Engagement and consultation with people living with disability

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023

Priority 6.

Engagement and consultation

Action 14.

Develop a toolkit that supports State authorities to consult and engage with people living with disability when developing policies and programs, which:

- promotes and explains co-design principles
- focuses on supports for consultation with regional South Australia.

Acknowledgment of Country

The Government of South Australia acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations and recognises them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.

Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters.

Contents

Introduction

This toolkit has been prepared by the Department of Human Services (DHS), drawing on information provided by State and local government agencies, people with lived experience of disability, the wider disability sector and community, and open-source disability information.

It has been developed to support State Government and local government consult and engage with people living with disability when developing policies and programs. It contains guidelines, resources, information, and promotes and explains co-design principles and supports for consultation, including within regional South Australia.

The purpose of the toolkit is to raise awareness, provide resources and generate new ideas for greater inclusion, consultation, and engagement. This toolkit is a starting point for inclusive engagement and users are encouraged to seek out additional sources of information or specialist advice if required.

Disclaimer

This toolkit is for reference only, is not a complete guide and may be added to or updated over time. References to third parties are provided for your information only and not as an endorsement by the South Australian Government.

The intended purpose of this toolkit is a guide to support inclusive engagement and consultation with people living with disability. You should always consider your own requirements and circumstances and seek professional advice where relevant.

Acknowledgments

JFA Purple Orange was engaged to co-design stage one of four accessible and inclusive toolkits. Over 100 State government agencies and local councils were invited to contribute to the content. DHS engaged Vision Australia and Funktion as industry experts to provide an expert review.

The draft Accessible and Inclusive toolkits were released for public consultation. The Department of Human Services received feedback from people with lived experience of disability, service providers and community groups, with a number of ideas and resources incorporated into the final toolkits.

If you have further resources that you think could be included in any of the Accessible and Inclusive toolkits please contact DHSDisabilityInclusion@sa.gov.au.

The collection of 4 toolkits includes

- Accessible and Inclusive Community Events toolkit

- Accessible Communication toolkit

- Engagement and Consultation with people living with disability toolkit

- Accessible Wayfinding and Signage toolkit.

Inclusive SA

The State's first Disability Inclusion Plan, Inclusive SA, was released in late 2019 and is a whole-of-government approach based on fairness and respect to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. The Plan includes 12 priorities with associated actions and aims to increase the involvement of people with disability in the community.

A key element of Inclusive SA is social inclusion, a priority for people living with disability as it affects all aspects of their lives. It is our aim that the contributions and rights of people living with disability are valued and understood by all South Australians and that their rights are promoted, upheld and protected.

It is important for social wellbeing that all South Australians can make independent decisions on how to engage with and contribute to the community. The whole community benefits when all South Australians are included.

This toolkit provides practical information to assist South Australian government agencies and local councils to use signage and wayfinding to assist people living with disability.

The toolkit is developed in response to Action 14 of Inclusive SA (the State Disability Inclusion Plan).

Legislation and frameworks

This toolkit is informed by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA), both of which promote equality of opportunity and the prevention of discrimination based on sex, race, disability and age.

The toolkit is also informed by the principles set out in the Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA), which reflect the principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the National Disability Strategy.

Diversity in Australia

Australia has a diverse population. In acknowledging Aboriginal peoples as the first peoples of this country, we also acknowledge the many people who identify with more than 270 ancestries and who now call Australia home[1]. We also acknowledge the wider diversity of our community, including the many people in Australia who live with disability.

- In 2018 there were 4.4 million Australians living with disability, 17.7% of the population[2], (1 in 5 people)

- 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair[3].

- 17.1% of people with disability use mobility aids)

- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, one quarter (26.9%) of people aged 60-64 years are living with disability. Over eight in ten people aged 90 and over (84.6%) have a disability[4]

- Disability discrimination accounts for the highest volume of complaints across the board to the Australian Human Rights Commission[5].

- 3 million Australians live with depression or anxiety[6].

350,000

Vision Australia estimates there are now over 350,000 people who are blind or have low vision.

About 17%

of Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are approximately 30,000 deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss.

Be careful of stereotypes

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about other groups of people that individuals form yet are not consciously aware of. We all have biases but by becoming aware of unconscious biases, challenging them and actively working to reduce them, we can enable better engagement and communication.

Review your ideas and consider if your proposal perhaps reflects an unconscious bias. Use inclusive language and ensure you are being truly inclusive and when planning wayfinding or signage consciously consider whether your biases are impacting your thinking.

Everybody wins inclusive consultation

Inclusive consultation, through engaging all members of the community, benefits everyone. Include people living with disability, across all consultation projects, not just those with a disability focus.

Engaging people with lived experience of disability in the decisions that affect them when developing programs and policy, results in better outcomes for everyone and ensures the whole community is represented.

Ensuring all engagement comes from an inclusive lens, allows for all of the community to be involved. Using a variety of tools and methods to engage, while thinking about inclusion from the very beginning, will have the greatest results. This toolkit also includes considerations and links to resources to engagement with children and young people, Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse, and new and emerging communities.

People living with disability, want to have a greater role in leading and contributing to government and community decision-making. It is our aim that the perspectives of people living with disability are actively sought and they are supported to participate meaningfully in government and community consultation and engagement activities.

This toolkit offers practical ideas and resources to effectively engage and consult with people with lived experience of disability. It is a starting point for inclusive engagement.

The social model of disability

The Social Model of Disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people living with disability. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes such as assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

The Medical model of Disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person not what the person needs. We believe that medical model of disability creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their lives.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice and control.

Sourced from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations.

What is inclusive engagement and consultation?

Inclusive consultation and engagement takes into account different access and communication requirements and includes:

- flexible approaches to suit individual needs

- respecting that different people have different needs

- provides everyone with the opportunity to contribute, regardless of their age, gender identity, culture, location and accessibility needs

- adopts a flexible approach for consultation

- considers a variety of access and communication requirements.

Community engagement is embedded in both State and local government policy.

Approaches reflect the work of the International Association for Public Participation (known as IAP2) and its Spectrum of Public Participation:
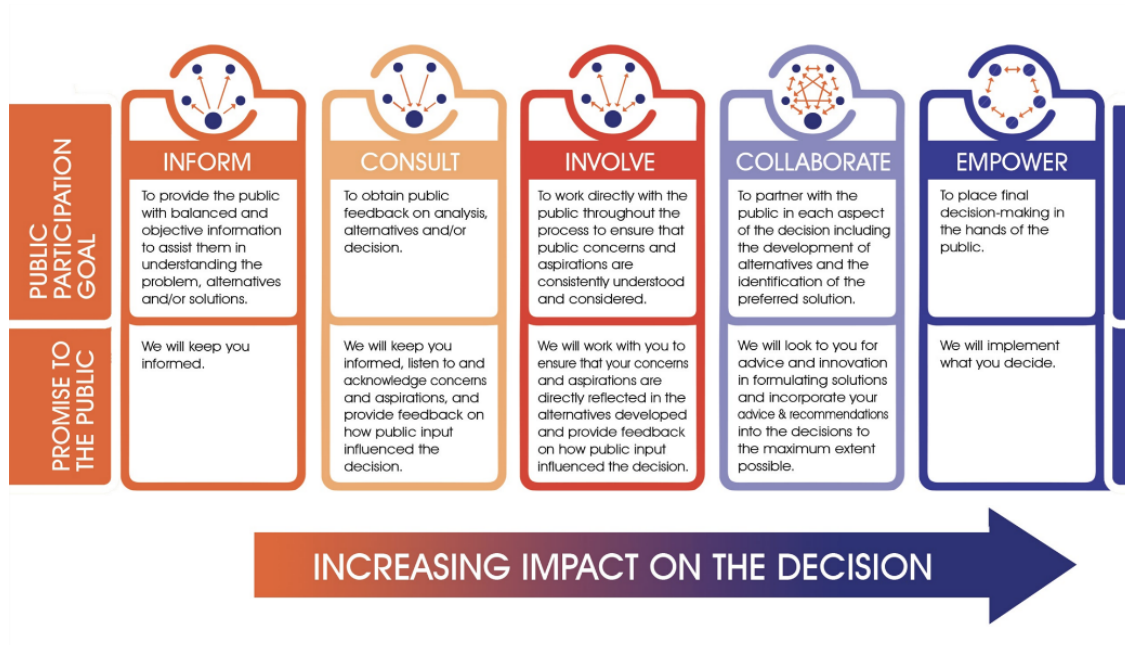
Better Together

The commitment to stakeholder engagement is fully articulated in the [Better Together framework](#).

Established in 2013, Better Together is centred on the following six engagement principles which provide a consistent approach across government and to guide best practice.

1. We know why we are engaging
2. We know who to engage
3. We know the history
4. We start together
5. We are genuine
6. We are relevant and engaging.

The six principles are inter-related and should be considered in any engagement activity. They rely on each other and if we choose not to pursue one, the overall success of the engagement may be hindered. While the Better Together framework is established to support government agencies, the principles and practices outlined can be applied in any context.

[Download a copy of the Better Together Principles of Engagement Handbook (PDF 1.8MB)](#)

Where to start

The Better Together resource will help you consider your intended engagement process. The *third and fourth principles* of Better Together should not be overlooked; knowing history and ensuring you are starting together will ensure the *fifth and sixth principles* of genuineness and relevance are embedded throughout your engagement.

Some things to think about in preparing to engage or as first steps in engagement might be one or more of the following:

- Identifying why it is you intend to engage with people living with disability. Is it to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower? (This list of engagement levels has been developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), called the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. It is used by Better Together. This Toolkit refers specifically to consultation and later describes co-design which has, at its core, elements of the upper end of the IAP2 Spectrum.)

- Planning informally and/or formally, and even writing an engagement or consultation plan will help get you started and keep you on track.

- Scoping the depth, detail, what's in and what's out (limitations or parameters), length of time needed to engage and consult (consider drawing a simple Gantt Chart7), and thinking about how to gather and synthesise information, should all be considered.

- Researching your topic or reason for engagement through online searches (ensure you draw information from known and reputable sources), conversations, confirming legislative or policy requirements and understanding and aligning with organisational need.

- Storytelling can inform history, truth and context, which may be helpful in reducing bias and opening opportunity for cultural, gender, religious or other understanding. This can prevent well-intentioned but misguided actions in the engagement or consultation process.

- Respecting those involved in the engagement or consultation process and the process itself, are important. Without respect, trust cannot be built, people are disempowered, and processes and outcomes lose meaning. Respect is a key element of inclusiveness.

Local government

Local government in South Australia was an early adopter of the IAP2 training and approach to involving the community in decision making. You can find out more in the LGA SA Community Engagement Handbook.

For government staff who would like to download the LGA Community Engagement Handbook, email *marketing@lga.sa.gov.au* to request access to the LGA's Members Only website content. The LGA encourages all government staff to request access so they can download the most recent version.

Methods of inclusive engagement and consultation

There is no limit to the way in which you can engage and consult with communities. Conducting an engagement process may form part of an 'event'. For information on how to conduct an accessible and inclusive event, refer to the Accessible and Inclusive Community Events toolkit.

Having a variety of consultation methods is key to inclusive engagement and ensures people with a range of disability or diverse circumstances are included.

Engagement options to consider

- **One-on-one meetings or interviews** help break down barriers and provide opportunity for in-depth understanding.
- **Questionnaires and surveys** which may be done in hardcopy or online options such as SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics, which can be sent out through email or published on a website such as [YourSAy](#).
- **Formal, informal group meetings or roundtable discussions** which can use a range of different techniques of engagement.
- **Steering groups, advisory panels, workshops, focus groups** or **stakeholder forums** that are directed and/or guided through different discussions.
- **Public forums** which enable voices from across the community to be heard.
- **Conferences and seminars** that include speakers and plenary sessions, workshops and information gathering.
- **Field days, demonstrations, trials and displays** which engage the general community or targeted groups seeking feedback and input in design or for the purposes of publicising services or products.

Offering a variety of ways to engage with people allows for a broader and more inclusive consultation.

Include representation of people with lived experience of disability across a range of advisory, reference and co-design groups – not just groups with a disability focus.

Consider the diversity within the community of people with disability. Methods will vary depending on individual needs (for example, vision, audio, Easy Read).

Consult and engage with your audience verbally and visually, providing a range of opportunities for people to provide feedback:

- accessible surveys, written (email or postal), online, phone or face-to-face.

- alternative format surveys can include Easy English with photos or symbols

- suggestion boards or boxes to record levels of satisfaction or suggestions for improvement

- use a variety of ways to interview that may include, face-to-face, telephone or video calls (including 1800 free call number).

- Make sure websites and online forums are accessible, following the guidelines provided in Online Accessibility Toolkit.

- Focus groups with an independent facilitator.

- Employing people with disability to interview and facilitate feedback and focus group sessions.

- Citizen workshops or citizens' juries – panels of people from the general public who meet to discuss their views on issues.

- targeted consultation forums or public meetings where people are invited to attend.

- YourSAy for government departments.

Considerations for people living with disability

The purpose of this toolkit is to support engagement and consultation with people with lived experience of disability. While the various methods and techniques outlined are useful in any context, specific considerations for those living with disability need to be factored into the processes involved. Consideration should also be given to the intersectionality of disability with the lived experiences of women, children, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Some specific things to think about:

Quick checklist for engagement

Principle	Method
Engage as early as possible	Allow time to make arrangements for Auslan interpreters, organising travel or creating accessible information
Allow enough time	Keep in mind that when engaging with people with disabilities, some processes may take longer and can require additional resources
Promote and engage well	Creating accessible information, websites and Easy Read documents can all take time
Determine a suitable location and time of day	Think about accessible locations and what time of day is best to hold your engagement
Allow time for input	Ensure there is sufficient time allocated for full participation remembering that use of interpreters, input by carers or use of assistive technology may require a longer overall timeframe
Think about whether payment is appropriate	Depending on the kind of engagement, some form of payment or honorarium may be appropriate, or you may consider paying for transport and/or accommodation costs

Tips for consulting with people living with disability

There is a lot that can be done to remove barriers and promote inclusive consultation and engagement. Three main areas to consider are:

Physical Accessibility

Having accessible toilets, appropriate access for wheelchairs or walking frames.

Transport

Appropriate and affordable passenger transport options may remove barriers for people getting to a public engagement forum.

Communication

Presenting information in a variety of formats provides for people with vision or hearing impairment and people with intellectual disability.

Ways to communicate

There are many different communication options available that will enable your engagement to be inclusive for people living with disability.

Think about using a variety of ways to communicate and promote your engagement and be aware of the various communication options you can provide upon request.

More information on accessible and inclusive communication can be found on the [Online Accessibility Toolkit](#).

This toolkit contains information on:

- Audio
- Braille
- Accessible print
- Easy read
- Auslan
- Video and multimedia.

Remunerations

Reimburse any transport costs and consider arranging payment or honorariums in recognition of people's time, expertise, lived experience and knowledge. This is particularly important if you are facilitating a co-design group, meeting or workshop.

Remuneration is subject to a number of factors and should be discussed with your organisation's business or human resources area.

Evaluation

Ask people if the venue, presentation style and information provided met accessibility needs as part of your evaluation/feedback.

Recognise people's contribution. This can include sharing with them how their ideas have been incorporated into the project, providing updates and including a formal recognition in the acknowledgments at the final product.

Promotion of your consultation

It is important to consider a variety of ways to promote your consultation. The 'Report it Right' Media guidelines have some useful tips to consider for any marketing campaigns.

- Social media and web postings – promote through disability peak bodies, community groups, government and corporate.

- Mainstream media, like local papers, community radio including culturally and linguistic diverse groups and Aboriginal community radio.

- Engage with disability specific media that is published by disability people bodies and advocacy organisations.

- Also include community organisations that are not associated with disability (i.e. Aboriginal community groups, children's centres and/or CALD community groups.

- Contact regional and local government.

- YourSAy is available for State government departments.

Messaging

Think about how your engagement or consultation is conveyed and include welcoming and inclusive messaging. Consultations and engagement don't necessarily have to be promoted as having a disability focus. Highlight your agency's other attributes, such as being an inclusive organisation, and emphasise all members of the community are welcomed and encouraged to provide contributions and ideas or be involved in co-design workshops.

Inviting people with a disability to notify the organisations contact person to request any access requirements — such as an Auslan interpreter, shows your organisation is inclusive and accommodating of access requirements. Provide information and materials in readable print and offer accessible formats upon request.
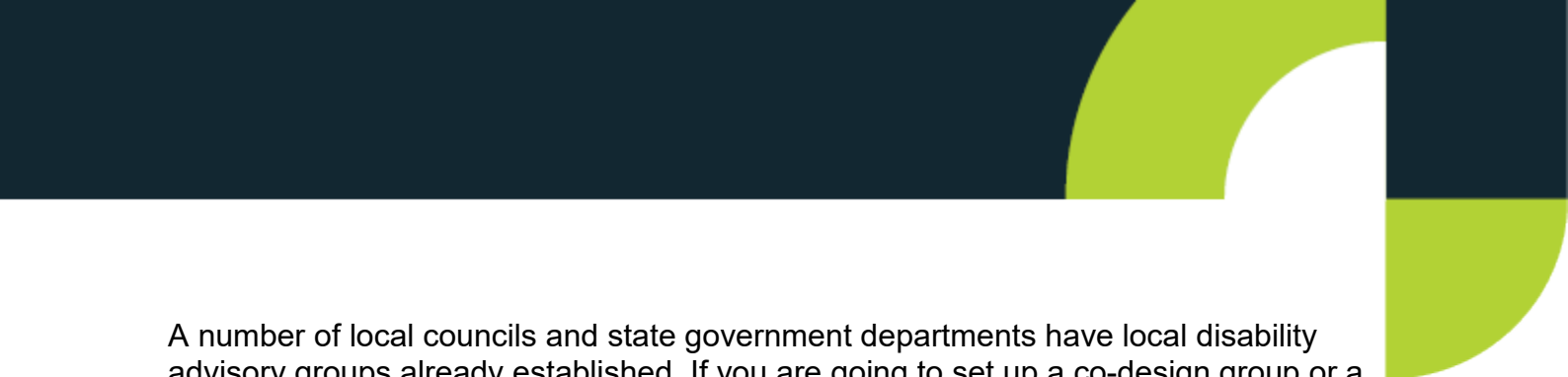
Preparing for your consultation

Plan your engagement and consultation to be inclusive from the start. Be clear about the purpose, target group (if applicable) and type of engagement group and chosen methodology.

- Advertise your consultation well in advance and give enough notice of any public sessions to give people opportunity to plan their attendance.

- Produce invitations and advertisements in Plain English with readable standard print. If requested, provide in accessible formats as described in the Online Accessibility Toolkit.

- Time and location are important. People who have support people, translators or require accessible taxis may find it difficult to attend events at certain times of the day (for example, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm may be a good time).

- When organising catering and venue size, note that some people may have support people, interpreters or guide dogs that must be included.

- Ensure the facilitator and other staff are aware of any access and communication needs of people with a disability.

- Allow the person to include a contact person if they have any particular access requirements, such as attendant carers or Auslan interpreters required to enable their contribution to the consultation.

- Consider if childcare should be provided.

- Consider providing catering during your engagement, even for shorter engagements to support participants with longer commute times.

- It is important to provide opportunity for participants to disclose disability, however some people may decline to disclose their disability, and that is their right.

Existing networks and advisory groups

A range of non-government and government organisations may be able to assist with your engagement by linking to people living with disability. They may be able to provide advice and support in relation to the needs of people with disability and may also be able to act as a conduit to people that you wish to engage.

It is important to acknowledge that different disability organisations and peak bodies may engage in different ways. For example, some organisations may send individual representatives, others may provide an opportunity to access a user group at a pre-scheduled meeting, while others may ask for payment.

A number of local councils and state government departments have local disability advisory groups already established. If you are going to set up a co-design group or a wishing to consult, you may wish to approach an agency who have a list of people that are interested in co-design and consultation.

- [Purple Orange](#)

- [Enabled Youth Disability Network (Purple Orange)](#)

- [Maven (Scope Global)](#)

- Disability Engagement Group (DHS).

The Department of Human Services Disability Engagement Group (DEG) is used to obtain advice about disability issues. The group is a confidential contact list of people who have chosen to be available to provide independent advice on issues that are important to people living with disability in South Australia. Consultations take place as needed. Members participate because of their interest and experience in areas related to disability. The group includes people living with disability as well as family members, carers and practitioners. Contact: DHSDisabilityTalk@sa.gov.au

Disability engagement partners, advisory groups and panels

- [Local Area Coordinators](#) are NDIS partners in the community who create NDIS support plans and connect people to services.

- [Disability Inclusion Advisory Group – Local Government Association](#) is a recently established group that advises councils on how to best work alongside people living with disability, to capture their ideas, concerns and needs to inform the implementation of Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). The group is made up of 12 members, representing a range of disability experiences and diversity.

- [Access and Inclusion Advisory Panel – Adelaide City Council](#) aims to connect the Council to people's lived experience. The Panel meets quarterly to help shape the access and inclusion outcomes for key projects across the city.

Children and young people

Meaningful engagement of young people may provide decision makers with information, ideas and solutions, to issues initiatives policies and programs, previously not considered.

The Practice guide to effective engagement with young people is a useful resource that was developed in collaboration with State Government, the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (YACSA), and young people across the State, including regional and remote areas.

Download the [Better Together – A practical guide to effective engagement with young people (PDF, 2.8MB)](#).

When engaging with children and young people living with disability, there are additional considerations to include during your consultation. These principles may also be useful when engaging with people of any age.

When engaging with people under 18 years of age in South Australia, your engagement must comply with the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*, this legislative instrument administers care and protection for children and young people in South Australia.

Safety for children and young people

Children and young people describe safety as more than physical safety. It is about feeling valued, known, accepted and understood, and having their sensory, emotional, behavioural and physical needs met.

When facilitating engagement, you must be mindful of the individual needs related to:

- types of disability, including physical, intellectual and psychosocial, and all levels of capacity. For example, how to account for the sensory needs of children and young people with autism and intellectual disability, as well as physical accessibility for people with physical disability.

- age, both chronological and developmental.

- how to work with families, carers and other organisations or service providers to arrange scheduling, risk assessment and adjustments or adaptations, where necessary.

Methods of engagement for children and young people

Traditional methods of engagement such as large group forums or survey deigned for a general audience may not necessarily be as effective when consulting or engaging with children and young people with disability.

Smaller groups are often preferred. This enables, the highest level or participation and engagement and the best possible support that meets individual needs.

Recognise and minimise barriers

Barriers facing children and young people living with disability can be attitudinal as well as practical.

- Ableism – perpetuates low expectations or assumptions about the capacity of people with disability to communicate and participate.

- Adultism – ignores or discounts children's perspectives.

- Logistical – barriers which may intersect with poverty and include issues with transport and accessibility costs of participation.

It is important to consider that some children and young people with disability rely on support from adults who understand their communication barriers and needs. It is essential that support guides facilitate communication, rather than speaks on behalf of the child or young person.

Identity and disclosing disability

Children and young people with disability view their place in the world very differently to adults. Like all young people, young people living with disability seek to be identified by, and valued for, their age, their relationships, and their achievements.

Identity develops over time, and many young people may not want to be defined by their disability and may choose not to disclose their disability. As such, opportunities for engagement should:

- available on a wide range of issues and experiences beyond 'disability specific' or 'age specific' issues.

- acknowledging that how a young person self-identifies may impact how they engage.

Authentic engagement

Authentic engagement and consultation with people with disability should:

- have a clear rational and purpose, which is communicated from the beginning

- be realistic about what you are doing with any information gathered

- ensure all information is relevant, meaningful, accessible and developmentally appropriate

- where possible share information or key messages gathered through the engagement or consultation back to participants in a way that is meaningful and easy to understand.

Flexible engagement options

To keep children and young people engaged and comfortable, it is important for those leading the consultation or engagement to:

- provide young people with opportunities to participate in different ways that are appropriate for them. This could include activities like drawing, colouring or plasticine, or with support from communication devices, interpreters, or with some other means.

- be willing and equipped to adapt to different disability-related needs or other needs related to the environment, size or the groups and age.

- use language that is child friendly and think about the most appropriate with to frame questions

- keeping questions broad and open-ended is likely to be more effective than technical, specific or closed questions.

Other considerations for engaging children and young people

Consider the benefits of partnering or collaborating with external agencies or organisations such as youth organisations with disability expertise.

Respect children and young people's time. In addition to school, young people living with disability may attend regular appointments, undertake capacity building activities and often access additional tutoring or mentoring.

The Commissioner for Children and Young people has held extensive engagement and consultations with children and young people across the state, including with children living with disability. More information can be found on the [Commissioner for Children and Young People](#) website.

- [Conversations with Children and Young People with a Disability (PDF, 321KB)](#)

- [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Inclusion and Diversity (PDF, 507KB)](#)

- [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Living in Regional SA (PDF, 1.07MB)](#)

- [Enabled Youth Disability Network (Purple Orange)](#).

LGBTIQA+ people

When planning inclusive community engagement, it is important to understand client groups and the challenges they potentially face. This helps to ensure programs and services are appropriate and address the diverse needs of clients.

- Don't make assumptions about someone's gender identity or sexuality.

- Make sure to create safe environments where LGBTIQA+ people feel safe to participate.

- Respect the privacy of any information that people share with you. For example, they might not have 'come out' (openly disclosed their sexuality or gender identity) with their family or carers.

Further information can be found at:

- [Disability Inclusion (LGBTIQ+ Health Australia)](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Strategy (NDIS)](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians experience higher rates of disability than other Australians. After considering age differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, the rate of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is almost twice as high as that among non-Indigenous people[8].

When engaging with people who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, specific acknowledgement and understanding of relationship with Country, local customs, history, disempowerment and current relationships should arise from deep engagement with traditional custodians to ensure consultation is done well. Recognising that English may be a second or third language for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is also important. Know what country you are meeting on and ensure you acknowledge the traditional custodians and pay respect to Aboriginal peoples as the State's first people and to their traditional relationship with Country.

It is important to build relationships and work in partnership with the Aboriginal community, including the Aboriginal community-controlled sector, Aboriginal organisations and local community groups. Working with established networks will allow your consultation to reach a greater audience and help develop ongoing trust and relationships.

Translation and interpretation

Consider if Aboriginal translation or interpreters are required. View the South Australian Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators Guide provided by Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

NDIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy

The NDIA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy (PDF 3.2MB). draws upon the existing strengths and features of rural and remote communities, along with engaging in the 'proper way' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are key components.

The strategy focuses on enabling quality engagement, service delivery and leadership to ensure the successful delivery of the NDIS in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. The strategy may provide useful information to consider when engaging with Aboriginal people with disability.

Resources on engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- FPDN Home - Network for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with disabilities

- Cultural Inclusion Framework

- The right track webinar series and toolkit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander toolkit The Right Track · City of Playford

- South Australian Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators Guide | Department of the Premier and Cabinet (dpc.sa.gov.au)

- The Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement has a report

- CAE_Biennal-Report_Rework_Web_compressed.pdf (dpc.sa.gov.au)

- Aboriginal health and wellbeing websites | SA Health

- First Nations engagement principles | Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

- Emerging Minds provide a [Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Children toolkit](#).

Cultural considerations

More than a quarter of Australians (26 per cent) were born overseas, and of these, two thirds were born in non-English speaking countries. Historically, Australians from culturally diverse backgrounds have been underrepresented in the disability sector.

More than 300 different languages are spoken by people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in addition to the hundreds of languages spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

People living with disability are members of many groups and may also identify with the beliefs, religion, values and history of other cultures. Different cultures have different understandings of, and attitudes towards, disability[9]. This may influence how you engage with communities.

Challenges that may affect your engagement

There are a number of challenges that may affect your engagement with multicultural communities including:

- navigating new government structures, processes, roles and responsibilities
- adjusting to different culture and language, and
- access to General Practitioners and other services.

Other factors that may impact engagement include:

- relationships. Remembering that building trust takes time
- language and literacy, cultural practices
- if the subject for engagement is culturally sensitive.

The role of family members and community

In planning engagement with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds consider the role of family members and community. A communication plan specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse communities may be helpful. Working in partnership with peak bodies and local cultural community groups is a good way to promote your consultation with existing networks and build ongoing relationships and trust.

Tailor your communications

- Consider whether translating and interpreting is required and contact the [Interpreting and Translating Centre.](#)

- Develop multilingual information strategies and promote your consultation in creative and cultural inclusive ways (Easy Read with pictures, written, spoken, electronic and printed).

- Communicate in each community's preferred medium (some communities may prefer printed information rather than verbal.

- Use established ethnic and community radio stations, websites, press and other media. Use networks and consult with community organisations who can link you to communities and support engagement (such as National Ethnic Disability Alliance, the Migrant Resource Centre, Multicultural Communities Council of SA or Multicultural Affairs).

- Engage bicultural workers or interpreters at face-to-face engagements (please refer to your agencies' policies and procedures for obtaining an interpreter); and allowing sufficient time for cross-cultural input and communication.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities

[The Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC)](#) is a registered NDIS service provider for children and adults with disabilities. AMRCC provide services to those with diverse cultural needs from non-English speaking backgrounds and have qualified and experienced bilingual staff from over 50 language groups.

[The Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia (MCCSA)](#) is the peak body, representing multicultural communities in South Australia and supports and advocates for all people from CALD backgrounds to realise their potential as active contributors to the economic, social and cultural life of South Australia. The MCCSA supports communities and members through strong collaborative leadership, advocacy, and resources. MCCSA advocates on behalf of CALD people with disability, their families and carers in South Australia, as well as on a national level through its affiliate, the Federation of Ethnic Communities Council (FECCA).

MCCSA useful resources

- [Disability and NDIS Resource Kit](#).
- [NDIS Community Connector Program](#)
- [Speak My Language](#)
- [Cultural Connections in Disability](#).

The [MCCSA Resource Kit](#) has information on the following subject matters:

- In Language Resources about Disability and the NDIS
- Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Disability
- Disability Advocacy Services
- NDIS and Disability Glossary (for interpreters, providers and consumers)
- Disability Self-Advocacy
- Disability in CALD Communities – Resources and Publications
- Working with CALD Communities (Tools and Resources).

Resources to support engaging cultural communities

- [Interpreting and Translating Centre (Translate SA)](#)
- [National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)](#)
- [Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (NDIS)](#)
- [Engaging CALD communities in the NDIS (Anglicare) PDF 1.18MB](#)
- [The Right Track (City of Playford)](#).

The NDIA Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy

The [NDIA Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018](#) strategy sets priority areas for action focussed on building connections and positive relationships with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, broadening choice and control, and increasing cultural competency within the NDIA and its Partners.

In July 2021, the NDIA released a progress update on the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy. The update details progress against the priorities identified in the Strategy and actions to further drive the implementation of the Strategy over the next 18 months.

People with disability from CALD backgrounds and key peak body organisations have extensively been involved in the development of the strategy.

The NDIA recognises that people with disability from a CALD background can face additional challenges in terms of inclusion in their communities, and this extends to their ability to access the NDIS and supports.

For further information about cultural and linguistic diversity please visit the [NDIS website](#).

Extending engagement to regional areas

The principles for good engagement and consultation are universal. A more considered approach to including the voices of people living in regional areas and to conducting engagement activities in regional areas (including rural, peri-rural and remote communities) is important.

The NDIA Rural and Remote Strategy

The NDIA [Rural and Remote Strategy (PDF 1MB)](#) draws upon the existing strengths and features of rural and remote communities, along with engaging in the 'proper way' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The strategy focuses on enabling quality engagement, service delivery and leadership to ensure the successful delivery of the NDIS in rural and remote communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia. The strategy has useful information that can also assist with engaging people in regional and remote areas for State and local government.

Rural town and district communities

When engaging with these communities consider the following:

- the impacts of changing populations

- the impacts of being a part of a minority group and the lack of anonymity, belonging, and access to supports this can generate (including for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people who identify from a LGBTIQ community, the elderly and those with disability)

- the layered influences of being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, connection to Country, the impacts of many years of disenfranchisement and the direct and indirect prejudice and racism that exists within Australian society

- recognition of the high levels of domestic violence and suicide that are often hidden

- the impacts of social isolation, poor communication, and financial and psychological difficulties associated with drought, flood and fire

- the impacts of distance from and fragmentation of key amenities and services (including education, emergency, health and mental health services, and social opportunities)

- and conversely the hopes, dreams and opportunities that regional and remote communities can offer and the strong sense of community that can exist in many communities.

Remote communities

When engaging with these communities consider the following.

- Research the community you are visiting or engaging with, find out the Aboriginal Nation, the history and cultural information Map of Indigenous Australia (AIATSIS).

- It is important to build strong relationships and work with community when engaging and consulting with remote communities.

- Find out who the key people to speak with are and invite community leaders, elders or representatives and work in partnership and collaborate.

- Connecting with the local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation or the area is a good starting point Members Archive (Aboriginal Health Council SA).

- Provide information in creative and culturally inclusive ways (written, spoken, electronic, printed or other creative media.

- Develop multilingual and multimedia information strategies and consider using pre-established Aboriginal and community radio stations, websites, press and other media use networks and consult with community organisations who can link you to communities and support engagement.

- Recognise and be respectful of cultural business that may impact your consultation.

- Understand the challenges of travel, communication, isolation and connection, overlaying the issues that exist for towns and district communities.

- Consider if interpreting and translation services are required when engaging with remote communities. Refer to the South Australian Aboriginal Languages Interpreters and Translators Guide (Department of the Premier and Cabinet).

- The methods of engagement outlined in this toolkit need to be considered and where applicable, people in regional South Australia actively included or separate engagement activities undertaken.

- Online Community Engagement toolkit for rural, remote and Indigenous Councils (Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government)

- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families and Children toolkit (Emerging Minds).

Extending engagement to co-design

Co-design is a simple way of involving people in the community in decision making processes. There are many benefits to co-design and it can be used in a wide range of circumstances.

One of the ways in which the outcomes of engagement can benefit people with lived experience of disability is through co-design.

Guidance to co-design with people living with disability

Purple Orange has developed a guide to co-design with people living with a disability. The guide is intended to assist organisations and individuals to apply co-design principles in their work.

The guide contains information such as:

- What is co-design?

- Co-design vs consultation who should use co-design and when?

- Key co-design principles

- How to run a co-design group

- Meeting preparation

- Hosting meetings

- Follow-up

- Co-design meeting agenda template

- Co-design terms of reference template

The full [Guide on Co-Design with People living with disability](#) on the Purple Orange website.

Co-design explained

The 'co' in co-design stands for community, conversation and collaboration. It's about bringing together people with lived experience of disability and those undertaking the designing to jointly make decisions, informed by each other's expertise.

The 'design' in co-design is about inputting, making, creating and testing, leading to rich learning and testing of ideas and assumptions. It leads to better outcomes which should result in more informed projects, programs, policy, services and products, and to benefits and longer-term improvements in design in other contexts, better community understanding and awareness, and improved accessibility and inclusiveness more broadly.

Co-design approaches are often workshop based, bringing the community experience into both the physical and virtual room through presentation of examples and user journeys. Where in the past we have expected to meet face-to-face, in a technologically and geographically expanding world, opportunities present themselves for community, conversation and collaborative co-design in an online environment. This can be done in through simple online meeting tools including video and teleconferencing.

Deciding if co-design is right for you

It is important to be honest about the level of engagement that can be achieved and if co-design is right for what you are planning. There will be times when co-design is not the best approach. Examples may include:

- an outcome has already been pre-determined

- a project that is time-critical

- it is not possible to obtain the relevant lived experience expertise

- resources to conduct co-design are not available.

It may be that an approach using consultation without co-design is more appropriate.

The benefits of co-design

While it may appear to be easier and more productive to progress a policy or program with limited external input, consultation and by extension co-design, offer a range of benefits:

- brings together the wisdom of lived experience and of professionals

- provides better and broader understanding of problems

- generates collective innovation, fresh thinking and new ideas

- engages, motivates and empowers end users

- creates a sense of collective ownership of solutions and outcomes

- identifies alternative business and service delivery models.

Involving people with lived experience of disability in co-design will benefit those involved, organisations and the whole community.

Holding a consultation or co-design event or activity

While this toolkit provides information about how to engage and consult with people living with disability, the emphasis here is on enabling the voices of people with disability to be heard through engagement that involves co-design events and activities. In planning a co-design event or activity, the Better Together website contains a number of resources you may find helpful.

Information about holding an accessible and inclusive event, is available in the Accessible and Inclusive Community Events toolkit (PDF, XXMB).

Some practical tips on conducting engagement and consultation using co-design can also be found in the Metro-Regional Intellectual Disability Network RID (Co-Design kit)

You may also like to refer to other toolkits on co-design. An example of another toolkit that has been reviewed and is considered useful has been produced by the Western Australian Council of Social Services ACOSS Co-Design Toolkit (PDF 7.3 MB).

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation has co-design Training resources: Co-design Training Resources (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation)

A number of links to existing co-design resources can be found in the Resources section of the toolkit.

Seeking feedback on a co-design event or activity

Asking people with disability who participated in a co-design event or activity to provide feedback on what they thought of the process and outcomes is important. This will provide insights into what was done well and where things could have been done better. Surveys are also a good record and can assist with holding future events.

Checklist

This checklist was developed by the **Centre for Inclusive Design**. It is designed to provide an overview of considerations to make events and meetings inclusive. It is also a useful resource for use during consolation and engagement with people living with disability.

Further information is available at the [Centre for Inclusive Design website](#).

Location and Venue

(also see our Accessible and Inclusive Community Events toolkit)

If the meeting is in a physical location, aim to use a venue that complies with Australian Building codes. Here are a few ways to check.

Choose a venue that can be accessed via a ramp, is clearly visible and accessible for public transport, taxis and cars.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure entrances are clearly signed and doors, ramps, lifts, and hallways can accommodate wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Does the venue have an automatic door? Ensure automatic doors are working appropriately and are 900 – 950mm wide. An alternative may be to have someone available to greet people and open swing door.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Is the venue aware of requirements around service animals in Australia? (Provisions around service animals: water, place to go to the toilet)

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Are there accessible bathrooms? Check that the bathrooms can easily be accessed, are clean and functioning.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Check the area is free from distracting noise, such as adjacent rooms, traffic and ventilation systems.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure the venue can cater for invited attendees and carers or companions (if required).

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Online events and meetings

Ensure the video conferencing/webinar software you are using is as accessible as possible with features complying with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1.

☐ Yes   ☐ No ☐ N/A

If possible, choose software that does not require attendees to download a plug-in to access the software. Some people with disabilities cannot download software without help and some attendees may not be able to download software to work computers.

☐ Yes   ☐ No ☐ N/A

Test software before the event. Make sure multiple people can access the software.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Provide an alternative if attendees cannot access the software. Can they dial in by phone, or use a chat facility?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Identify protocols for speaking at the beginning of the meeting.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Platform options for online meetings and events

Zoom – Provides some accessibility options and features.

Google Hangouts – Provides some information on accessibility features for users with a google account.

GoToMeeting – May require a plug-in download. Provides an easy to use interface and would need testing as there is no information on accessibility features or configuration.

WebEx – May require a plug-in download but is used by the W3C. WebEx accessibility features.

Skype – Requires an app or plug-in download. Skype provides information on accessibility features.

Communications and promotions

Make event information and materials available in a variety of alternative formats, such as, braille, large print, audio/video, email, Easy Read.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Promotion on social media should include accessibility, such as description of images, accessible hashtags, captioned videos and accessible formats.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Website information and materials need to be in an accessible format.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure e-Newsletters and event updates sent to mailing lists are in accessible formats.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure signage and onsite banners have good colour contrast and are easy to read from several meters away. Also, make sure signage is placed in logical areas.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Invitations

Ensure digital invitations are in an accessible Word, PDF or email format. Also ensure physical invitations have good colour contrast and information is easy to read. You may wish to identify the accessibility adjustments available, so attendees feel comfortable with disclosing their needs.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Provide information on how to access the venue, including, venue drop off points, accessible parking, public transport and walking directions.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

For event registrations or RSVPs, ask attendees if they have any particular accessibility requirements. This ensures adjustments can be managed as a part of the event.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Provide a range of alternatives for attendees to register or RSVP for the event – by phone, email, in person or online. Many online event registration tools are not accessible and people with disabilities can find them difficult to use.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Companion card holders should be honoured for ticketed events.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Wayfinding

Wayfinding materials should be simple and easy to read with clear step-by-step directions and appropriate directional signage. (see our Accessible Wayfinding and Signage toolkit).

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Do signs and elevators have braille signage? Consider having people placed outside lifts or in the lobby to help direct attendees.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

If a map has been provided in physical format or electronically, ensure the type is not too small and venue is clearly marked. Further help can be provided by including the location of accessible parking, seating and restrooms. It's also good to provide a phone number and other contact information.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

If electronic kiosks are used to assist with wayfinding, ensure the height for information can be adjusted, directions are announced as well as shown on screen, captions are supplied with videos, there is good colour contrast; and, icons are clear and simple to understand.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Room set up

Ensure the room is well lit throughout.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Book Auslan interpreters well in advance to ensure interpreter availability.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Provide space for Auslan interpreters (if required). Ensure interpreters are positioned in a well-lit area at the front visible to the audience. Reserve space at the front for Deaf, hard of hearing or lip-reading attendees.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure there is ample space around the entrance for people to enter and exit without disrupting other attendees.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Provide sufficient space between tables for wheelchairs and mobility scooter access and ensure their height is adjustable.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Are stages and speaking areas, including lecterns, accessible for people with limited mobility?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Is the room clear of clutter, trip hazards (For example: cables removed or taped down and secure flooring)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Provide guests with access to a separate, quiet area to allow them to take a break or make phone calls, and adequate seating at standing events.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

For smaller meetings, ensure name tags/lanyards are provided and speakers/attendees are announced at the beginning of meetings.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Prepare an Acknowledgement to Country for the beginning of the event/meeting. A large event may require inviting an indigenous elder to reside over the Welcome to Country.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

The host or event organiser should provide a 'house-keeping' statement at the beginning of the event. This should outline the layout of the room, breakout rooms, and location of the toilets, meal areas, fire exits and emergency procedures.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Ensure the host provides an introduction for attendees in meetings. For people who are blind it helps to know who is in the room and where they are located, including attendees connecting by phone or electronically.

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Technology and audio visual

Ensure a hearing loop is available and additional microphones provided for questions.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Provide adjustable height microphones, or lapel microphones.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Provide live captioning. This involves having an adequate internet connection available for attendees to connect to through their personal devices, as well as a phone line to connect the captioners.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure screens can be viewed from any vantage point.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Have audio systems been tested? Are hearing loops and microphones working and ready for use?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

If using a conference communication app, has it been tested for accessibility? Are there other methods to connect and contribute such as email or Twitter?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Requirements for speakers and presentations

Some of your speakers and presenters may not have presented to an audience with different needs. It is useful to provide them with information that will help them communicate to their audience. A key aspect for presenters to think about is to deliver and provide handouts and materials in multiple formats.

All presentations should be provided in an accessible format – especially if they are to be made available to attendees afterwards. Otherwise, notes in an accessible document format are useful.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

All videos must be captioned. Where appropriate, videos should be audio described.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Presenters have been briefed to describe any visual content in presentations.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Printed handouts of materials have also been provided in accessible electronic formats ahead of time if required.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Presenters should keep abbreviations and acronyms to a minimum and explain them.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure speakers announce their name (and role) before speaking.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Have the accessibility needs of presenters been addressed?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Refreshments and dietary arrangements

Provide a variety of meal options, including items that are easy to eat or do not require utensils.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure catering staff are briefed and available to assist attendees with serving items where required and serving tables are at appropriate heights for people of short stature or in wheelchairs. Food is positioned near the edge of tables and not in the middle.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Ensure meals cater for dietary preferences and conditions, including allergies, intolerances and diabetes and they are clearly labelled.

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Is there access to the outdoors to allow people to walk service dogs during meal breaks?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

Resources

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy (NDIS)](#)

- The Australian Centre of Excellent for Local Government – Online Community Engagement toolkit for rural , remote and Indigenous Councils [Online Community Engagement Toolkit](#)

- [Guide on Co-Design with People living with Disability (Purple Orange)](#)

- [Co-design for community inclusion (Huddle) PDF 6.3 MB](#)

- [Co-Design Toolkit (People with Disabilities Western Australia)](#)

- [Ten priorities to address disability inequity (First Peoples Disability Network Australia)](#)

- The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) has a co-design resource bank featuring a range or resources that can assist in planning or delivering co-design including co-design planning tool, example project plan and co-design score card. These may be useful resources when combined with the other inclusive ideas found withing this toolkit:

    - [Co-design Training Resources (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation)](#)

    - [Co-designing the transition of Accommodation Support Services (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation)](#)

    - [Co-designing the transition of Accommodation Services (The Australian Centre for Social Innovation) PDF 7.2 MB](#)

- ['Report it Right' Media Guideline (Inclusive SA)](#)

- ['Report it Right' Quick Reference Guidelines (Inclusive SA)](#)

- [Child and family partnerships: Case studies (Emerging Minds)](#) – co-design toolkit – includes resources and podcasts

- [Commissioner for Children and Young People - SA](#)

- [Conversations with children and young people with a disability (Commissioner for Children and Young People) PDF 321 KB](#)

- [What Kids Have Told Us About Inclusion and Diversity (Commissioner for Children and Young People) PDF 507 KB](#)

- [What Kids Have Told Us About Regional SA (Commissioner for Children and Young People) PDF 1.1 MB](#)

- [Protocol for engaging people with disability (Services Australia)](#)

- [National Ethnic Disability Alliance](#)

- The local government association has a Community Engagement Handbook. For Government staff who would like to download the LG Community Engagement Handbook, email *marketing@lga.sa.gov.au* to request access to the LGA's Members Only website content.

- Australian Service Excellence Standards (DHS) – certificate level modules focus on people, partnerships and communication and valuing diversity and inclusion. The ASES standards are widely adopted by DHS and SA government funded entities.

- Communication boards are a key tool to help organisations facilitate conversations with people who have complex communication needs. Free downloads are available on the Two-Way Street website.

References

[1] Australian Human Rights Commissioner website: Face the facts: Cultural Diversity | Australian Human Rights Commission

[2] Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2019, 4430.0 *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015*

[4] Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia 2018

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2016, 4430.0 - Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2015

[5] Australian Human Rights Commission 2018-19 Complaint statistics, viewed 15 November 2019

[6] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2008, 4326.0 - National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results

[7] Gantt Chart – a visual representation of a project schedule or timeline.

[8] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 4704.0 – The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Commonwealth of Australia, 2008.

[9] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016 Census, Commonwealth of Australia 2016