 3: Personal and community support

**Outcome statement: A South Australia where people with disability can access quality,
tailored personal and community support addressing their individual needs**

Objective: To build a service system in South Australia that takes a person-centred approach and recognises the contributions and potential of all people with disability.

Priority area 1: Accessibility

Outcome: People with disability can easily access community support and services.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
17.	We will review, maintain and develop initiatives and procurement strategies that connect people with disability to community based support and services.	**3.1.1**	The number of initiatives and improvements made to connect people with disability to community support and services wherever they present. For example, referral hubs, mobile outreach, online information platforms, frontline worker training, and partnerships with community organisations.	Annually

Priority area 3: Information sharing

Outcome: People with disability receive more coordinated and effective support when services work together and share information.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
18.	We will participate in Inclusive SA Community of Practice meetings, South Australian Disability Reform Interdepartmental Committee (SADRIC) meetings, and OCPSE's Disability, Diversity and Inclusion Community of Practice to support the implementation of the State Plan and DAIP.	**3.3.1**	The number of inter-agency meetings and initiatives to support the implementation of the State Plan and DAIP.	Ongoing

Priority area 5: Programs

Outcome: Government-funded programs and services include disability-specific provisions to enable full and equal participation.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
19.	We will identify programs or improvements to initiatives and procurement strategies to enhance disability inclusion.	**3.5.1**	The number of grants and funding amount distributed to enhance disability inclusion.	Nov 2026

Domain 5: Safety, rights and justice

Outcome statement: A South Australia where all people with disability feel safe, have their rights upheld and have full and equal protection before the law

Objective: To improve the safety and overall experience of people with disability coming into contact with our emergency services, criminal justice and civil law systems.

Priority area 1: Targeted knowledge, understanding and support

Outcome: People with disability are understood, supported, and have their rights upheld, including within the justice system.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
20.	We will ensure all departmental touchpoints whereby customers may pursue a complaint or provide feedback are accessible to people with disability, including alternative pathways should an option/ touchpoint not be suitable.	**n/a**	The percentage of complaints and feedback systems that are accessible to people with disability.	June 2026 then ongoing

Priority area 2: Responding to emergencies

Outcome: People with disability are kept safe during emergencies, with their needs planned for
and prioritised.

No.	Action	State Plan measure	Measure	Timeframe
21.	We will review emergency response resources and systems to ensure the needs of people with disability are planned for and prioritised during emergencies.	**5.2.1**	The number of emergency response resources and systems developed for people with disability.	June 2026

DAIP implementation

DSD's DAIP will be implemented through an annual implementation plan. Each work group is responsible for embedding DAIP outcomes in their planning, project design and day-to-day operations.

Responsibility for delivery

- The **Executive Leadership Committee** and Executive Sponsor will oversee DAIP implementation and champion disability inclusion across the agency.
- The **People and Culture Committee** will lead implementation, monitor progress, provide guidance, and support engagement, awareness and inclusion initiatives.
- **Executives and managers** are responsible for implementing relevant actions within their teams and ensuring inclusion is embedded in everyday practice.
- The **Organisational Development team** will coordinate the implementation plan, track progress, provide guidance and resources, and report on actions and outcomes.

Sharing the plan

- The DAIP will be published on the Department of State Development website in accessible formats, including Easy Read and screen-reader-friendly versions.
- Employees will be informed through internal communications, presentations and onboarding materials.
- Key partners, funded organisations, and industry and community stakeholders will be directed to our DAIP to promote consistent inclusion practice across our initiatives.

Embedding disability inclusion in operations

Disability inclusion will be embedded in DSD's operations through:

- clearly and consistently communicating the purpose behind our DAIP
- partnering with a disability advocacy organisation to identify and address systemic unconscious bias and strengthen program review mechanisms
- applying inclusive design principles across all policies, initiatives, communications and events
- incorporating accessibility and inclusion criteria into procurement, contract management and project planning, where appropriate
- prioritising training, resources and tools that build disability confidence and capability
- recognising and celebrating efforts to improve inclusive practices
- integrating DAIP principles and actions into business, program and workforce planning
- updating the implementation plan in response to new insights, evidence and experience.

Monitoring and reporting progress

- Progress against the DAIP will be monitored on an ongoing basis and overseen by the People and Culture Committee. Regular updates will be provided to the Executive Leadership Committee, and key outcomes will be included in the statewide Inclusive SA Annual Report.
- We will regularly review our data sources to ensure they remain accurate, relevant and reflective of current needs.
- We will monitor implementation through quantitative data, qualitative feedback and lived-experience insights to identify achievements, gaps and emerging priorities.

Involvement of people with disability

- Employees with lived experience of disability will be actively involved through consultation, feedback mechanisms, and participation on the People and Culture Committee and the DAIP Working Group. Their insights will help shape priorities, actions and measures of success.
- People with disability, their carers, and representative organisations will be engaged in designing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating programs, services, and policies. Their perspectives will inform both the DAIP and the adaptive implementation plan, ensuring initiatives are grounded in real experience and aligned with best-practice accessibility and inclusion standards.
- Engagement activities will be designed to be accessible, culturally appropriate and respectful, using multiple methods (e.g. surveys, workshops, co-design sessions, one-on-one conversations) to enable meaningful participation.
- We will ensure feedback is acted on and transparently communicated, demonstrating how lived experience contributions influence decisions and continuous improvement.

Promotion & awareness

- The DAIP and its implementation plan will be promoted internally through employee briefings, internal communications, leadership updates, and integration into induction materials to ensure all staff understand their role in advancing accessibility and inclusion.
- Awareness events - including key dates such as the International Day of People with Disability - will be celebrated to build understanding, visibility and organisational commitment.
- Examples of inclusive practice and DAIP achievements will be shared through internal and external communication channels to reinforce a culture of inclusion, highlight progress, and encourage ongoing participation across the organisation.
- All DAIP-related communications will be drafted and delivered in accessible formats and channels - ensuring information is inclusive, easy to understand, and available to all employees and stakeholders.
- Leaders and managers will be supported with tailored communication resources and key messages to help them champion accessibility and inclusion within their teams.

Acknowledgments

DSD would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP), in particular the individuals who provided feedback through or consultation, and through our DAIP working group.

Glossary and definitions

Disability - The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA) defines disability in relation to a person as including long-term physical, psycho-social, intellectual, cognitive, neurological or sensory impairment, or a combination of any of these impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing our differences. Diversity ensures the public sector is representative of the community we serve and brings a range of perspectives, experiences and opportunities to our work (*OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026*).

Equity recognises each person has different circumstances and acknowledges different approaches are necessary. Equity requires public sector agencies to address structural barriers and inequalities that may exist in the workforce and take a proactive approach to promoting fairness and justice (*OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026*).

Inclusion is about creating a workplace culture where people feel and are respected, valued, trusted and safe to contribute the diversity of their lived experiences. Inclusion ensures the public sector is a welcoming and supportive environment for all employees and stakeholders, regardless of their background or identity (*OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026*).

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation, and compounded inequities (Diversity Council Australia).

Lived experience is personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by others (*DHW Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2026*).

ANNEXURE 1

Our *SA Autism Strategy 2025-2029* Action Plan commitments

The *SA Autism Strategy 2024-2029* (Strategy) is a strategic document that supports inclusion of Autistic people, and their families and carers in South Australia. As part of the Strategy, the SA Strategy Action Plan 2025-2029 (SA Action Plan) outlines the steps the South Australian Government will take to fulfill the commitments of the Strategy.

The Department of State Development (DSD) is committed to creating environments, services and workplaces that are inclusive, affirming and accessible for Autistic and neurodivergent people. We recognise that neurodivergence includes autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette syndrome and other neurodevelopmental differences, and that people may identify with more than one form of neurodivergence.

We value the strengths, perspectives and capabilities that neurodivergent people contribute to South Australia's workforce and economy, and we are committed to creating conditions where these strengths can be realised while also addressing the barriers and support needs that many people experience. This work is particularly important for improving vocational education and employment outcomes for neurodivergent people across South Australia.

To achieve these outcomes, DSD's Action Plan addresses the following selected focus areas and commitments of the SA Action Plan, in line with the roles and responsibilities of our Department.

Focus area 2: Positive educational experiences

2. Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism amongst our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings.

Focus area 3: Thriving in the workplace

1. Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.
2. Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.
3. Increase opportunities for Autistic people to gain meaningful and lasting employment.
4. Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education to employment.

Focus area 4: Access to support and services

1. Develop a centralised state information system to support access and navigation of available support and services.
3. Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.
4. Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and support are available.

Focus area 5: Participation in the community

3. Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.

The Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Strategy on the Inclusive SA website - autismstrategy.sa.gov.au.

Our SA Autism Strategy 2025-2029 Action Plan commitments

Focus area 2: Positive educational experiences

We want the South Australian public education system to champion Autistic children and students to thrive in the educational environment, to receive the right support for them, and feel empowered to succeed.

Commitment 2: Improve the knowledge and understanding of autism among our educators, support staff and those connected to our education and care settings.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Improve the training and support provided to educators in higher education settings.		
Support registered training organisations (RTOs) that deliver subsidised training to effectively work and support Autistic students and provide inclusive learning environments.	Ongoing	The number of initiatives offered to RTOs that help them to effectively work with and support Autistic students and provide inclusive learning.

Focus area 3: Thriving in the workplace

We want a diverse, inclusive and welcoming South Australian workforce where the strengths and skills of Autistic people flourish.

Commitment 1: Improve knowledge, understanding and awareness of autism across the workforce.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Ensure public sector employees undertake Autism Awareness and Understanding training.		
Ensure in-person and online Autism Awareness and Understanding training is completed across public sector workforce.	Pilot by June 2026 then ongoing	The number of staff who undertook Autism Awareness and Understanding Training: • online • in-person.
Target: Increase awareness of autism across the public sector workforce and the strengths and benefits of employing Autistic people.		
Outline the initiatives completed to promote autism inclusion in the workplace.	Annually in January	The number of initiatives completed to promote autism inclusion in the workplace. **Initiatives include: events, days of significance, internal staff communications/newsletters, social media*
Engage Autistic employees and employees with disability to provide advice and inform inclusion activities, including to assist in promoting days of significance.	Ongoing	The number and proportion of lived experience staff engaged to inform inclusion activities.

Commitment 2: Create an accessible, inclusive and welcoming public sector where Autistic people can thrive.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Embed autism inclusion into workplace policies and practices.		
Review recruitment policies and processes to ensure they support reasonable adjustments and are responsive to the alternative ways Autistic employees can engage throughout the recruitment and training processes.	Nov 2026	The number and proportion of recruitment and training policies and processes that are reviewed to ensure they support Autistic and/or neurodivergent staff.
Review and implement reasonable adjustments to procedures and flexible workplace arrangements that support all staff, including Autistic employees and parents and carers of Autistic people.	Nov 2026 then ongoing	The number and proportion of reasonable adjustment and flexible workplaces arrangement procedures to support staff, including Autistic staff, that are: • reviewed • implemented.
Review and update, where applicable, new starter forms to include an opportunity to identify as Autistic and/or neurodivergent to enable more accurate reporting and awareness in the public sector workforce.	Nov 2026	The number of onboarding forms used to identify Autistic and/or neurodivergent staff that are reviewed and updated.
Target: Develop strategies to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Autistic public sector employees.		
Identify appropriate mechanisms, including clear confidentiality, to ensure Autistic employees feel safe, supported and confident to disclose that they are Autistic at the commencement of employment and through the employment lifecycle.	Nov 2026 then ongoing	The number of support mechanisms available to ensure Autistic and/or neurodivergent staff can disclose confidentially. **Support mechanisms include: secure IT systems, privacy principles*
Continue to promote and provide EAP services that are inclusive, culturally appropriate, neurodiversity-affirming and in a range of modes and formats to support the diverse communication styles of Autistic employees.	Ongoing	Are Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services being promoted? Y/N

Commitment 3: Increase opportunities for Autistic people to gain meaningful and lasting employment.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Develop programs and resources that support Autistic people to transition into meaningful employment in the public sector.		
Deliver programs that target diversity and inclusion for Autistic people to gain practical workplace experience while undertaking higher education to support them into employment long-term.	Nov 2028	The number of programs that target diversity and inclusion for Autistic and/or neurodivergent people to gain practical workplace experience while undertaking higher education.
Review and implement opportunities to support Autistic people to transition into employment in the public sector with tailored initial and ongoing support for Autistic employees.	Nov 2028	• The number of employment transition programs that support Autistic and/or neurodivergent people are reviewed; • The number of Autistic and/or neurodivergent people who accessed those programs.
Target: Provide alternative workplace training and volunteer options that support Autistic people entering the public sector workforce.		
Review and implement alternative and accessible workplace training options to support Autistic employees in a range of accessible formats and learning styles.	Nov 2029	The number of alternative and accessible workplace training options available to support Autistic and/or neurodivergent staff.
Review existing peer support or mentoring programs to ensure they are inclusive of Autistic employees.	Nov 2027	The total number of peer support and/or mentoring programs and, of those, the proportion reviewed to ensure they are inclusive of Autistic staff.

Commitment 4: Consider alternative employment initiatives when transitioning from education
to employment

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Develop programs or supported pathways for Autistic students transitioning from education settings to employment across the public sector.		
Review existing graduate programs to expand pathways for Autistic graduates from education settings to employment.	Nov 2028	The number of expanded pathways for Autistic graduates engaging in graduate programs.

Focus area 4: Access to support and services

We want a clearer, more consistent and accessible service system where Autistic people and their families and carers can access the support they need, when they need it.

Commitment 1: Develop a centralised state information system to support access and navigation of available support and services.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community throughout the planning, development and implementation phases to ensure services are neurodiversity-affirming and are effectively meeting the needs of Autistic people.		
Deliver or review initiatives, platforms and systems to connect Autistic people with information in various accessible formats across Government of South Australia support and services.	June 2027	The number of initiatives, platforms and systems made to connect Autistic people with information in various accessible formats. **Initiatives, platforms and systems include: website content, accessible formats (e.g. Easy Read).*

Commitment 3: Work with organisations to ensure evidence and research on autism can be effectively and efficiently translated into practice.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Collaborate with subject matter experts when developing and implementing support and services for Autistic people.		
Collaborate with autism-specific organisations, where relevant, when developing and implementing policies, support and services for Autistic people.	Ongoing	The number of autism-specific organisations engaged when developing and implementing policies, support and services for Autistic people.
Target: Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community throughout the planning, development and implementation phases to ensure services are neurodiversity-affirming and are effectively meeting the needs of Autistic people.		
Consult with reference groups and lived experience groups, where relevant, on autism-related matters to provide insights and guidance on identifying and addressing barriers to accessing services provided by the Government of South Australia.	Ongoing	The number of reference and/or lived experience groups engaged to identify and address barriers to accessing services on autism-related matters.

Commitment 4: Ensure neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and support
are available.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Improve existing services to ensure they are streamlined, effective and efficient to meet the individual needs of Autistic people.		
Review and update, where relevant, the customer service areas and experiences to ensure Autistic people feel supported when accessing services.	June 2027	The number of customer service areas reviewed and updated to ensure Autistic and/or neurodivergent people are supported when accessing services.
Target: Ensure a wide range of neurodiversity-affirming and culturally appropriate services and support are available, including to Autistic people who do not yet have an autism diagnosis.		
In the development of new strategies and initiatives, the State Autism Strategy and/or Autism Charter will be linked and referenced, where appropriate.	Ongoing	The number of references made to the State Autism Strategy and/or the Autism Inclusion Charter in new strategies and initiatives.
Target: Improve data capturing strategies of diverse cohorts of people accessing state government services and support.		
When consulting to inform the development of new strategies and initiatives, personal identifying data will be collected, where appropriate, to capture and consider the specific perspectives of the Autistic community.	Ongoing	Are you capturing personal identifying data including Autistic and/or neurodivergent people during consultation on the development of new strategic and initiatives? Y/N

Focus area 5: Participation in the community

We want a truly inclusive South Australia where Autistic people can meaningfully participate in the community without restriction.

Commitment 3: Partner with organisations, sporting clubs, local councils and community services to support inclusive initiatives for Autistic people of all ages.

Action	Target date	Measure
Target: Collaborate with the Autistic and autism community to ensure activities and services are autism inclusive.		
Consult with the Autistic and autism community, where appropriate, when planning and organising events to ensure they are autism inclusive, such as the inclusion of breakout or sensory spaces.	Ongoing	The number and proportion of lived experience people engaged to inform planning and organising of events.

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