



State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029 2025 Annual Report

*Including reporting on the
State Autism Strategy Action Plan*



**Government of
South Australia**

Acknowledgement of Country

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

We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, and that cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws remain important today.

We are committed to ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples with disability are embedded in the implementation of South Australia's State Disability Inclusion Plan.

Language

We acknowledge that language is a personal preference, and that diverse language and terminology preferences exist within the disability and neurodivergent community. For the purposes of this Annual Report, both identity-first and person-first language are used.

The term 'Aboriginal' has been used throughout this Annual Report to reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This reflects the preference of the South Australian Aboriginal community to use 'Aboriginal' in both written and spoken contexts.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge and thank the many people whose contributions shaped this Annual Report and the ongoing work of disability and autism inclusion across South Australia.

Our sincere thanks go to people with disability, Autistic people and the broader neurodivergent community, as well as their families, carers and advocates. Their insights, advocacy and lived experience continue to inform reform and ensure it reflects everyday experiences.

We also thank all state authorities for their collaborative efforts in developing and aligning their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) with the State Disability Inclusion Plan (State Plan), and for their contributions to the State Autism Strategy (Autism Strategy) and the State Autism Strategy Action Plan (Autism Action Plan). Their commitment to improving access and inclusion across services, systems and communities is critical to this work.

We acknowledge the contribution of lived experience advisory groups, community organisations, service providers and advocacy bodies. Their guidance and partnership strengthen the impact of disability and autism reform across government.

Finally, we recognise the work of the DHS Disability Policy and Reform team for leading the coordination of the State Plan and Autism Strategy, supporting the development of the DAIP and Autism Action Plan and delivering the Annual Report.

As South Australia implements these plans throughout 2026, we look forward to continuing this partnership to strengthen inclusion and build a state where all people can participate, belong and thrive.

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Minister's message

I am pleased to present the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025 Annual Report (the Report), the first report under South Australia's new State Plan, *A South Australia Where No One Is Left Behind*.

I am grateful for the collective efforts across South Australia to strengthen access, inclusion and participation for people with disability, helping ensure that no South Australian is left behind. This report highlights those efforts.

It reflects a significant year of transition, as government agencies and local councils aligned their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) with the new State Plan and prepared for full implementation from 2026.

Importantly, it marks the first year of reporting under the State Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029, with Autism Action Plans developed across government.

In 2025, the South Australian Government delivered more accessible housing and community infrastructure, helping ensure that more South Australians of all abilities are supported and empowered to live independently, safely and with dignity in their communities.

We expanded inclusive sport, recreation and employment initiatives, and improved digital accessibility and inclusive communication across the state, reducing barriers for participation and supporting greater social connection and economic participation for those living with disability.

Across South Australia, government agencies and local councils improved the accessibility of information, services and public spaces, strengthened inclusive policies and practices, expanded disability awareness initiatives, and worked closely with people with disability to inform decision-making.

This work reflects the importance of building inclusive communities where all people can equally, safely and actively participate, contribute and feel connected. Embedded in initiatives and improvements is a foundation of deep listening and engagement with people with disability, Autistic people, carers and community organisations. It recognises that meaningful inclusion requires that people with disability help shape the decisions, services and systems that affect their lives.

This report reflects our state's collective efforts to ensure that South Australia is a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming place for all and tells the story of how agencies across government are progressing work to improve outcomes for those living with a disability, their families and carers, through a coordinated approach and a strengthened commitment to creating inclusive communities across our state.

Together, the State Disability Inclusion Plan, the State Autism Strategy, and the aligned DAIPs and Autism Action Plans provide a unified and coordinated approach to achieving this vision.

As Minister for Human Services, I am committed to leading work to help ensure that every South Australian is supported and empowered to live happy, healthy and connected lives. I am heartened to see my commitment reflected in the dedication shown in this work with these plans going beyond policy documents to being practical drivers of change that translate shared values into tangible outcomes. I am committed to sustaining this progress in partnership with the community.

My heartfelt thanks to every individual, organisation, community partner, and people with disability for their ongoing contributions.

It is through your efforts, your experience, advocacy and leadership, that we continue to shape a more inclusive South Australia. Together.

Hon Katrine Hildyard MP

Minister for Human Services

Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well

Minister for Women

State Disability Inclusion Plan – 2025 Annual Report

About this report

Under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* (the Act), state government agencies and local councils (state authorities) are required to annually report on the progress under the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029 (State Plan) and their Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs).

This Annual Report summarises the progress made by responsible state government agencies between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025.

To read the Act visit, visit <https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au> and search ‘Disability Inclusion Act’

Annual reporting addresses progress across the **five domains** of the State Plan:

1. Inclusive communities and environments
2. Education and employment
3. Personal and community support
4. Health and wellbeing
5. Safety, rights and justice.

State authorities are also required to address the seven legislated **priority groups**:

- Aboriginal peoples with disability
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- Women with disability
- Children with disability
- People with disability who identify as LGBTIQ+
- People with significant intellectual disability or vulnerability due to disability
- People with disability living in regional communities.

In addition, the needs of older people with disability and carers are recognised, acknowledging that many may experience multiple and intersecting barriers to inclusion.

Background

The Department of Human Services (DHS) administers the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* and is responsible for whole-of-government coordination of the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

South Australia's first State Plan, *Inclusive SA*, established the foundation for Disability Access and Inclusion Plans across government from 2020. In August 2025, the second State Plan, *State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029: A South Australia Where No One Is Left Behind*, was released.

Following the release of the new State Plan, all state authorities began developing or revising their DAIPs to align with updated priorities, domains and measures. This work reflects a continued whole-of-government commitment to access and inclusion outcomes for South Australia.

DHS supported state authorities to develop consistent, measurable and accessible DAIPs aligned with the statewide priorities. DHS provided guidance materials, standardised templates and advice on accessibility requirements, co-design and consultation with lived experience groups. These supports enabled state authorities to progress DAIP development and established a coordinated, implementation ready suite of DAIPs to be published from 2026.

For the purposes of this report, the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* is referred to as **the Act**, the *State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029* as **the State Plan**, and *Disability Access and Inclusion Plans* as **DAIPs**.

Reporting approach

In accordance with the Act, all state authorities were required to report on progress for the 2025 calendar year (1 January – 31 December 2025).

As the first year of reporting under the State Plan, 2025 focussed on planning, alignment and implementation readiness across all state authorities.

Most DAIPs remained in development throughout 2025 and will be published in 2026. The data presented reflects progress in planning, governance, capability building and early practice development.

Reporting data was collected through DHS administered surveys and consolidated to produce the 2025 State Disability Inclusion Annual Report, fulfilling reporting requirements under sections 14 and 17 of the Act. Relevant activity under the State Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029 is also included.

The 2025 reporting year establishes a whole-of-government baseline for implementation. From 2026 onwards, annual reporting will increasingly focus on tracking progress against DAIP actions and the State Plan's outcomes and measures.

Data summary

All 111 state authorities submitted a report for the 2025 reporting period representing 100 percent participation compared with 97 of 99 in the previous reporting year.

Note: Since the previous reporting period, the number of state authorities participating under the Disability Inclusion Act 2018 increased from 99 to 111.

- 43 of 43 state government agencies (100 per cent) compared with 31 of 31 in previous reporting year.
- 68 of 68 local councils (100 per cent), compared with 66 of 68 in previous reporting year.
- 12 new state authorities.

Alignment with State Plan domains and measures

The State Plan provides a consistent, statewide framework for improving access and inclusion for people with disability across South Australia. Developed through extensive consultation, the State Plan identifies five outcome-focused domains that reflect what matters most to people with disability and establishes a common basis for priorities, measurement and reporting across all state authorities.

The five domains provide the framework for DAIP actions, reporting and mandatory measures. All state authorities are required to incorporate the State Plan's mandatory measures into their DAIPs, ensuring consistency and comparability across government. At the same time, state authorities retain flexibility to tailor actions to their specific services, functions and communities.

Progress is reported against both the domains and measures to provide a consistent, outcomes-focused view of performance and impact.

Progress across the five domains

In 2025, state authorities reported activity across all five domains of the State Plan. The distribution of activity reflects the different roles, responsibilities, and areas of influence of state authorities, rather than the relative importance of each domain.

The percentages shown below represent the proportion of the 111 reporting state authorities that identified the domain as being addressed through their DAIP.

1. Inclusive communities and environments: 110 (99 per cent)
2. Education and employment: 105 (95 per cent)
3. Personal and community support: 104 (94 per cent)
4. Health and wellbeing: 65 (59 per cent)
5. Safety, rights and justice: 95 (85 per cent).

Higher levels of reporting were evident in domains with broad applicability across state authorities, such as inclusive communities and environments, and education and

employment. Lower levels of reporting, particularly in health and wellbeing, reflect that this domain more directly aligns with agencies operating within health-related portfolios, rather than all state authorities.

As 2025 represents a foundation year, the activity reported demonstrates early planning, initial alignment of DAIPs with the State Plan, and the establishment of governance and measurement arrangements. This work lays the foundation for more targeted implementation and expanded activity from 2026 onwards.

Application of mandatory measures

A total of **56 mandatory measures** apply under the State Plan. These are allocated as follows:

- Measures assigned to all state authorities: 14
 - These measures must be included in every DAIP and support consistent reporting across government.
- Measures assigned to local councils and the Department for Environment and Water (DEW): 2
 - These measures apply exclusively to councils and DEW, reflecting their role in shaping and supporting local communities.
- Measures assigned to specific state authorities: 32
 - These measures apply only to state authorities responsible for particular services, systems or regulatory functions.
- Measures reported through Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS) reporting: 8.

These measures are captured through existing ADS reporting processes. Together, these 56 measures form the core components of DAIPs, supporting consistent whole-of-government reporting while allowing flexibility for state authorities to focus on actions and outcomes relevant to their specific roles, responsibilities and operating environments.

DAIP development

During the 2025 reporting year, state authorities demonstrated strong alignment with DHS guidance in the development of their DAIPs. This reflects a consistent, whole-of-government approach following the release of the State Plan.

- State authorities that used the DAIP Guidelines: 94
- State authorities that used the DAIP template: 109.

DAIP publication status

The 2025 reporting year represents a foundational and transitional period following the gazettal of the State Plan on 14 August 2025. At the time of reporting, most state authorities were actively progressing the development, consultation, and approval of new or revised DAIPs.

While the Act requires DAIPs to be published within six months of gazettal, this timeframe did not provide sufficient opportunity for many state authorities to undertake meaningful consultation, develop effective actions and complete robust DAIP development processes.

As at 30 June 2026, 88 of 111 state authorities (79 per cent) had published a DAIP. A further 16 state authorities had advised a scheduled publication date, with the majority expected to publish by 31 August 2026. Six authorities had not confirmed a publication date at the time of reporting, although they indicated through the annual reporting survey that publication was expected by 30 June 2026.

- DAIPs published: 88 of 111 (79 per cent)
- DAIPs scheduled for publication by 31 July 2026: 5
- DAIPs scheduled for publication by 31 August 2026: 7
- DAIPs scheduled for publication by 30 September 2026: 4
- DAIPs scheduled for publication by 30 November 2026: 1
- DAIPs with no confirmed publication date (publication date not confirmed at the time of reporting): 6.

DHS continues to engage with state authorities to provide tailored advice and support, ensuring a smooth transition from development to publication and consistent implementation.

Accessible and alternative formats

The Act requires DAIPs to be published in formats that are accessible to people with disability. At the time of reporting, state authorities indicated a strong commitment to publishing DAIPs in multiple accessible formats as plans are finalised.

Reported formats include:

- Easy Read: 88 state authorities
- web-accessible HTML: 86 state authorities
- alternative formats: 70 state authorities.

Alternative formats include large print (36), Auslan video (7), translated versions, and other accessible formats.

These figures reflect both completed and planned formats and should be interpreted in the context of DAIPs still undergoing development or approval at the end of the reporting period. Collectively, they demonstrate a strong commitment to accessible information and inclusive communication.

Priority groups

State authorities reported early indications on how the seven legislated priority groups were being considered in DAIP development. In line with the State Plan, state authorities are expected to reflect the diverse and intersecting experiences of people with disability across all five domains, including those who may face compounded barriers to access and inclusion.

Summary of priority group activity

Across state authorities, there was a strong commitment to advancing inclusion for all seven legislated priority groups, as well as older people with disability and carers. Activities delivered throughout 2025 demonstrate these groups were increasingly centred in service design, community planning and policy implementation through culturally safe co-design, accessible communication, inclusive infrastructure and tailored service responses.

Aboriginal peoples with disability

State authorities supported culturally led and community-driven initiatives that strengthened community participation, services and connection to Country. Key activities included:

- Aboriginal-led consultation
- cultural capability training
- co-designed engagement approaches
- strengthened governance and representation.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Initiatives supporting people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds included:

- translated resources
- Easy Read materials
- accessible websites
- culturally responsive engagement and communication.

Women with disability

State authorities strengthened inclusion and safety for women with disability through initiatives focused on wellbeing, accessibility and protection from violence. Activities included:

- strengthened responses to domestic, family and sexual violence informed by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission)
- accessible employment and workforce initiatives
- wellbeing and support programs
- trauma-informed practices across services and systems.

Children and young people with disability

State authorities supported improved inclusion across education, recreation and community life. Initiatives included:

- Universal Design for learning approaches
- student voice and participation processes
- inclusive sport and recreation programs
- sensory-friendly events and activities
- inclusive literacy supports
- school-to-work transition initiatives
- Sports Vouchers Plus
- accessible and inclusive play spaces.

People with disability who identify as LGBTIQ+

State authorities promoted inclusive and respectful participation through:

- diverse representation in communication engagement
- participation in advisory and reference groups
- collaboration with organisations and networks such as Rainbow Council and Welcoming Cities
- intersectional approaches to policy and service delivery
- inclusive workforce practices
- provision of all-gender amenities and inclusive environments.

People with significant intellectual disability or vulnerability

State authorities supported people requiring higher levels of support through:

- high-support and accessible infrastructure
- tailored service pathways and personalised planning
- sensory-friendly and quiet environments
- accessible housing initiatives
- accessible communication and information tools
- co-design and lived experience engagement across justice, health and community services.

People with disability living in regional and remote communities

State authorities worked to strengthen access and participation through:

- improvements to transport and footpath accessibility
- expanded regional sport and recreation opportunities
- new Changing Places facilities
- culturally informed initiatives in remote Aboriginal communities
- digital access and online participation
- improved accessible communication for emergency preparedness.

Older people with disability

Older people were supported through initiatives promoting healthy ageing, safety and community participation, including:

- healthy ageing and wellbeing initiatives
- Memory Hubs and dementia-inclusive supports
- accessible housing upgrades
- mobility and community infrastructure improvements.

Carers

Carers were recognised through initiatives supporting their role in enabling participation and inclusion, including:

- Companion Card accessibility and compliance measures
- co-designed health planning processes
- accessible emergency information
- community programs supporting carers and families.

Collective impact

Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate a whole-of-government commitment to recognising the diversity of disability experiences and embedding culturally informed, trauma-aware, inclusive and rights-based approaches across all five domains of the State Plan.

Engagement with lived experience

Engagement data presented in this section reflects activity reported by state authorities at different stages of DAIP development. As many DAIPs were still in draft or consultation at the end of the reporting period, the results should be interpreted as indicative of engagement underway rather than a final position.

State authorities used a range of approaches to engage people with disability in the development of their DAIPs. Approaches varied depending on organisational context, stage of development, and the nature of each authority's functions. Some state authorities were not yet in a position to respond to all questions at the time of reporting, the figures below therefore reflect engagement activity to date.

State authorities reported using a combination of engagement mechanisms, including:

- direct engagement with service users with disability: 79 state authorities
- lived experience advisory groups: 56 state authorities
- other tailored engagement approaches: 42 state authorities.

Some state authorities also engaged through established DHS advisory structures, including:

- Disability Minister's Advisory Council: 4 state authorities
- State Autism Strategy Advisory Committee: 9 state authorities.

Consultation and co-design

Reported consultation and co-design activities included:

- internal consultation with staff with disability: 90 state authorities
- public consultation: 82 state authorities
- external accessibility or co-design expertise: 29 state authorities.

Key insights

- Engagement with lived experience was widespread and multi-layered, with many state authorities using multiple approaches.
- People with disability who access services were a central focus in DAIP development.
- Staff with lived experience were recognised as a significant source of expertise, reflecting growing acknowledgment of lived experience within the workforce.

Implementation challenges and insights

Of the 111 state authorities that submitted reports, 80 (72 per cent) identified systemic challenges affecting the development of their DAIP during 2025.

- Government agencies: 30 of 43.
- Local councils: 50 of 68.

Key systemic factors

Reported challenges largely reflect the transition to the new State Plan, alongside broader organisational pressures during 2025. The most commonly identified factors were:

- funding or budget limitations: 46 of 80
- competing organisational priorities: 46 of 80
- limited access to disability inclusion expertise: 39 of 80.

Other factors, reported by fewer than half of state authorities, included:

- tight legislated timeframes: 35 of 80
- data or consultation limitations: 34 of 80
- coordination or communication challenges: 27 of 80
- geographic or regional challenges: 17 of 80
- challenges embedding priority group requirements: 16 of 80.

Mitigating factors

State authorities reported that clear guidance, standardised templates and direct support from DHS helped mitigate many of these challenges, particularly during the transition to the new State Plan.

State authorities reporting no systemic issues

Of the 111 state authorities, 31 reported no systemic issues affecting DAIP development:

- Government agencies: 13
- Local councils: 18.

These authorities attributed smoother development processes to:

- early planning and preparation
- strong internal governance and leadership
- use of existing lived experience or advisory groups
- clear, consistent and accessible tools and guidance including Communities of Practice, DAIP Guidelines and standardised templates.

Overall assessment

Systemic challenges were widely and transparently reported during this foundational year of DAIP development. Time, funding and capacity constraints were the most significant pressures identified.

The findings indicate that early preparation, strong internal coordination, and consistent whole-of-government guidance significantly reduced barriers and support effective DAIP development and implementation.

Progress across the five domains

Alongside these challenges, state authorities demonstrated meaningful early progress across all five domains of the State Plan through DAIP development and early implementation activities.

While 2025 was primarily focused on planning and transition, progress included:

- improved accessibility of public information and services through clearer communication, accessible formats and upgraded online platforms
- broader and more consistent engagement with people with lived experience, supported by strengthened consultation processes
- strengthened organisational practices, including governance arrangements, internal policies and workforce capability development
- expansion of disability inclusive programs and initiatives, recognising that some domains align more directly to specific state authorities

- increased availability of accessible and alternative formats to support equitable access to information.

Together, these achievements establish a strong foundation for full DAIP implementation from 2026 onwards and reflect growing momentum toward system-wide improvement under the State Plan.

What follows is a selection of illustrative examples delivered across state government agencies and local councils. They are not exhaustive and are presented at varying levels of detail to reflect the diversity of activities undertaken.

Domain 1: Inclusive Communities and Environments

Significant progress was made in creating more inclusive public spaces, digital environments and community settings.

The Department for Environment and Water delivered accessibility upgrades at Belair National Park, including a Changing Places facility, inclusive play spaces and a wheelchair-accessible bus at Milena.

The SA Housing Trust delivered 357 new homes built to Livable Housing Design Standards, including 65 to Gold standard, and retrofitted existing homes to improve accessibility.

The Courts Administration Authority, Central Adelaide Local Health Network, and the Environment Protection Authority improved built environments through enhanced wayfinding, more accessible entrances and strengthened compliance measures.

Digital accessibility advanced across government with South Australia Police, Primary Industries and Regions South Australia and the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment implementing Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant tools and accessible web content guidelines.

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission strengthened public safety through the Alert SA smartphone app, supporting communities during natural disasters and emergency events.

Through the Accessible Australia initiative (Tranche One), four new fixed Changing Places accessible toilet facilities were funded in 2025. Two were completed during the year, with the remaining two progressing toward completion in 2026. As at 31 December 2025, South Australia had nine fixed Changing Places toilet facilities completed or under construction.

Local councils delivered infrastructure improvements including accessible playgrounds, sensory-friendly spaces, upgraded paths and ramps, improved access and new Changing Places toilet facilities. Increased application of universal design across community infrastructure including libraries, civic buildings, beaches and recreation spaces supported broader participation.

Councils also strengthened disability access and inclusion advisory groups and co-design practices, embedding lived experience into planning, infrastructure and policy development.

Domain 2: Education and employment

Government capability to deliver disability-inclusive education and employment practices continued to strengthen in 2025.

The Department for Human Services delivered the Linking DAIP Domains with Closing the Gap Community of Practice session, strengthening understanding of intersecting risks for Aboriginal Peoples with disability.

Preventive Health SA, Defence SA, the Department of Treasury and Finance, Primary Industries and Regions South Australia and the Attorney-General's Department expanded disability awareness training, universal design practice and inclusive recruitment processes.

TAFE SA enhanced inclusive education through embedding Universal Design for Learning, expanding supports, and strengthening student feedback mechanisms.

The Compulsory Third Party (CTP) Regulator, in partnership with Barkuma, delivered supported workplace placements. One participant completed an information technology placement through collaboration with the Department of Treasury and Finance's ICT team and subsequently secured ongoing employment. The Regulator was recognised with a 2025 Employer Award for disability-inclusive employment.

Primary Industries and Regions South Australia continued to build inclusive pathways through the Fishcare Volunteer Program. The Department for Education advanced reform through the Inclusive Education Amendment Act 2025, strengthening protections, transparency and equitable participation across all schooling sectors.

Local councils supported inclusive employment through supported roles, volunteering pathways and community-based skill development initiatives.

Domain 3: Personal and community support

State authorities expanded person-centred and culturally informed supports to enhance participation, connection and independence.

The Central Adelaide Local Health Network introduced Supported Surgical Pathways to better accommodate communication, sensory and decision-making needs in planned surgery.

The Department for Correctional Services strengthened disability supports through an NDIS access program, enhanced mental health and behavioural support, and improved reintegration planning, supporting 99 people in custody to access the NDIS and community supports.

The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing supported participation for more than 10,000 children through Sports Vouchers Plus, while the South Australian Sports Institute expanded Para sport pathways.

Local councils delivered community-based supports including autism-friendly activities, dementia-inclusive spaces, wellbeing programs and culturally grounded initiatives that strengthen connection and belonging.

Domain 4: Health and wellbeing

State authorities delivered inclusive health, recreation and wellbeing initiatives across metropolitan, regional and local settings.

The Central Adelaide Local Health Network advanced inclusive clinical practice through disability stakeholder groups and partnerships with Carers SA and Deaf Connect.

Preventive Health SA released its first Diversity and Inclusion Position Statement, embedding inclusive practice across public health programs.

The Department for Environment and Water expanded inclusive outdoor recreation through accessible infrastructure and play spaces.

Local councils strengthened wellbeing outcomes through healthy ageing initiatives, accessible recreation facilities, culturally informed programs and sensory-friendly events for Autistic children and families.

Domain 5: Safety, rights and justice

State authorities strengthened safety, rights and equitable participation across justice, emergency management and civic systems.

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission improved emergency preparedness through accessible alerts, updated Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and expanded disability awareness training.

The Attorney-General's Department ensured disability inclusion in the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence through accessible engagement and expert input

The Electoral Commission of South Australia expanded accessible voting options, including telephone-assisted voting, translated materials and low-sensory early-voting centres.

The Department for Correctional Services strengthened trauma-informed supports and mental health partnerships for people with disability in custody.

Local councils contributed to improved safety through emergency planning, accessible infrastructure, pedestrian safety initiatives, discrimination reporting pathways and strengthened staff capability.

Disability Royal Commission

Monitoring and implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) supports the State Plan's focus on safeguarding, accountability, and systemic improvement for people with disability.

The Disability Royal Commission delivered its final report on 29 September 2023. It included 222 recommendations aimed at strengthening safeguards, rights and inclusion for people with disability.

The final report is available at:

<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>

On 31 July 2024, the South Australian Government released its initial response to the Disability Royal Commission, alongside the Joint Government Response developed with the Australian Government and other state and territory governments. The majority of recommendations were accepted or accepted in principle, reflecting a shared commitment to systemic reform.

South Australia's government response is available at:

<https://dhs.sa.gov.au/drc-response>

Joint government response is available at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/disability-royal-commission-response>

South Australia's recommendations

The South Australian response addressed 129 recommendations where the State has responsibility:

- 4 recommendations accepted
- 87 recommendations accepted in principle
- 36 recommendations subject to further consideration
- 2 recommendations noted (Recommendations 7.14 and 7.15, relating to the phasing out and ending of special and segregated schools).

DHS is leading implementation of South Australia's response in collaboration with government partners and stakeholders, supported by co-design with people with lived experience.

Progress reporting

The Disability Royal Commission progress report, published on 27 November 2025, provides the first comprehensive update on progress across all recommendations.

Recommendations where South Australia has sole responsibility (44):

- 6 completed
- 12 in progress
- 9 requiring further work before implementation can commence
- 17 subject to further consideration.

Recommendations where responsibility is shared with the Commonwealth (85):

- 3 completed
- 33 in progress
- 37 requiring further work before implementation can commence
- 10 subject to further consideration
- 2 noted (Recommendations 7.14 and 7.15).

The Disability Royal Commission progress report is available at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/disability-royal-commission-progress-report-2025-0>

Looking to the future

The work undertaken throughout 2025 established a strong foundation for long-term disability and autism inclusion reform across South Australia.

As implementation progresses in 2026 and beyond, state authorities will increasingly focus on delivering measurable outcomes through their DAIPs and Autism Action Plans. Ongoing collaboration with people with lived experience, community organisations and stakeholders will remain critical to ensuring reforms are practical, inclusive and responsive to community needs.

Together, government and community will continue working toward a South Australia where people with disability and Autistic people can fully participate, contribute and thrive.

State Autism Strategy Action Plan – 2025 Annual Report

About this report

Under the State Autism Strategy 2024–2029 (Autism Strategy), the Government of South Australia committed to addressing the barriers experienced by Autistic people, their families and carers across seven focus areas. The Autism Strategy is the overarching, whole-of-government, five-year roadmap that sets the long-term direction and priority areas for improving inclusion and outcomes for Autistic South Australians of all ages.

The Autism Strategy is supported by the State Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029 (Autism Action Plan), which outlines the measurable activities, projects and initiatives that key state government agencies will undertake to deliver on the strategy's commitments. It translates the Autism Strategy into clear actions to be implemented across government between 2025 and 2029.

State government agencies have committed to providing annual updates on their Autism Action Plans. Reporting covers all seven focus areas of the Strategy:

1. Pathways to diagnosis
2. Positive educational experiences
3. Thriving in the workplace
4. Access to supports and services
5. Participation in the community
6. Access to health and mental health services
7. Interactions with the justice system.

This Annual Report summarises the progress made by responsible state government agencies between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025.

A note on priority populations

The Autism Action Plan recognises the diverse and intersecting experiences of Autistic people, and how these can contribute to structural and systemic discrimination. Actions are therefore designed to support Autistic people across a range of identities, including where there they may not be explicitly linked to a particular priority group.

Background

South Australia's first Autism Strategy was launched June 2024 following extensive co-design with Autistic people and the broader autism community. Led by the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Autism Strategy aims to improve the lives of Autistic people, their families and carers.

It contains 25 commitments across seven focus areas, including improving early diagnosis, interventions and supports, enhancing education and employment outcomes, increasing accessibility of mainstream services and healthcare, and promoting fairer, more equitable experiences within justice systems.

Launched in September 2025, the Autism Action Plan 2025–2029 outlines how these commitments will be delivered through a stage approach. Its development was shaped by statewide consultation and informed in partnership with state government agencies and people with lived experience represented on the State Autism Strategy Advisory Committee.

The Autism Strategy 2024–2029 and Autism Action Plan 2025–2029 are available at:
<https://autismstrategy.sa.gov.au/>

Autism Inclusion Charter, Office for Autism

For the first time in South Australia's history, the Government established the Office for Autism to ensure Autistic voices are central to decision making.

In 2024, the Office for Autism launched the South Australian Autism Inclusion Charter 2024–2029 (the Charter), which sets out the Government's commitment to autism inclusion across the public sector and supports implementation of the Strategy. At the launch, state government agencies signed the Charter, committing to Autism Awareness and Understanding Training.

Through policy and initiatives that promote access, inclusion, awareness, opportunity, connection and belonging, the Office for Autism is working toward a state where Autistic people can live their best lives, and where their families and communities are supported and valued.

More information about the Office for Autism and the Autism Inclusion Charter is available at:
<https://officeforautism.sa.gov.au>

National Autism Strategy

The National Autism Strategy 2025–2031 (National Strategy) was released in early 2025 and provides a national framework for building a safe and inclusive society where Autistic people are supported to thrive. It establishes a coordinated national approach to improving inclusion, understanding, and life outcomes across Australia.

The National Strategy is supported by the National Autism Strategy First Action Plan 2025–2026, which outlines priority actions across Commonwealth, state and territory governments through shared governance arrangements. Responsibilities for actions are coordinated nationally, including through mechanisms such as the Disability Reform Ministerial Council.

The National Autism Strategy 2025–2031 and the National Autism Strategy First Action Plan 2025–2026 are available through the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing at: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/national-autism-strategy>

State Autism Strategy Action Plan development

DHS is the lead agency responsible for coordinating implementation and supporting state government agencies to develop their Autism Action Plans. Activities and initiatives were developed collaboratively with key state government agencies and informed by consultation with Autistic people and the autism community.

DHS supported state government agencies to develop clear and measurable outcomes aligned to their assigned actions. To support consistency, DHS developed an Autism Action Plan Development Guide and templates, providing a consistent framework for setting objectives and reporting measures.

Given the strong alignment between the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029 (State Plan) and the State Autism Strategy, state government agencies will include their Autism Action Plan alongside their Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP). Integrating these plans supports a coordinated, consistent and measurable approach to improving access and inclusion for Autistic people and for people with disability.

Autism Action Plan Annual reporting

Reporting approach

Under the State Autism Action Plan, state government agencies are required to report annually on progress. For the 2025 calendar year (1 January – 31 December 2025), the primary focus was on the development of each agency's first Autism Action Plan, including alignment with the broader State Autism Strategy and assessment of readiness for implementation from 2026 onwards.

State government agencies captured their progress through a DHS survey. DHS consolidated these responses into this Annual Report, which summarises the status of Autism Action Plan development during the 2025 reporting period.

Some actions under the State Autism Action Plan apply to all state government agencies as shared whole-of-government responsibilities. In these cases, multiple agencies are collectively responsible for delivering and reporting against the same measures. Other actions are agency-specific, with individual state government agencies solely responsible for delivering and reporting on actions aligned with their functions or services.

From 2026 onwards, annual reporting will expand to include progress on implementation and the outcomes achieved through actions.

Scope of reporting

This section outlines the reporting scope and reflects the collective input of all state government agencies. A total of 30 state government agencies, comprising 20 state government agencies and 10 local health networks are responsible for delivering the State Autism Action Plan.

For this reporting cycle, agencies completed a survey consisting of eight questions grouped into the following four key areas:

- Action Plan development
- Accessibility and engagement
- Challenges
- Highlights.

Action Plan development

Under the State Autism Action Plan, all state government agencies are required to incorporate mandatory actions into their respective Autism Action Plans. These mandatory actions support coordinated implementation and enable progress to be measured consistently across government.

The State Autism Action Plan includes 207 actions, categorised as:

1. Actions assigned to all state government agencies – 22 actions that must be addressed in every Autism Action Plan.
2. Actions assigned to specific state government agencies – the remaining actions apply only to agencies with responsibilities relevant to their services or regulatory role.

To support high quality Action Plan development, DHS developed the Autism Action Plan Development Guide and accompanying templates. These resources support alignment with the State Autism Action Plan, assist agencies to address all mandatory actions, and guide the development of meaningful, agency-specific actions.

State government agencies

There are 30 state government agencies, including 10 Local Health Networks. All 30 agencies submitted a report for the 2025 reporting period representing 100 per cent participation.

Action Plans published

Publication timeframes for Autism Action Plans were aligned with the DAIP requirements, with an initial target of 14 February 2026, consistent with the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA). Aligning these timeframes supports a cohesive, whole-of-government approach to disability and autism inclusion, strengthening accountability, integrated planning, and streamlined reporting.

As this represents South Australia's first State Autism Strategy and Autism Action Plan, the 2025 reporting year was a foundational and transitional period. While a small number of agencies met the initial publication timeframe, many required additional time to undertake meaningful consultation, develop robust measures, and ensure actions were achievable and fit for purpose.

Consistent with the staged approach applied to DAIP development, most state government agencies (agencies) committed to publishing their Autism Action Plans by 30 June 2026.

As of 30 June 2026, 20 of 30 agencies, or 67%, have published an Autism Action Plan. A further 10 agencies advised their anticipated publication date, with the majority expected to publish an Autism Action Plan by 30 September 2026.

- Autism Action Plans published: 20 of 30 agencies
- Scheduled for publication by 31 July 2026: 1
- Scheduled for publication by 31 August 2026: 5
- Schedule for publication by 30 September 2026: 4.

These figures reflect early-stage implementation, with most agencies continuing to progress consultation, planning and approval processes.

The follow state government agencies have not published their Autism Action Plan at the time of reporting, however, they have advised through the annual reporting survey of their anticipated publication date:

State government agencies: 5 agencies

- Department for Environment and Water
- Department for Health and Wellbeing
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- Office for Early Childhood Development.

Local Health Networks: 5 networks

- Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN)
- Eyre and Far North Local Health Network (EFNLHN)
- Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network (FUNLHN)
- Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network (RMCLHN)
- Yorke and Northern Local Health Network (YNLHN).

Accessibility and engagement

Providing information in accessible formats is a key component of inclusive communication. Making Autism Action Plans available in a range of formats supports access for people with diverse needs and preferences.

At the time of reporting, state government agencies indicated a strong intention to publish Autism Action Plans in multiple accessible formats as plans are finalised.

Reported formats include:

- Easy Read version: 24 agencies
- web-accessible HTML: 24 agencies
- alternative formats: 18 agencies.

Alternative formats reported include large print (5), Auslan video (1), translated versions (2). A further nine agencies indicated they would explore additional formats, such as Auslan and e-reader versions, as implementation progresses.

These figures include both completed and planned formats and should be interpreted in the context of Autism Action Plans still under development or approval at the end of the reporting period. Collectively, they demonstrate a strong commitment to accessible information and inclusive communication.

Engagement with lived experience

Engagement data reflects activity reported by state government agencies at different stages of Autism Action Plan development. As many plans were still in development or consultation at the end of the reporting period, results should be interpreted as indicative rather than final.

State government agencies used a range of approaches to engage Autistic people and those with lived experience. These varied depending on organisational context, stage of development, and agency function.

Actions within agency Autism Action Plans are informed by the overarching State Autism Action Plan, which was developed through extensive consultation with Autistic people and the autism community. As a result, some agencies relied on this existing consultation, with further engagement planned during implementation.

At the time of reporting, some agencies were not yet in a position to respond to all questions. The figures below therefore reflect engagement activity to date.

Reported engagement approaches include:

- consultation with Autistic and/or neurodivergent service users: 14 agencies
- lived experience advisory groups: 15 agencies
- internal consultation with Autistic and/or neurodivergent staff: 22 agencies
- public consultation: 13 agencies
- engagement supported by external consultants: 4 agencies.

Some state government agencies also engaged through established DHS advisory structures:

- State Autism Strategy Advisory Committee: 8 agencies
- Disability Minister's Advisory Council: 4 agencies.

Six (6) agencies reported that they did not undertake additional engagement during development, noting that engagement activities are planned as part of implementation.

Key insights

- Engagement approaches combined new consultation activities with extensive lived experience engagement to inform the State Autism Strategy.
- Internal staff with lived experience were a significant source of insight.
- Many agencies identified ongoing engagement as a core component of implementation, reflecting the staged approach to delivery.

Opportunities for Improvement

State government agencies were asked to identify factors influencing the development and early implementation of their Autism Action Plans. These insights support transparency, highlight common system-level pressures, and inform continuous improvement.

Nineteen agencies reported challenges in developing their Autism Action Plan. Common factors included workforce and resourcing constraints, varying levels of role clarity, and the time required to undertake meaningful engagement with people with lived experience.

The most commonly identified areas for improvement were:

- timeframes required to develop an Action Plan
- workforce capacity, including limited staffing and staff turnover
- capacity to engage with people with lived experience within available timeframes.

Many agencies reported that these challenges were mitigated through the use of the Autism Action Plan Development Guide and template provided by DHS. These resources supported consistency, clarified expectations and streamlined planning processes.

Eleven agencies reported no significant barriers, noting that clear central guidance and alignment with broader disability inclusion planning supported timely and effective progress.

These insights will inform refinements to guidance, timeframes and support for future reporting cycles, strengthening implementation across government.

Highlights

State government agencies throughout the public sector delivered a range of initiatives during 2025 to improve autism inclusion, accessibility and participation for Autistic and neurodivergent people and their families.

South Australian Police continue to deliver autism awareness training – developed by Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT), in consultation with Autistic people, parents and carers – to police officers and police security officers. The Department for Housing and Urban Development also embedded autism awareness training into onboarding and induction processes to strengthen workforce capability and inclusion.

The Department for Environment and Water partnered with people with lived experience to improve accessibility for Autistic visitors in national parks. This included installing a communication board at the upgraded Adventure Playground in Belair National Park to support non-speaking Autistic visitors. A non-speaking Autistic volunteer was also engaged to develop social stories and undertake accessibility assessments.

The CTP Regulator within the Department for Treasury and Finance continued to deliver the Capacity Building Placement for People with Disability Program. In 2025, it partnered with Barkuma to provide supported employment opportunities for Autistic people. One participant completed a placement with the IT team and secured an ongoing role commencing January 2026.

TAFE SA strengthened inclusion for Autistic and neurodivergent students through the Connecting U pilot program, supporting engagement, wellbeing and peer connection. Lived experience was also embedded in decision-making through staff and student networks.

More than 50 Autistic students contributed to the first Autism Inclusion Student Roundtable as part of the Autism Inclusion in Secondary Schools trial, helping to inform improvements to inclusion and the school experience.

The Department for Child Protection partnered with the Office for Autism to deliver the Inklings Program, supporting infants in care who are at risk of developmental delay by providing early intervention focused on social, play and communication skills.

Inclusive SA website

The Inclusive SA website continued to be a key source of disability inclusion information and resources during 2025, recording:

- 34,363 page views
- 16,619 users
- 15,458 first time visitors
- more than 5,200 resource downloads.

Popular resources included the State Disability Inclusion Plan and State Autism Strategy materials, which are available in PDF, HTML, Easy Read and plain text formats.

These figures indicate sustained community interest in disability inclusion policies and highlight the website's role as a central point for statewide information and guidance.

Glossary

ADS

Australia's Disability Strategy

Advocacy

Support that helps people with disability understand their rights, speak up and make decisions. This includes independent advocacy (support from someone not connected to a service) and microboards (small, self-directed support networks formed around one individual).

Agencies

State government agencies

Australia's Disability Strategy (ADS)

A national plan aimed at improving the life experiences of Australians with disability, their families and carers.

Autism Action Plan

A plan developed by state government agencies to improve access and inclusion for Autistic people. It outlines practical, measurable actions tailored to each organisation and supports implementation of the State Autism Strategy.

Auslan

Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is the sign language used by members of the Australian Deaf community.

CALD

Culturally and linguistically diverse

Changing Places

Specialist bathrooms designed with a peninsular toilet, adult-size changing bench and ceiling hoist. These facilities help people with disability and high support needs to use bathrooms safely and with dignity.

Closing the Gap

A national agreement focused on improving the life outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

Co-occurring conditions

Conditions occur at the same time. For example, a person may have both intellectual and physical disability requiring different types of support.

Cultural safety

An environment where people feel respected, valued and safe to be themselves. It recognises and responds to power imbalances and supports people's identity and needs. Only the person receiving the service can determine whether it's culturally safe.

DHS

Department of Human Services (South Australia)

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP)

A plan developed by state government agencies and local councils to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. DAIPs outline practical actions to remove barriers and support participation in line with the State Plan.

Disability Engagement Group (DEG)

A group of people with lived experience of disability, representing diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, gender identities and metropolitan and regional communities.

Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA) (The Act)

South Australian legislation that guides efforts to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. It requires the development of the State Disability Inclusion Plan and DAIPs, and promotes choice, control and barrier reduction.

Disability Minister's Advisory Council (DMAC)

A group of people with lived experience of disability who provide advice to the Minister for Human Services. There are three councils: Disability, LGBTIQ+ and Youth.

Disability Royal Commission

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, which was established to improve safety and uphold rights.

Inclusive SA

South Australia's first State Disability Inclusion Plan

LGBTIQA+

An acronym referring to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Lived experience

Knowledge and understanding gained through direct, personal experience of disability.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

An Australian Government initiative that funds reasonable and necessary supports for people under 65 with a significant and permanent disability.

National Strategy

National Autism Strategy 2025–2031

Neurodivergence / neurodivergent

A non-medical term describing natural variations in how people think, learn and process information. Neurodivergent people may include Autistic people and others whose brain functions differ from the dominant norm.

Priority groups

Groups identified under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* as potentially experiencing overlapping disadvantage, including Aboriginal peoples with disability; culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people with disability; women; children; LGBTIQA+ people; people with significant intellectual disability or high vulnerability; and people in regional communities.

State authority / State authorities

Defined under the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA)* as government departments, agencies, local councils, or other prescribed bodies.

State Plan

State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029

Strategy

State Autism Strategy 2024–2029

The Charter

South Australian Autism Inclusion Charter 2024–2029

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

An international treaty that promotes, protects and ensures the full enjoyment of human rights by people with disability.

Universal Design

An approach that designs environments, products and services to be usable by as many people as possible from the outset, without the need for adaptation.

Contact

The Department remains committed to continuous improvement and to working in partnership with the community to strengthen disability and autism inclusion across South Australia.

If you would like to provide feedback or request further information, please contact:

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Document format

This 2025 Annual Report is available in **plain text** and **Easy Read** formats on the Inclusive SA website: <https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/>

If you require this report in another format, please contact us using the details above.

Further information, including the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029, the State Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025–2029, and how state authorities are delivering Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) and Autism Action Plans, is available at:

<https://inclusive.sa.gov.au/our-work>.