

Office of Disability - Engagement Framework

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1. What is the Office of Disability?

The Office of Disability (the Office) is a part of the Northern Territory Government's, Department of Territory Families Housing and Communities. The Office is responsible for:

- advising the Northern Territory Minister for Disabilities, the Northern Territory (NT) Government and the Australian Government on matters of importance to people with disability in the NT.
- whole of NT Government disability policy and program development and monitoring and reporting of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- supporting the NT Government to meet its obligations to:
 - the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD);
 - Australia's Disability Strategy (NDS);
 - the Northern Territory Disability Strategy, development, ongoing monitoring and reporting.

2. What is the Office of Disability Engagement Framework

The purpose of the Framework is to guide the Office in its consultation activities and lets stakeholders know what they can expect from the Office's consultation activities.

The Framework:

- Provides practical information about who the Office will engage with and how they will engage;
- Provides principles and measures to know if it has engaged well.

3. Why does the Office of Disability need to engage?

In order to undertake its role effectively the Office must engage and work with those who have lived experience of disability. This includes people with disability, their families, kinship groups, carers, significant others, guardians and other stakeholders. The Engagement Framework (the Framework) explains how the NT Government will engage with stakeholders to seek their expertise and views.

Through engagement the Office can build positive relationships with people with disability and other stakeholders to ensure that they are involved in, and can contribute to, decisions that impact on them.

Engagement supports the Office to:

- have a better understanding of the experiences and matters of importance to people with disability, carers, close networks and other stakeholders in the NT.
- ensure the diversity of peoples experiences are considered, particularly those lesser heard voices, who may not normally have the opportunity to engage with the NT Government.
- be informed, evidence based and innovative in its policy advice.
- be responsive to risks and opportunities as they arise.
- ensure policy advice and decisions are appropriate and can be practically applied in the NT.
- monitor and evaluate the progress of initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for people with disability.

4. Who will the Office of Disability engage with?

The Office will engage with those with lived experience of disability, specialist disability service providers and representative organisations, mainstream services and the broader community.

People with lived experience

The lived experience of people with disability is important and is valued. The Office will engage with the diverse range of people that make-up people with disability, their families, carers, significant others, kinship groups and guardians in the Territory, including those lesser heard voices of Indigenous people, youth, people with cognitive and psychosocial disability and people who live in remote areas.

The [Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee](#) (the Committee) is a ministerial advisory committee to the Northern Territory Minister for Disabilities. The Committee is made of people with lived experience of disability and is representative of the diversity of people with disability in the Territory. The role of the Committee is to advise the Minister of issues of importance to people with disability in the Territory.

Table: 1

Northern Territory data snap shot
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49.3% of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants in the NT identify as Indigenous. ¹ • 25.6% of NDIS participants identify as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. ² • Youth are strongly represented amongst NDIS participants, 43% of NDIS participants in the NT fall within the 0-14 age group.³ • The most commonly reported disabilities of NDIS participants in the NT are autism (22.9 per cent), intellectual disability (20.0 per cent), developmental delay (10 per cent) and psychosocial disability (9.3 per cent). ⁴ • There are many people with disability who are not NDIS participants. Nationally NDIS participants are estimated to make up only 10 per cent of people with disability in Australia.⁵

Our Engagement Partners

The Office will engage with representative organisations including disability related peak bodies, advocates and advocacy organisations. The Office will also engage with specialist disability service providers, specialist disability schools, local government authorities and Aboriginal representative bodies and service providers. These stakeholders have established relationships with people with lived experience of disability; are experts in engaging meaningfully with their members and service users and have an in-depth understanding of the community they represent and service.

¹ NDIS Quarterly Report September 2020

² NDIS Quarterly Report September 2020

³ NDIS Report to Ministers for Q1 of Y 8 Full Report, p.492.

⁴ Report on Government Services 2019-20 Table 15A.11

⁵ AIHW, People with disability in Australia 2019: in brief, p. 2

In addition to directly seeking the expertise and views of specialist disability service providers and representative organisations, the Office will work with these stakeholders as engagement partners. The Office of Disability will:

- seek their advice to ensure engagement is accessible and inclusive of those they represent and provide services to; and
- enlist their support to engage with service-users and/or members.

Main-stream services

Mainstream services are those services that all members of the community use, examples include health services, transport, sport and recreational activities, justice systems and housing. They include services provided by the government, non-government and the private sector. The Office of Disability values the expertise of these services and their experience in providing services to the broad community. The Office will engage with services to understand the services they provide to people with disability and barriers and opportunities to improving access.

The Northern Territory community

The National Disability Strategy provides a shared vision for an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens. Community attitudes, awareness and understanding of disability are important to creating change and to achieving this vision.

The Office of Disability will engage with the Northern Territory community to build awareness and to develop understanding of the role the community can play in supporting access and inclusion for people with disability

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How will the Office of Disability engage?

The Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee provided the following advice to support the Office in engaging with stakeholders.

How to let people know about consultation (for the NT Disability Strategy).	Barriers or problems that can stop people giving their input and the best way to avoid or solve these.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media campaigns, being videos, photos and not just having them in English but specifically having them in plain English and also in languages that are spoken all throughout the Territory • Mail drops, also letterbox drops for those who do not have access to the forums • Through the town council, councils have good ways to get things out of the community so having meetings with the council • School newsletters • Community groups, getting out and speaking with community groups and having them pass information on, the best way they can, to their group of people • Use of radio, including Yolgnu radio and other community radio • Making sure things are in other languages • Meetings • Free food • DAC members talking about it with colleagues and peers • Using examples like video clips • Holding input sessions with parents and carers at schools • Asking local GPs or clinics who talk with people with disabilities all the time, to pass on information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of internet and poor internet connection. A lot of information these days is being passed through the internet and internet only, this can cause quite a bit of miscommunication. We need to make sure that the internet is not the main source that people get the information through. People based information rather than internet based information. • Making things easy to read and plain English rather than in government speak. • Stigma is a significant issue affecting people providing input. When people speak up they need to be supported and empowered to speak up. Support is needed for self-advocacy. There is sometimes a negative perception of people who speak up, of being a troublemaker. People need to feel safe to speak up and give their input. • People need to feel validated and that their voice is heard. We need to ensure people's input is recorded and people can see what actions have been taken in response to the input. • Consultation needs to ensure that false expectations are not created. We need to be clear not to make promises that can't be kept.

5. Principles for engagement

Our engagement will be:	We will achieve this by:
Inclusive and reflective of the diversity of people with disability and their experience and views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seeking the views of lesser heard voices. • Working in collaboration and partnership with established representative and stakeholder groups and listening and learning from their expertise. • Supporting leadership from within stakeholder groups, and through the involvement of the Northern Territory Disability Advisory Committee in consultation design and delivery. • Adapting our engagement approach to involve all stakeholders where possible. • Following best practice for engagement in remote areas, consistent with the Northern Territory Government Remote Engagement and Coordination Strategy. • Following the principles for best practice in engagement with First Nations Peoples provided by the Department of Territory Families Housing and Communities Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework.
Appropriate and accessible and met the needs of individuals, groups and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing accessible options for all engagement resources and activities in order that engagement can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of all stakeholders. • Incorporating cultural and language considerations in consultation design and planning. • Providing a range of options for stakeholders to provide their input and allowing for flexibility in engagement design and planning.
Transparent and accountable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being clear about the purpose of the engagement and how stakeholders input will be used. • Asking for stakeholder feedback to evaluate engagement activities. • Providing timely updates, reporting back to stakeholders on engagement outcomes and sharing knowledge and learnings. • Reporting on how stakeholders input has informed our work.
Safe, supportive and trauma informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following a trauma informed approach for events and consultations, including ensuring provisions are made for support people and support services. • Respecting the value of every person, their experience and contribution. • Respecting your privacy and not sharing your personal information.

6. How will we know when we have engaged well?

The Office of Disability will know when we have engaged well when the participation and input from engagement shows representation from all those who we have identified we should engage with. This includes: People with lived experience, our engagement partners, mainstream service providers and the community.

Key to all engagement activities is the input from those with lived experience. Input we receive should be reflective of the diversity of people with disability in the Territory with consideration of the following:

Cultural identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Territorians, with consideration of coverage across key language groups and discrete regions and communities. Torres Strait Islanders Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Territorians Non-Indigenous Territorians of Australian heritage
Disability	<p>People who experience the following impairments which in interaction with various barriers hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. Developmental disability Chronic conditions Those with mild to moderate disability
Age	Reflective of those affected by disability in the NT. Noting that children and youth form a significant proportion of those with disability in the NT.
Gender	Equitable gender representation.
Regions	All regions of the NT, with representation from all Local Government Areas.
Remoteness	<p>Classifications of regions in the NT consistent with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities Towns, villages, town camps Remote communities (minor/ major) Homelands/ family outstations (less than 100 people) <p>Source: Classifications as per https://bushtel.nt.gov.au/public/pdf/Bushtel_User_Guide.pdf</p>
Those whose lived experience is a result of a direct relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers Guardians Family Kinship family

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant others• Service providers
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