



MDAA's Disability Inclusion Act Review

Online survey responses

What changes, if any, should be made to the objects outlined in section 3 of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014?

In section 3 of the Disability Inclusion Act sub-section b) outlines that the Act aims to promote the independence and social and economic inclusion of people with disability. We believe that there is a need to strengthen the wording of this to ensure there are greater opportunities for people with disability rather than just promote. Social isolation and barriers to employment have been main areas of concern communicated to us by our consumers, increasingly so for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people from new and emerging communities in rural or remote areas.

Is there anything missing that you would want added to the objects?

The Act should also outline the way it aims to make sure there are measures that will assess whether the objectives have been adhered to. This point is to be expanded on in the subsequent responses.

Are the provisions relating to the State Disability Inclusion Plan still correct and relevant?

Do you think a State plan is necessary, and if so, what do you think is most important to be included in the plan?

We do believe a State plan is necessary wherein increased employment opportunities need to be a focus. We also think that results of the initiatives outlined in the plan are transparent. Have their projects worked? If not, these initiatives must be adjusted. While this points to a greater concern of a need to improve reporting, we think it should be included in any DIAP.

Additional attention is also required when engaging with people from CALD backgrounds. By and large, data from various agencies in the disability space, most notably the NDIA, show that we have still not effectively engaged with CALD communities to the extent necessary. This has been further supported by the recommendations put forward by the Sax Institute Review (2018).

The Sax Institute review reported on NSW Government agencies and local government Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs)

Should the Act cover more than just NSW Government agencies and local government DIAPs? If so, what other groups do you think should be required to have a DIAP?

Are Disability Inclusion Action Plans effective?

Medium to large private organisations should also be required to have a DIAP. This could be less detailed than Government agencies depending on capacity, but they should show evidence of considering or attempting to implement strategies for disability inclusion. This would fit within a social model of disability where we acknowledge the role we all play.

What improvements, if any, could be made to help agencies prepare their Disability Inclusion Action Plans? What are the steps you think they should be required to complete before drafting their plans?

Agencies need to consult people with disability and disability organisations on several levels of the process, including at the end of any given DIAP. They must be consulted once the plans have been implemented to assess their effectiveness and apply any changes necessary to direct positive outcomes. It has been evident that not enough of this has been done by various major agencies.

Are the reporting requirements for Disability Inclusion Action Plans enough? If not, how do you think they should report and who should they be reporting to?

The Sax Institute review of the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (2018, pg.9) noted that 'most agencies were not actively monitoring or collecting data that could demonstrate meaningful outcomes'. While we agree that it is good to have public authorities reporting to the Minister on the progress of their DIAPs each financial year, it is necessary to have clearer targets or key performance indicators need to be specified. It would also be worth following up on some initiatives conducted in the previous financial year to determine whether they are sustainable and have had any meaningful, long term effects for people with disability.

We are aware that in-depth reporting requires significant time and resources for a number of agencies, however, the long standing and reoccurring systemic issues communicated to us by our consumers calls for a need into greater emphasis on meaningful outcomes. These outcomes should be specific in highlighting how plans have assisted priority groups, including people from CALD background with disability.

Do the functions of the Disability Council remain appropriate? Is it still relevant following the rollout of the NDIS?

Yes, the functions of the Disability Council do remain appropriate. While the NDIS has brought with it additional safeguarding bodies, the Disability Council still plays an important role. It is a significant fact that the majority of the council is made up of people with disability. Importantly, the numbers seen through NDIA reporting of CALD participation in the scheme show that the NDIS still only assists a small number of CALD people with disability. Beyond this, the NDIS only supports a small percentage of people that have been recognised to live with a disability by other government agencies. The lack of inclusion of all people with disability within the NDIS further demonstrate the need for other safeguarding bodies and particularly, the Disability Council NSW.

The RC's advisory role, as well as the promotion aspects of the council are still important. In saying this, review into the NSW DIAP revealed that, despite it's role to monitor disability inclusion actions planning, the Disability Council did not have access to the full documentation to allow for a thorough review of plans, nor does it have the space to provide extensive feedback. We think that not only is the Disability Council necessary, but steps should be taken to appropriately resource it.

The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and it's Optional Protocol brought with it a number of drastic and positive changes to the disability sector. Significantly, most agencies now practice what reflects a social model of disability with inclusion and accessibility being a shared responsibility of society in general as led by the state. The Disability Inclusion Act 2014, remains a valuable representative of this is. It is important to ensure the independence and social and economic inclusion of people with disability; and promoting the need for the State and the community to take responsibility in ensuring people with disability enjoy the same rights as any other Australian. It has the ability to cover all people with disability, unlike the NDIS, but changes are needed in the Act ensure continuous improvement is made on past initiatives.