

# Disability Policy in Australia – Where to Next?

Australian Senate Occasional Lecture Series – Ben Gauntlett

3 December 2021



Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission

# Overview of Presentation

Disability in  
Australia

International  
Day of People  
With Disability

Effect of  
Covid-19

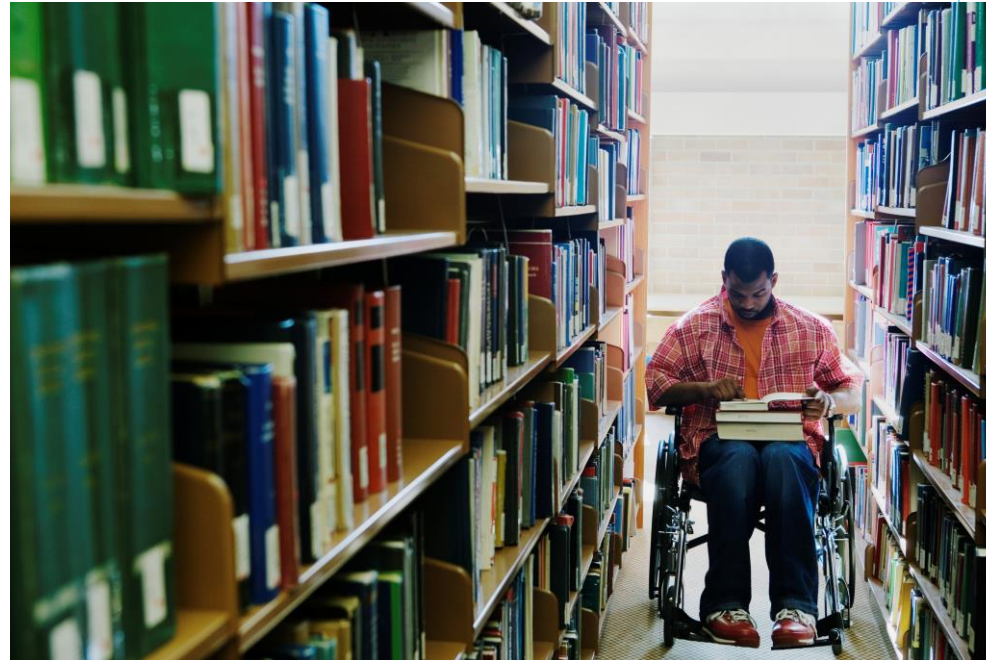
Australian  
Disability  
Strategy

Critical Issues  
for Australia

Where to  
Next?

# Four Key Points

1. Every government policy has a disability element that needs to be recognised
2. Community awareness of disability and human rights is critical
3. Disability policy is ultimately about individuals
4. We need whole of community engagement



# Disability in Australia



4.4 Million People  
Live With Disability

People born in  
2018 can expect to  
live 21% of their  
lives with disability

7.6% of children  
aged 0-14 live with  
some form of  
disability

50% of people over  
65 live with some  
form of disability

1 in 5 households  
have a person with  
disability in it

1 in 3 people with  
disability have  
finished year 12

# International Day of People with Disability

Theme:

- ▶ “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.”

In Australia – launch of Australian Disability Strategy 2021-2031.

- ▶ Enormous emphasis on implementation.

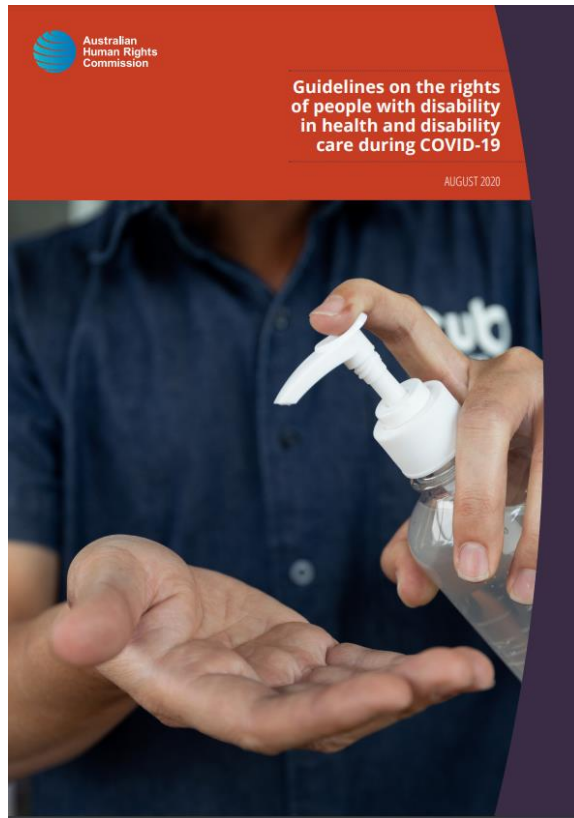


# SDGs and Disability

- ▶ SDG 4 – Education
- ▶ SDG 8 – Employment
- ▶ SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities
- ▶ SDG 11 – Accessible Cities
- ▶ SDG 17 – Data



# Covid-19 in Australia



**The Covid-19 policy response has cause significant angst in the following areas:**

- ▶ Access to healthcare
- ▶ Disability support
- ▶ Vaccine access
- ▶ Supported Decision-making

**Key Issues:**

- ▶ Need for reasonable adjustment
- ▶ Community awareness of people with disability
- ▶ Invisible and communication disability

# Australian Disability Strategy

1. Employment and Financial Security
2. Inclusive Homes and Communities
3. Safety, Rights and Justice
4. Personal and Community Support
5. Education and Learning
6. Health and Wellbeing
7. Community Attitudes





# Developing a new National Disability Strategy

## Senate Community Affairs Committee: Inquiry into delivery of NDS Outcomes 2017

- Report released November 2017.

## Social Policy Research Centre Review of NDS Implementation 2018

- Desktop review of documents about the implementation of the NDS.
- Consultations held in all state and territory capitals.
- Report released August 2018.

## Productivity Commission Review of National Disability Agreement 2019

- Report released February 2019.



## NDS Stage 1 Consultations 2019

- More than 3,000 people participated.
- 2,649 responses to online public survey.
- 17 public community consultation workshops.
- 474 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability participated.
- 15 targeted disability sector stakeholder meetings.
- Report released December 2019.

## NDS Position paper (released July 2020) and NDS Draft Outcomes Framework (released October 2020)

Input from State, territory, local government agencies

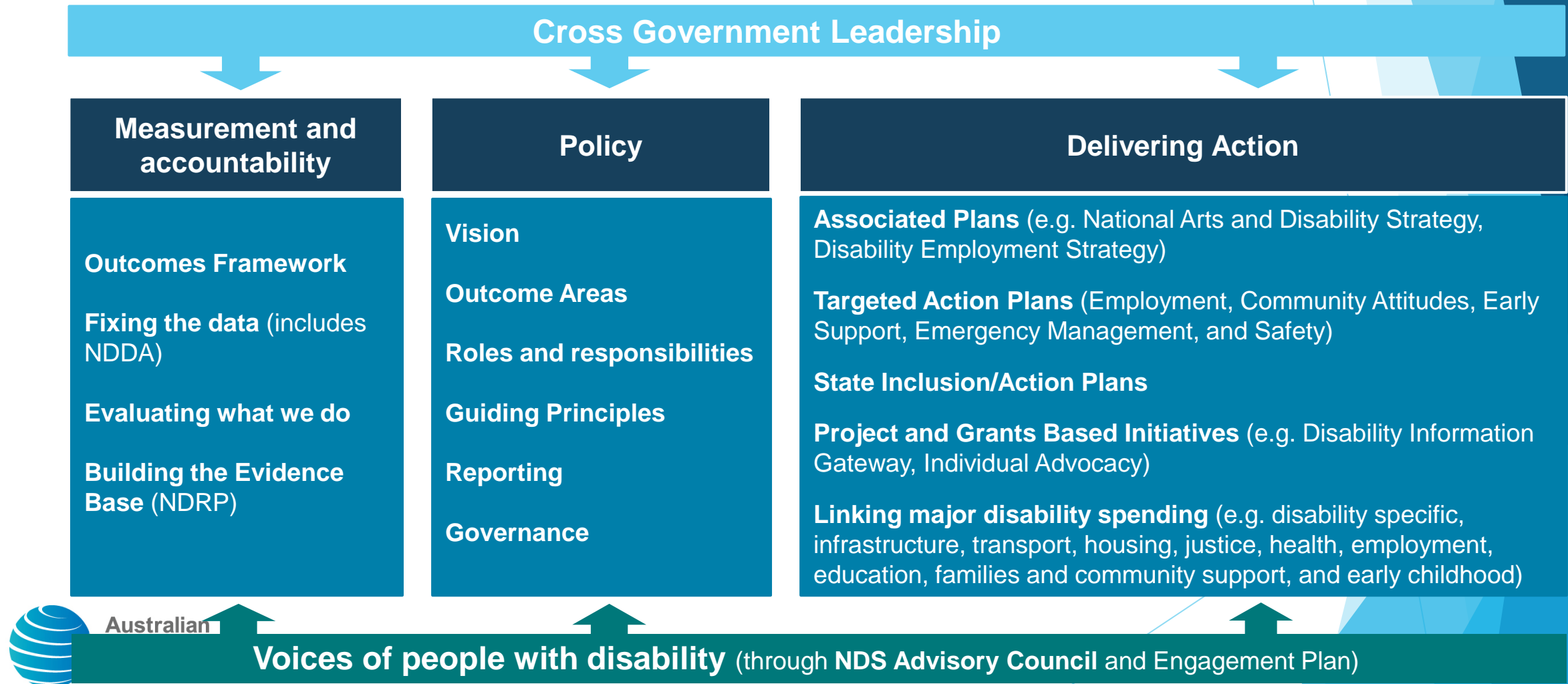
Input from Commonwealth agencies

## NDS Stage 2 Consultations July – December 2020

- 237 public submissions on the **NDS position paper**.
- 132 people with disability from harder to reach groups participated in focus groups.
- 102 participants in five cross-sector collaboration forums on:
  - Community attitudes, early supports and employment.
- Three workshops with national Disability Representative Organisations (DROs) on position paper.
- AHRC webinar – 800 registered attendees.
- Consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.
- 74 public submissions on the **draft NDS/NDIS outcomes framework**.
- Two workshops with DROs on outcomes framework.
- Academic roundtable on outcomes framework.

## Draft NDS (Australia's Disability Strategy)

# Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031



# The Strategy's Advisory Council

- ▶ In December 2020, disability ministers from all governments initially agreed to establish the Council.
- ▶ Almost 12 months of design with people with disability and disability sector.
- ▶ Commitment to Council is written into the new Strategy.
- ▶ Focus on implementation and monitoring tie closely to the main components of the Strategy such as:
  - ▶ Targeted Action Plans
  - ▶ Associated Plans
  - ▶ Outcomes Framework
  - ▶ Progress and implementation reports
  - ▶ Strategy 'products' e.g. guide to the guiding principles, good practice guide to engagement
- ▶ Council's advice will be included in reporting to ministers and in public reporting on the Strategy.
- ▶ The Council's Chair will attend a disability ministers meeting each year to report on the Council's work and priorities.
- ▶ Ministers will use the Chair's report to inform their work plan for the following year.

# Australian Disability Strategy – Employment

## Increase

- Increase employment of people with disability

## Improve

- Improve the transition of young people with disability from education

## Strengthen

- Strengthen financial independence of people with disability

# Australian Disability Strategy – Community Attitudes

Employers value the contribution people with disability make to the workforce, and recognise the benefits of employing people with disability

Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability

Increase representation of people with disability in leadership roles

Improving community attitudes to positively impact on Policy Priorities under the Strategy

## History of National Disability Strategy

- Method of Implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Focus on NDIS
- Inconsistent application
- Need for Legal Reform
- Universal Design



## Australian Disability Strategy and the NDIS

- NDIS is an aspect of a broader policy framework
- For the NDIS to thrive it must co-exist with other State and Commonwealth policies (and be supported)
- Needs to be based upon the CRPD
- CRPD reviews in 2013 and 2019
- Importance of Inclusive Equality



# Critical Issues in Australia



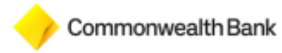
- ▶ Need to focus upon implementation of the CRPD through the Australian Disability Strategy
- ▶ Emphasis on economic and social participation
- ▶ Whole of community engagement
- ▶ Greater use of permanent consultation mechanisms
- ▶ Gather and interpret data
- ▶ Law reform



# Opportunities in Australia



- ▶ Paralympics (#Wethe15)
- ▶ Royal Commissions
- ▶ Covid-19 lifestyle changes
- ▶ Technology
- ▶ Advocacy and Inclusion of People with Disability in Decision-Making
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Unique Economic Conditions



# Where to Next?

