



Australian Government

# Summary of the Australian Government Response to the Disability Royal Commission

July 2024

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## Cover Artwork by Helen Butcher: 'Belonging'

Artwork Title: Belonging  
Medium: Pencil on paper  
Developed: 2024



**'To me, the artwork 'Belonging' represents the inclusion of all people in society, embracing their differences. Inclusion means less discrimination, allowing people to feel they are part of the community and accepted for who they are. It's about having a place in society, having a voice, being seen, and being able to access more opportunities. It's not about being confined to a tiny box, but about creating more space for us — for instance, inclusive workplaces and interest groups.'**

*Helen Butcher, 2024*

Helen Butcher is an artist at ArtGusto, a supported art studio in Geelong, Victoria, dedicated to local disabled and neurodiverse artists.

In mid-2017, Helen reignited her passion for art by joining ArtGusto. Over the past seven years, she has developed her own distinctive style through her exploration of florals and patterns. By using patterns, Helen creatively experiments with colour and design. While her love for florals remains, her art has evolved to include unexpected yet delightful expressions

*Cover artwork © Helen Butcher / Copyright Agency, 2024*

using geometric shapes and dynamic background-foreground interactions. Recently, she has expanded her artistic repertoire to include shaping clay into vessels, experimenting with glaze colour dynamics.

When Helen first started at ArtGusto, she was hesitant to exhibit her work due to fear of criticism. However, she has since achieved significant milestones: her work has been published as cover art, exhibited in 27 group shows and more than eight competitions, commissioned for a short film, featured in a mural, and she has sold her art.

In 2022, Helen moved with her parents from Geelong to North-Eastern Victoria. Despite the move, she continues to participate in ArtGusto through video link and occasional in-person visits to the Geelong studio and excursions in Melbourne. Maintaining these social connections has been crucial for Helen and beneficial for her colleagues at ArtGusto.



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Government acknowledges the traditional owners of Country throughout Australia on which we gather, live and work.

We acknowledge all traditional custodians, their Elders past, present and emerging, and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to their culture, community, land, sea and water.

## Content warning

This publication contains information about violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation that may be distressing to readers.

## Support services

### **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1800 880 052**

The National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline is a free, independent and confidential service for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disability. The Hotline works with callers to find appropriate ways of dealing with reports of abuse or neglect through referral, information and support.

### **1800RESPECT: Call 1800 737 732, Text 0458 737 732**

1800 RESPECT is Australia's national counselling, information and support service for anyone affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. It is available, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



## **Disability Advocacy Support Helpline: 1800 643 787**

The Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (the Helpline) is a pilot initiative announced as part of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*, designed to improve access to individual advocacy support. The Helpline is a phone-based service that is delivered by Advocacy Law Alliance and accessed through the Disability Gateway. The Helpline is a free service for people with disability, their families and carers, who require short-term individual disability advocacy support.

## **Disability Advocacy Finder:**

The National Disability Advocacy Program provides people with disability access to effective advocacy support. The Department of Social Services funds 59 advocacy organisations across Australia to protect and promote the rights of people with disability. Services can be found through the Disability Advocacy Finder at the Ask Izzy website: <https://askizzy.org.au/disability-advocacy-finder>.

## **Lifeline Crisis Support: Call 13 11 14, Text 0477 13 11 14**

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

## **Beyond Blue Support Service: 1300 224 636**

Beyond Blue is an organisation that provides a free online and telephone helpline for people with depression, anxiety or other mental health issues. You can talk to trained mental health professionals who can give you support and advice. Beyond Blue can also help you find mental health services near you.



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## Foreword

We are pleased to present the summary of the Australian Government response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission). You can access the full response at [www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response](http://www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response).

The Disability Royal Commission was Australia's largest inquiry into the experiences of people with disability. It highlighted that people with disability are subjected to harm, exclusion, and discrimination at significantly higher rates than people without disability.

**As a nation we must do better. We must work together to ensure all Australians can participate as equal members of society, regardless of disability, gender, age, race, culture, religion, or sexual orientation.**

The Disability Royal Commission's Final Report includes 222 recommendations and sets out a vision for an inclusive Australia where people with disability live free from harm; where human rights are protected; and where individuals live with dignity, equality and respect, can take risks, and develop and fulfil their potential.

**The Australian Government supports this vision.**

The Australian Government has primary or shared responsibility for 172 recommendations. In this initial response we:

- accept or accept in principle 130 recommendations,
- are considering further 36 recommendations, and
- note 6 recommendations.

There are several recommendations that relate to ongoing or recently concluded inquiries or negotiations that require further consideration in consultation with people with disability, state and territory governments and other stakeholders. We will continue to publish responses to outstanding recommendations as this work concludes.

**We thank the nearly 10,000 people with disability,** their families, friends, representatives and carers who shared their experiences and ideas with the Royal Commission. We also thank the Commissioners and Royal Commission staff for their important work and everyone who contributed to the Australian Government's consultation and engagement process to inform responses and reform. These contributions have already made a difference and will continue to inform national change towards a safe, inclusive and accessible Australia.

## **We have listened to what is most important to people with disability and will focus the first stage of reform and implementation activities on:**

- **Safety:** Developing targets to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices; unifying quality and safeguarding arrangements; ensuring people with disability have access to consistent community visitor schemes as a safeguarding mechanism; improving the safety of women and girls with disability; and continuing the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline.
- **Rights & Anti-Discrimination:** Establishing a new disability advocacy program to better support people with disability to protect and defend their rights; initiating a review and modernisation of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*; amending the migration health requirement to be fairer and more inclusive for children with disability; and considering further the Royal Commission's recommended Disability Rights Act alongside the final report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework.
- **Inclusion & Access:** Reviewing *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*; improving national approaches to accessible information and communications, including Auslan; consulting on a First Nations Disability Forum or other appropriate shared decision-making mechanism; continuing the Primary Care Enhancement Program for People with Intellectual Disability; working with state and territory

governments to improve outcomes for students with disability; and supporting grassroots efforts to break down stigma and improve community attitudes towards people with disability.

- **Employment:** Implementing a new specialist disability employment program to help more people with disability prepare for, find, and maintain suitable employment; establishing a Disability Employment Centre for Excellence to build the capacity of employment service providers to deliver high quality and effective services; and continuing to work with people with disability, their families, representatives, advocates and service providers to evolve the supported employment sector.

This builds on our existing work identified in the Australian Government Progress Update on the Disability Royal Commission and investment to get the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) back on track, establish additional foundational supports, improve outcomes under *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*, enhance approaches to inclusion and access for people with disability in mainstream settings, and improve data and research through the National Disability Data Asset and National Disability Research Partnership.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The Australian Government Progress Update on the Disability Royal Commission is available on the Disability Royal Commission Response Hub at [www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response](http://www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response).



We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the disability community to implement meaningful change to embed our shared vision for an inclusive Australia.



**The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP**  
Minister for Social Services

## Response snapshot

The Australian Government:

- has primary or shared responsibility for **172 recommendations**
- accepts or accepts in principle **130 recommendations**
- is considering further **36 recommendations**, and
- notes **6 recommendations**.

To build on existing funding and commitments to support a safe, inclusive and accessible Australia for people with disability, the Australian Government is making a significant investment towards the first phase of its response to the Disability Royal Commission, including:

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**\$39.7 million**  
to establish a new disability advocacy program

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**\$6.9 million**  
to review and modernise the Disability Discrimination Act

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**\$12.1 million**  
to amend the Migration Health Requirement to be fairer and more inclusive for children with disability

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**\$23.3 million**  
to establish a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence

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**\$2.6 million**  
for the continued delivery of the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service

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**\$4.4 million**  
for consistent approaches to community visitor schemes as a safeguarding mechanism

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**\$227.6 million**  
to implement a new specialist disability employment program

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**\$1.2 million** to develop targets to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices

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**\$12.3 million** to improve national approaches to accessible information and communications, including Auslan

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**\$2 million** towards improving the safety of women and girls with disability

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**\$15.6 million** to unify national disability quality and safeguarding arrangements

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**\$3.7 million** to continue the Primary Care Enhancement Program for People with Intellectual Disability

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**\$19.6 million** to support grassroots efforts to improve community attitudes around disability

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This builds on the significant investment made over the last three Budgets totalling **more than \$3 billion to build a more inclusive Australia**. This includes considerable investment and action to get the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) back on track, \$57 million in the 2023–24 Budget to evolve the supported employment sector, \$68.3 million in the October 2022–23 Budget for the analysis, research and delivery of the National Disability Data Asset, as well as the enactment of the *Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023* to strengthen quality and safeguarding arrangements for people with disability outside the NDIS.



# Consultation and engagement to inform the Australian Government Response



## Consultation and engagement to inform the Australian Government Response

The Australian Government, at ministerial level and through the Commonwealth Disability Royal Commission Taskforce (Taskforce), has consulted and engaged with people with disability, their families, carers, representative organisations, service providers, unions, and the broader community to inform decision-making on reform in response to the Disability Royal Commission's Final Report and recommendations.

### Who we consulted

Everybody was invited to have their say and put forward their views relating to the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission. This included:

- people with disability, their families, and carers,
- advocates and representative organisations,
- disability support providers, unions, and workers, and
- peak bodies, academics, and other organisations.

The Australian Government also acknowledges the Disability Representative Organisations, peak bodies and other organisations that conducted significant independent engagement and consultation within their own membership networks and represented their views to the Taskforce. These efforts have enabled us to have a wider reach into the community, to hear more voices and to better understand what is important to them.



## How we consulted

Initial engagement with Disability Representative Organisations and peak bodies was undertaken through existing consultation forums to draw out and understand the nuances of their views of the recommendations and seek input on the approach to consulting. Taskforce representatives also undertook extensive desktop monitoring and analysis of public submissions, commentary and forums on the Disability Royal Commission and attended many forums with disability stakeholders to better understand their response to the Disability Royal Commission recommendations. We heard from various advisory councils, including Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council, as well as numerous consultation and inter-jurisdictional forums.

The Government has also engaged with stakeholders and the community through a combination of high-level roundtables, forums, workshops, and individual meetings.

The DSS Engage page on the DSS website was the Taskforce's primary public facing engagement mechanism. It went live shortly after the release of the Disability Royal Commission's Final Report and remained active for the duration of consultations. Interested members of the public were invited to subscribe for updates through the DSS Engage page, to be kept up to date on stakeholder consultation activities.

## Public consultation

A public consultation was opened on 28 November 2023, through an online questionnaire and submission process. The questionnaire was open to everyone. Respondents were invited to select up to three recommendations they considered the most important to them, and up to three recommendations they did not support. Free text fields were available to provide more information. Respondents were also given the option to provide a written submission to the consultation.

The public consultation closed on 19 January 2024. It received 335 questionnaire responses and 118 written submissions from a wide range of individuals and organisations.

All questionnaire responses and written submissions were analysed and consolidated into a de-identified report outlining key themes of responses. The report is available on the Disability Royal Commission Response Hub at [www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response](http://www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response).

## What we have heard

The public consultation revealed a high level of overall support for the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission. Respondents indicated optimism about the potential for Royal Commission recommendations to have a positive impact on the lives of people with disability. Many stakeholders also called for people with disability to be involved in implementation. While many recommendations attracted broad support, some recommendations attracted divergent views, particularly those related to special/segregated education, employment and housing. It is clear community members, like the Disability Royal Commissioners, have differing views on the future of these settings. All stakeholders agree that better accessibility and inclusion of people with disability across mainstream education, employment and housing settings is critical.

## **Working with state and territory governments**

On 3 November 2023, the Disability Reform Ministerial Council — which includes Commonwealth, state and territory ministers with responsibility for disability policy and services — committed to work collaboratively to progress the necessary reform to make Australia safe and inclusive for all people with disability and noted that addressing the issues highlighted by the Disability Royal Commission requires a national effort, including all governments and all parts of our community.

The Joint Australian, State and Territory Response to the Disability Royal Commission is available on Disability Royal Commission Response Hub at [www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Joint-Response](http://www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Joint-Response). It demonstrates a strong collaborative approach to implementing nationally coordinated change in response to the Disability Royal Commission.

# Australian Government policy statement on disability reform



## Australian Government policy statement on disability reform

The Australian Government is committed to a national effort and working in partnership with the disability community to implement the necessary reforms to make Australia more inclusive, accessible, and safe.

The Disability Royal Commission's Final Report included wide-ranging recommendations. The response prioritises investment in measures that will deliver better safeguarding, promote inclusion and accessibility, and uphold human rights, and recognises the unique perspectives and experiences of First Nations people with disability. The program of reform activity will be staged over several years and aligned with broader reforms to the disability ecosystem — as well as mainstream system reforms in health, education, and housing — as this supports the ongoing involvement of people with disability and enables lasting change.

Implementing and embedding our shared vision for an inclusive Australia requires a sustained national effort.

The following are the **key principles** that will shape and inform the ongoing development and implementation of the Australian Government's disability reform agenda in response to the Disability Royal Commission.



The Australian Government commits to enabling policy and delivering services that realise the vision set out by the Disability Royal Commission of an Australian community where people with disability:

- live free from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation,
- where human rights are protected, and
- individuals live with dignity, equality and respect and can fulfil their potential.

This includes a future where people with and without disability:

- live, learn, work, play, create, and engage together in safe and diverse communities,
- have the power of choice, independence, and the dignity to take risks,
- make significant contributions to communities that value their presence and treat them with respect, and
- are culturally safe and belong in families, communities, and peer networks.

The Australian Government commits to strengthening safeguards, independent oversight and complaint mechanisms that will help to reduce the unacceptable levels of violence, abuse and neglect experienced by people with disability. In many instances this will require working together with state and territory governments to enhance protections and services systems nationally.

The Australian Government commits to listening to the voices of people with disability and working in partnership with the disability community to design, implement and evaluate policies and programs that drive reforms to make Australia more inclusive, accessible, and safe for people with disability.

The Australian Government commits to recognising and responding to the intersectional and diverse needs of people with disability, including women and children; First Nations people; people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; LGBTIQ+ people; and older Australians. The Australian Government commits to upholding the human rights of people with disability to enable them to live with dignity, equality and respect.

The Australian Government commits to lifting capability across the Australian Public Service to deliver culturally safe, trauma-informed, inclusive, and accessible services. The Australian Government commits to promoting a more inclusive society where people with disability feel they belong, are respected, valued and able to fully contribute. *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* remains the key national policy mechanism to drive the necessary reforms at a national level.

# Overview of investment and action



## Safety



Prioritising action to improve the quality of disability services, strengthen safeguards in the community, and better prevent violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation is central to the Australian Government's initial response to the Disability Royal Commission.

- \$15.6 million to establish a **Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy** to unify disability quality and safeguarding arrangements for people with disability across Australia.
- \$4.4 million to ensure people with disability have access to consistent **community visitor schemes** as a safeguarding mechanism.
- \$2.6 million to continue the **National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline** and **Complaints Resolution and Referral Service**.
- \$1.2 million towards a whole-of-government approach to **reduce and eliminate the use of restrictive practices**, through establishing targets and performance indicators within the NDIS and developing a joint action plan with states and territories.

- The initial design of a **Risk Profile Model** to better identify NDIS participants who may be at risk of harm and support comprehensive individualised response strategies.
- \$0.5 million to apply a disability lens to the **First Action Plan** of the **National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032** to identify how each action in the Action Plan will address the needs of women and girls with disability.
- \$0.25 million to ensure **Guidance Materials for Family Domestic and Sexual Violence front line services** are accessible for women and girls with disability in Australia.
- \$1.25 million to expand the **Safer Girls Safer Women Project** to support women, girls and gender diverse people with disability, through implementing **best practice guidelines and learning resources and tools for workplaces** for sexual health, respectful relationships and consent education.

This builds on existing work and investment to strengthen quality and safeguarding for people with disability, including:

- \$160.7 million through the 2024–25 Budget to transform the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's ability to protect people with disability from abuse, violence and neglect, and to detect and prevent fraud through the **Data and Regulatory Transformation Program**.

- \$142.6 million through the 2023–24 Budget to support the **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in safeguarding NDIS participants**.
- The establishment of the **NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce** to provide advice on the design and implementation of the new graduated risk-proportionate regulatory model proposed in the NDIS Review final report.
- The release of the new National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) **Participant Safeguarding Policy and Implementation Plan** in April 2023.



## Rights & Anti-Discrimination



The Australian Government welcomes the Disability Royal Commission's rights-based approach to its inquiry and recommendations and is committed to advancing the rights of people with disability through ongoing law and policy reform, and strengthening on the ground programs that support people with disability to defend and protect their rights.

- \$6.9 million for **disability discrimination law reform**, to undertake a review and modernisation of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* in consultation with people with disability.
- \$39.7 million in additional funding to establish a **new individual disability advocacy program**. The new program will bring together current services to establish a streamlined and cohesive delivery model of ongoing individual disability advocacy supports. This will deliver better outcomes for individuals with disability who are at high risk of harm by addressing unmet demand and providing better support capability for the most vulnerable cohorts. It will be informed by and align with work already progressing under the National Disability Advocacy Framework.
- \$12.1 million to amend the **Migration Health Requirement** to be fairer for children with disability who are born and living in Australia.



These measures are consistent with the Government's ongoing commitment to implement the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and build on the work already underway to advance the rights of people with disability, including:

- The enactment of the ***Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023*** (the DSI Act) to strengthen quality and safeguards arrangements for people with disability outside the NDIS. The DSI Act was developed through extensive consultation with people with disability and seeks to embed human rights principles.
- The development of a new ***International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy*** to ensure Australia remains a strong and consistent global leader in advancing equity and human rights for persons with disability.

- **Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework:** In March 2023, the Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, referred Australia's Human Rights Framework to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights tabled its **inquiry report** on 30 May 2024.<sup>2</sup> The report provides 17 recommendations, including that the Government re-establish and significantly improve Australia's Human Rights Framework, enact a Human Rights Act, and enhance the role of the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Government is carefully considering the recommendations alongside the Disability Royal Commission's recommendations to establish a Disability Rights Act and National Disability Commission.

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2 [www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/Human\\_Rights/HumanRightsFramework](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Human_Rights/HumanRightsFramework).

## Inclusion & Access



To achieve an inclusive society, systems and services must be universally accessible and responsive to the diverse experiences, circumstances and needs of all people with disability. Through the initial response to the Disability Royal Commission, the Australian Government is investing in a range of initiatives to better support inclusion and access, recognising the diverse and intersectional experiences of people with disability and their carers at all life stages.

These initiatives include:

- Working with state and territory governments in partnership with First Nations people on consultations to develop a **First Nations Disability Forum** or other appropriate shared decision-making mechanism for the cross-cutting outcome of disability under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Reviewing ***Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*** in 2024 to ensure it is strengthened as a key driver in delivering national change in response to the Disability Royal Commission by working with state and territory governments, the Australian Local Government Association, Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council, and people with disability, their families, and representative organisations.

- \$12.3 million for a **national approach to accessible information and communications for people with disability**, including the development of an Associated Plan under *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* building capability across Australia's Public Service agencies to embed accessibility in the policy design and implementation of government policies, programs and services and everyday interactions with the community.
- \$3.7 million to continue the **Primary Care Enhancement Program for People with Intellectual Disability** to support access to health services for people with intellectual disability.
- \$19.6 million to **lift disability responsiveness and capability of key professional workforces** and support **grassroots efforts to improve community attitudes** and understanding of disability.
- Working with state and territory governments in partnership with people with disability to help educators, schools and school systems deliver more inclusive education to improve outcomes for school students with disability.

This complements comprehensive existing commitments and work to support an inclusive and accessible society that supports all people with disability, including people with physical, neurological, neurodevelopmental, psychosocial, sensory, intellectual and cognitive disability. Our existing work goes beyond the Disability Royal Commission's recommendations, including:

- Through the soon-to-be-released **Aviation White Paper**, the Government will implement a range of actions to affirm the rights of people with disability to access air travel, simplify travel processes and provide appropriate avenues to recourse where standards are not met.
- The **National Agreement on Closing the Gap (National Agreement)** and **Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031** provide the overarching policy frameworks that outline the expectations for transformative change at all levels of government for First Nations people with disability. Disability is recognised as a cross cutting outcome under the National Agreement. Both frameworks seek to embed a strengths-based approach. The **Disability Sector Strengthening Plan (DSSP)** and the **National Disability Footprint**, endorsed by the Joint Council on Closing the Gap, support implementation of Priority Reform Two under the National Agreement to build the community-controlled disability sector.

- Additional investment announced in January 2024 in response to the **NDIS Review** to support access to supports both within and outside the NDIS, including through:
  - \$11.6 million to support work to develop a **Foundational Supports Strategy** and to design additional foundational supports with states, territories, and the community.
  - \$118.1 million for **design and consultation across key recommendations of the NDIS Review**, including around fairer and better ways to access an NDIS budget, improved NDIS home and living options, better ways to access and pay for supports, and best practice early childhood supports.
- Release of the **Early Years Strategy**, which sets out the Government's vision to best support Australia's children and their families. This includes valuing all forms of diversity, such as disability, and ensuring supports and services are equitable, inclusive, and accessible. The Strategy includes a focus on empowering parents, caregivers, and families, which includes enabling and encouraging early access to early childhood supports when required to detect and act on early developmental delay signals.
- Development of a **National Autism Strategy** which will improve life outcomes for all Autistic people in Australia. It will provide, for the first time, a coordinated national approach to services and supports for Autistic Australians and their families.

- In **education**, the Australian Government is providing an estimated **\$3.7 billion** in 2024 to support schools to implement reasonable adjustments through the Schooling Resource Standard **students with disability loading**. The Department of Education will also commence work to inform national system reforms to drive more accessible and inclusive school education and improve outcomes for students with disabilities. To complement this, the Government produces resources to support students, parents, and carers to understand their rights; and support school staff to understand their obligations. The Government also supports professional development for school staff to build skills and understanding around autism through the **Positive Partnerships Program**; and provides funding through the **Higher Education Disability Support Program** to assist universities to support students with disability.
- Almost 2.65 million Australians care for someone with disability, a medical condition, mental illness, or older Australians. In October 2023, the Government announced the development of a **National Carer Strategy** to better support carers. In the 2024–25 Budget, the Government announced \$18.6 million over 5 years to introduce greater flexibility for Carer Payment recipients to manage their work, study, and caring responsibilities.



## Employment



The Australian Government is committed to ensuring that Australians with disability of working age have the opportunity to access secure and inclusive work. Achieving this requires lasting reform across the disability employment ecosystem to boost workforce participation, stamp out discrimination in the workplace, and foster a dynamic and inclusive labour market.

Over the next 4 years, the Government has committed over \$5.5 billion to help more people with disability prepare for and find suitable employment. This includes additional investment announced in the 2024–25 Budget, including:

- \$227.6 million in additional funding to implement **a new specialist disability employment program** commencing 1 July 2025. The new program will replace the current Disability Employment Services program and help people with disability, injury or illness find and maintain sustainable employment by delivering high-quality, personalised services.
- \$23.3 million to establish a **Disability Employment Centre of Excellence** to develop best practice, evidence-based information to help providers deliver high quality effective employment services and supports to improve disability employment outcomes.

This builds on existing actions to improve employment outcomes for people with disability:

- The release of the **Employment White Paper**, which followed the **Jobs and Skills Summit** held in September 2022 to explore avenues to achieve full employment, productivity growth and equal opportunities. The White Paper outlines the Government's vision for a dynamic and inclusive labour market.
- Following the Jobs and Skills Summit, the Business Council of Australia and Australian Network on Disability partnered with the Commonwealth and four large employers to deliver an 18-month **Career Pathways Pilot**. The pilot aimed at increasing understanding across all levels of management of the barriers to career advancement employees with disability may face and provided strategies to reduce those barriers. A total of \$3.3 million in Commonwealth funding was allocated to the pilot.

- Another outcome of the Jobs and Skills Summit was the allocation by the Commonwealth of \$3.3 million in Commonwealth funding to deliver a 12-month **Tourism Local Navigators Pilot**. The pilot tested new ways to connect job seekers with disability to meaningful tourism jobs by supporting selected organisations to provide Local Navigators to act as a connector between small and medium tourism businesses and employment service providers along with people with disability. The Local Navigators helped to reform workplace cultures and employment practices along with building the confidence of employers to employ people with disability.
- In October 2023, the Government also launched the **Carer Inclusive Workplace Initiative** to ensure carers are better supported to participate in the workforce.
- An additional \$57 million committed in the 2023–24 Budget **to evolve the supported employment sector**. Supported employment services support the paid employment of people with disability. They play a vital role in supporting approximately 16,000 people with disability to contribute and connect to their local community through employment. The additional funding will increase the capability of the sector to provide people with disability with high support needs access to a wider range of employment opportunities with appropriately targeted supports. It will also provide access to advocacy support and information for people with disability and their families to build confidence and understanding about rights and options at work.

- A refreshed NDIA **Participant Employment Strategy 2024–26** released on 20 March 2024 to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of NDIS employment supports.
- \$707 million to deliver a new **Remote Jobs and Economic Development Program** in the second half of 2024 that provides people in remote communities with real jobs, proper wages and decent conditions. The program is being developed in partnership with First Nations people and will fund 3,000 jobs over three years. It will support remote communities to determine local projects and job priorities to increase economic opportunities in their areas. The program will support people with disability through boosting the care and support economy in remote areas.
- In November 2022, the Government invested \$2 million to develop disability leaders across Australia through the **Disability Leadership Program**. The pilot was offered through the Australian Institute of Company Directors for people living with disability to boost their leadership and senior executive skills to undertake board positions. Over the two-year pilot, 208 people with disability enrolled in the program, with 87% reporting meeting their goals or aspirations for the course.

- In 2022, the Government amended the **Fair Work Act 2009** to provide greater scope for employees to request flexible work and made the right to request flexible work arrangements an enforceable right. This change will benefit all eligible workers, including workers with disability.
- The Australian Public Service Commission is continuing to develop and implement initiatives to **improve employment outcomes for people with disability in the Australian Public Service**. The Australian Public Service Commission is undertaking a discovery project to ascertain the feasibility of implementing the relevant Disability Royal Commission recommendations across the Australian Public Service.



# Summary of responses to recommendations





## Summary of responses to recommendations

This section provides a summary of the Australian Government's responses to the 172 recommendations for which we have a primary or shared responsibility. It does not include responses to the 50 recommendations within the sole responsibility of state and territory governments.

Detailed responses to each recommendation can be found in the full Australian Government Response to the Disability Royal Commission, available at [www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response](http://www.dss.gov.au/DRC-Aus-Gov-Response).

Please note the first recommendation in the Royal Commission's Final Report is Recommendation 4.1. Accordingly, responses commence from Recommendation 4.1.

<b>Response language and definitions</b>	
<b>Response Position</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Accept</b>	Accept / support the recommendation in full.
<b>Accept in principle</b>	Accept / support the overarching policy intent but may consider different approaches to implementation.
<b>Note</b>	Used for recommendations in which it would not be appropriate to indicate acceptance or rejection, which may be due to the recommendation not being within the Australian Government's policy responsibility or remit.
<b>Subject to further consideration</b>	Indicates the Australian Government is still considering the recommendation. This may be due to a need to await the outcome of related inquiries or to enable further consultation and engagement to inform a response.

## Volume 4: Realising the human rights of people with disability

Volume 4 examines Australia's human rights obligations and proposes changes for a stronger and more comprehensive legal framework to protect and advance the rights of people with disability. It includes 34 recommendations, all of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

There are 22 recommendations regarding the establishment of a Disability Rights Act. The Australian Government will consider these further alongside the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' (PJCHR) inquiry report regarding Australia's Human Rights Framework, which was published on 30 May 2024.

There are 12 recommendations regarding the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Disability Discrimination Act). The Australian Government accepts in principle all of these recommendations and is dedicating \$6.9 million to review and modernise the Disability Discrimination Act.

### Australian Government positions — Volume 4

Recommendation title	Australian Government response
4.1–4.22: Establishment of a Disability Rights Act	Subject to further consideration
4.23–4.34: Reform the Disability Discrimination Act	Accept in principle

## Volume 5: Governing for inclusion

Volume 5 examines existing national disability policy, strategy and governance arrangements. It includes 7 recommendations, 6 of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 3 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendation 5.1 around a new national disability agreement, and will respond to this recommendation by the end of 2024,
- is further considering recommendation 5.5 around establishing a National Disability Commission, noting this requires further consideration alongside the PJCHR inquiry report, and
- notes recommendation 5.6 around new governance arrangements for disability.

The Australian Government, state and territory governments, and the Australian Local Government Association, have commenced a focused review of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–31* to consider the issues raised in the Disability Royal Commission and to take account of feedback from the first two years of *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–31* implementation.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 5

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
5.1: Develop a National Disability Agreement	Subject to further consideration
5.2: Review and update Australia's Disability Strategy	Accept
5.4: Review national agreements, strategies and plans	Accept in principle
5.5: Establishment of a National Disability Commission	Subject to further consideration
5.6: New governance arrangements for disability	Note
5.7: Focal points across jurisdictions to implement the CRPD	Accept in principle

## Volume 6: Enabling autonomy and access

Volume 6 examines the barriers that impact people with disability being able to exercise autonomy and access services and systems on an equal basis as others. This includes barriers to accessible information and communication, support for decision-making, advocacy, healthcare, and the overuse of restrictive practices in various settings. Volume 6 includes 41 recommendations, 24 of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 21 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendation 6.20 around the withdrawal of the interpretative declaration on article 12 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. The Australian Government will revisit its interpretative declaration following its work in collaboration with states and territories to consider embedding the Disability Royal Commission's supported decision-making principles outlined at recommendation 6.6 into relevant legislation and policy,
- is further considering recommendation 6.41 around legislative prohibitions of non-therapeutic sterilisation, noting states and territories are better placed to regulate this practice. The Australian

Government supports greater publication of data on the sterilisation of people with disability. Further consideration would be required to ensure accurate data can be published while protecting the privacy of individuals, and

- notes recommendation 6.30 around expanding the scope of the National Centre of Excellence of Intellectual Disability Health to include autism and other forms of cognitive impairment.

To support action in response to recommendations in Volume 6, the Australian Government has allocated:

- \$12.3 million to develop an Associated Plan under *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031* to improve the accessibility of information and communications for people with disability,
- \$39.7 million to establish a new individual disability advocacy program,
- \$3.7 million to continue the Primary Care Enhancement Program for People with Intellectual Disability.
- \$1.2 million to develop targets to reduce and eliminate restrictive practices.



## Australian Government positions — Volume 6

Recommendation title	Australian Government response
6.1: National accessible communications plan	Accept in principle
6.2: Increase the number of Auslan interpreters	Accept in principle
6.3: Access to skilled and qualified interpreters	Accept in principle
6.6: Supported decision-making principles	Accept in principle
6.19: Data collection on support and representation arrangements	Accept in principle
6.20: Interpretative declaration	Subject to further consideration
6.21–6.23: Advocacy	Accept in principle
6.24–6.25: Health system capability regarding cognitive disability	Accept in principle
6.26: Expand the role of the Health Ministers Meeting to monitor health workforce capability development	Accept in principle

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
6.27: Establish regular progress reporting by accreditation authorities	6.27 (a) and (b): Accept in principle 6.27 (c): Accept
6.28: Improve access to clinical placements in disability health services	Accept in principle
6.29: Improve specialist training and continuing professional development in cognitive disability health care	Accept in principle
6.30: Expand the scope of the National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health	Note
6.31: Embed the right to equitable access to health services in key policy instruments	6.31 (a): Accept 6.31 (b): Accept in principle
6.32: Increase capacity to provide supports and adaptations through improved guidance, funding and accessible information	Accept in principle

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
6.34: Introduce disability health navigators to support navigation of health care for people with disability	Accept in principle
6.37: Data collection and public reporting on psychotropic medication	Accept
6.38: Strengthening the evidence base on reducing and eliminating restrictive practices	Accept in principle
6.39–6.40: Restrictive Practices	Accept in principle
6.41: Legislative prohibition of non-therapeutic sterilisation	Subject to further consideration

## Volume 7: Inclusive education, employment and housing

Volume 7 considers the experiences of people with disability in accessing inclusive education, employment and housing. It includes 44 recommendations, 35 of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 28 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendations 7.31 and 7.32 around supported employee wages and supported employment,
- is further considering recommendation 7.40 around the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, noting the Plan is currently under development and is subject to negotiation between the Australian, state and territory governments,
- is further considering recommendations 7.43 and 7.44 concerning roadmaps to phase out group homes noting the interactions of these recommendations with the NDIS Review which governments are still considering,

- notes recommendations 7.14 and 7.15 around the phasing out of segregated education. The Australian Government recognises the ongoing role of specialist settings in service provision for students with disability and providing choice for students with disability and their families. State and territory governments will continue to be responsible for making decisions about registration of schools in their jurisdictions.

To support action in response to recommendations in Volume 7, the Australian Government is:

- investing \$227.6 million to implement a new specialist disability employment program commencing on 1 July 2025,
- investing \$23.3 million to establish a Disability Employment Centre of Excellence,
- working with state and territory governments in partnership with people with disability to help educators, schools and school systems deliver more inclusive education to improve outcomes for school students with disability.

In January 2024, the Government also announced additional investment in response to the NDIS Review, including \$49.7 million for design and consultation activities around key NDIS Review recommendations about improved NDIS home and living options.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 7

Recommendation title	Australian Government response
7.2, 7.3, 7.6, 7.13: Inclusive education	Accept in principle
7.8, 7:10: Education workforce capability and complaints management	Accept in principle
7.9, 7.12: Education data, evidence, and funding	Accept in principle
7.14–7.15: Phasing out of non-mainstream or segregated education	Note
7.16: Priorities for inclusion in the new Disability Employment Services model	Accept
7.17: Develop education and training resources for Disability Employment Services staff	Accept
7.18–7.23: Disability employment in the public sector	Accept in principle
7.24: Convene a Disability Employment Rights Council	Note
7.25: Amend the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> (Cth)	Accept in principle

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
7.26: Amend the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth)	Accept in principle
7.27: Enable a Fair Work Ombudsman referral mechanism	Accept
7.28: Improve information about wages and the Disability Support Pension	Accept
7.29: Embed an 'open employment first' approach in the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy	Accept
7.30: Support the transition to inclusive employment	Accept in principle
7.31: Raise subminimum wages	Subject to further consideration
7.32: End segregated employment by 2034	Subject to further consideration
7.33: Prioritise people with disability in key national housing and homelessness approaches	Accept in principle
7.34: Include homelessness in Australia's Disability Strategy	Accept



<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
7.39: Preventing homelessness when people with disability transition from service or institutional settings	Accept in principle
7.40: Address homelessness for people with disability in the National Housing and Homelessness Plan	Subject to further consideration
7.41: Group home reform	Accept in principle
7.42: Improve access to alternative housing options	Accept in principle
7.43–7.44: Group homes reform	Subject to further consideration

## Volume 8: Criminal justice and people with disability

Volume 8 considers the experiences of people with disability in contact with the criminal justice system and the violence experienced by women and children with disability, including family and domestic violence. It includes 24 recommendations, 10 of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 9 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendation 8.17 around the interactions between the NDIS and the justice system alongside related recommendations in the NDIS Review.

To support action in response to recommendations in Volume 8, the Australian Government has allocated:

- \$2 million towards improving the safety of women and girls with disability through the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, and
- \$19.6 million to uplift disability responsiveness and capability of key professional workforces and support grassroots efforts to improve community attitudes and understanding of disability.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 8

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
8.2: Disability awareness in OPCAT monitoring	Accept in principle
8.11: Information for courts and legal practitioners	Accept in principle
8.12: Implementation of the National Principles	Accept in principle
8.13: Data about people detained in forensic systems	Accept in principle
8.17: NDIS Applied Principles and Tables of Support concerning the justice system	Subject to further consideration
8.18: Timing of NDIA-funded transition supports	Accept
8.19: Amendment of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) to cover police provision of 'services'	Accept in principle
8.20: Improving police responses to people with disability	Accept in principle

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
8.23: Action plan to end violence against women and children with disability	Accept in principle
8.24: Disability-inclusive definition of family and domestic violence	Accept in principle

## **Volume 9: First Nations people with disability**

Volume 9 outlines the issues and themes identified through listening to the many stories and experiences shared with the Disability Royal Commission by a wide range of First Nations people with disability, their families, carers, supporters, and communities. It includes 13 recommendations to improve the experience of First Nations people with disability in accessing culturally appropriate and safe supports and services and elevating First Nations disability policy. The Australian Government has primary or shared responsibility for 10 of the 13 recommendations in Volume 9.

The Australian Government accepts or accepts in principle all 10 of the recommendations.

The Australian Government has committed to working with state and territory governments in partnership with First Nations people on consultations to develop a First Nations Disability Forum or other appropriate shared decision-making mechanism for the cross-cutting outcome of disability under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Government will also work with First Nations people with disability, community-controlled organisations, mainstream support providers and other disability support providers to improve the cultural safety of supports, including through improved market stewardship and regulation.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 9

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
9.4: Expand community connector programs	Accept
9.5: Block funding the community-controlled sector	Accept in principle
9.6: National Disability Insurance Agency Board	Accept in principle
9.7: Participation in cultural life	Accept in principle
9.8–9.9: NDIS return to country and family supports policies and funding	Accept in principle
9.10: First Nations Disability Forum	Accept in principle
9.11: Building on the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan	Accept in principle
9.12: Disability-inclusive cultural safety standards	Accept in principle
9.13: Remote workforce development	Accept in principle

## Volume 10: Disability services

Volume 10 examines how disability service providers and the National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) can do more to prevent, identify and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in disability services. It includes 33 recommendations, all of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 31 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendation 10.8 concerning a national disability support worker registration scheme. The NDIS Provider and Worker Registration Taskforce will provide a report with advice and recommendations to Government in mid-2024 which will inform the response to this recommendation,
- notes recommendation 10.9 on the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Industry Award because it does not have standing under the *Fair Work Act 2009* to make an application to vary the SCHADS award.



To support action in response to recommendations in Volume 10, the Australian Government has allocated \$15.6 million to establish a Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy to unify quality and safeguarding arrangements for people with disability across Australia. This builds on existing significant work and investment to strengthen safeguards in disability services.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 10

Recommendation title	Australian Government response
10.1: Embedding human rights	Accept in principle
10.2: Independent support coordination	Accept in principle
10.3: Adequate support coordination	Accept
10.4: Quality of support coordination	Accept in principle
10.5: Advocacy	Accept in principle
10.6–10.7: Supported decision-making in disability services	Accept in principle
10.8: A national disability support worker registration scheme	Subject to further consideration
10.9: The Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award	Note
10.10: Provider of last resort	Accept in principle
10.11: Internal procedures for monitoring reportable incidents.	Accept in principle
10.12: Introduction of class or kind determinations	Accept in principle

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
10.13: Creating an independent investigators panel	Accept in principle
10.14: Developing model policies and procedures	Accept in principle
10.15: Complaint handling and investigative practice guideline	Accept in principle
10.16: Requirement to consider redress	Accept in principle
10.17: Access to safeguarding indicators and expertise	Accept in principle
10.18: Improved complaint handling procedures and responses	Accept in principle
10.19: Requirement to investigate certain complaints	Accept in principle
10.20: Making complaint processes accessible	Accept
10.21: Registration and audit process	Accept in principle
10.22: Strengthened regulatory requirements	Accept in principle
10.23: Publishing data about the unregistered provider market	Accept

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
10.24: Improved access to behaviour support practitioners	Accept in principle
10.25: Strengthened monitoring, compliance and enforcement	Accept in principle
10.26: Expanded data reporting and publication	Accept in principle
10.27: Strengthened intelligence capacity	Accept in principle
10.28: Information sharing between prescribed bodies	Accept in principle
10.29: Establishing a First Nations Unit	Accept in principle
10.30: Engagement and capacity building activities	Accept in principle
10.31–10.33: Worker screening	Accept in principle

## Volume 11: Independent oversight and complaint mechanisms

Volume 11 proposes strengthened independent oversight and complaint mechanisms and pathways across six areas: adult safeguarding functions; independent complaint reporting; referral and support mechanisms; the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT); disability death review schemes; and reportable conduct schemes. It includes 18 recommendations, 12 of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government:

- accepts or accepts in principle 9 of the recommendations,
- is further considering recommendations 11.1 and 11.2 concerning nationally consistent and integrated adult safeguarding functions. The approach to this recommendation will be informed by the work governments will undertake together to develop a framework that sets out the standards and culture of how the disability ecosystem will work to strengthen safeguarding for people with disability.
- is further considering recommendation 11.16 about a national agreement on disability death reviews noting this requires further consideration following state and territory consideration and scoping of recommendations 11.14 and 11.15 regarding the establishment of disability death reviews schemes in each state and territory.

To support action in response to recommendations in Volume 11, the Australian Government has allocated:

- \$15.6 million to establish a Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy to unify quality and safeguarding arrangements for people with disability across Australia
- \$4.4 million for consistent approaches to community visitor schemes as a safeguarding mechanism.
- \$2.6 million for the continued delivery of the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline and the Complaints Resolution and Referral Service

## Australian Government positions — Volume 11

Recommendation title	Australian Government response
11.1–11.2: Adult safeguarding	Subject to further consideration
11.4: Creating accessible complaint pathways	Accept in principle
11.5: Complaint handling and investigative practice guidelines	Accept in principle
11.6: Enshrining key provisions of OPCAT in legislation	Accept in principle
11.7: Resourcing and wider definition of places of detention	Accept in principle
11.10: Improved consistency and coordination	Accept in principle
11.11: Disability inclusive approach to implementing OPCAT	Accept in principle
11.12–11.13: Community Visitor Schemes	Accept in principle



<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
11.16: National agreement on disability death reviews	Subject to further consideration
11.18: Dual oversight of reportable conduct and incidents	Accept in principle

## Volume 12: Beyond the Royal Commission

Volume 12 considers monitoring and reporting on actions in response to the Disability Royal Commission's recommendations, and disability data improvements. It includes 8 recommendations, all of which are within the Australian Government's primary or shared responsibility.

The Australian Government accepts or accepts in principle all 8 of the recommendations.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments have committed to deliver the enduring National Disability Data Asset. The National Disability Data Asset will bring together de-identified data from Australian, state and territory government agencies for research and analysis to give a more complete picture of the life experiences of people with disability. It will be in operation in 2024–25.

Consistent with recommendation 12.2, all governments have also agreed to report to the Disability Reform Ministerial Council twice a year on the implementation of Disability Royal Commission's recommendations.

## Australian Government positions — Volume 12

<b>Recommendation title</b>	<b>Australian Government response</b>
12.1: Government responses to the Final report	Accept in principle
12.2: Implementation of the Final report recommendations	Accept in principle
12.3: Progress reporting on implementation of recommendations	Accept in principle
12.4: Evaluation of effectiveness in improving outcomes	Accept in principle
12.5: A nationally consistent approach to data collection	Accept in principle
12.6: Disability flags in data collection for mainstream services	Accept in principle
12.7: Improving disability data collection	Accept in principle
12.8: Long-term support for the National Disability Data Asset	Accept in principle