

IT'S TIME TO ACT

**QDN
FEDERAL
ELECTION
PLATFORM
2025**



About Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability. Our motto is 'nothing about us without us.'

QDN is the Executive Peak body for people with disability in Queensland and operates a state-wide network of 3000+ members and supporters who provide information, feedback and views based on their lived experience, which inform the organisation's systemic advocacy activities. We believe people with disability should always be at the table when decisions are made that directly impact their lives.

QDN's systemic advocacy work encompasses a range of responses – from community campaigns, formal submissions, evidence to commissions and inquiries and membership of roundtables and working groups around national, state, and local government legislative and policy initiatives. QDN's work is focused on the rights and full social and economic inclusion of people with disability within their communities. QDN's systemic advocacy work has focussed on a range of key areas identified

by Queenslanders with disability which includes the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), improving mainstream services including healthcare, housing, employment, and transport systems.

QDN also currently hosts 32 peer support groups across Queensland, made up of people with a diverse range of disability types, and convened by people with disability. The groups meet to socialise, share information, life experiences, and solutions to create more inclusive lives and communities. Local groups are a space for people with disability to share information on topics that are of interest to them, to extend their social networks, provide peer support, and to build capacity and leadership skills.

Groups usually meet on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, and meetings are held both face-to-face and virtually. QDN is representing the collective voice of our members in this election campaign document.

Introduction



At this election, Queenslanders with disability want to see action and progress.

QDN is committed to ensuring our voice as people with disability in this upcoming federal election so real and transformative change can happen.

QDN members want to make sure our disability votes count.



It's time to act....

For far too long, Australians with disability have been denied the same opportunities as others due to persistent and unyielding barriers. Our members want the same opportunities as all Australians. We want an inclusive, accessible and just society.

It is critical that we see change across the areas of employment, housing, health, transport, safety, the NDIS and the implementation of the disability reforms. We want to see change and the time is now. QDN's 2025 federal election platform includes QDN member views and incorporates Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031, National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and reforms highlighted in the NDIS Review and Disability Royal Commission recommendations.

We call on candidates from all political parties and from all corners of the state to commit to the policy positions outlined in this platform. In doing so, you will be showing the over 5.5 million people with a disability in Australia and their families that you understand what it takes to get things moving to improve the lives of Australians with disability. In terms of broader disability policy actions, QDN seeks a commitment from all parties to commit to deliver on:

- Disability reforms across the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review. This includes a broader system of support including NDIS and Foundational Supports that will inform and support all people with disability.
- Inclusive employment and financial security.
- Stronger disability legislation, reform, and advocacy to protect our rights.
- Safety and wellbeing.
- Inclusive health care.
- Affordable and inclusive housing.
- Inclusive and accessible transport.

QDN ELECTION COMMITMENTS

Summary

It's time to act for disability inclusion for Australians with disability.



It's time to act for.....

**A stronger system of support for all
people with disability**

We need you to commit to:

1. Genuine co-design and extended timeframes for consultation on NDIS reforms.
2. Investment in a system of Foundational Supports that will work alongside mainstream services.
3. Deliver a strong, sustainable and responsive NDIS that keeps choice and control and people with disability at the centre.



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Inclusive employment and greater financial security

We need you to commit to:

1. Reform the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and increase the income free threshold and remove income and asset testing of partners.
2. Prioritise employment opportunities for people with disability.
3. Encourage organisations and business to adopt Disability Action Plans.
4. Increase the number of people with a disability in leadership and board roles.
5. Deliver cheaper electricity costs and expand the Energy Bill Relief fund.



Protect and promote human rights

We need you to commit to:

1. Strengthen and modernise the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992.
2. Create a National Human Rights Act.
3. Co-design accessible and inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems and regulations.
4. Fully implement all Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review recommendations and implement Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.
5. Increase funding for individual and systemic advocacy, NDIS appeals and self-advocacy programs.



It's time to act for.....



Prioritise safety and wellbeing

We need you to commit to:

1. Expand the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 to give specific protections to women and children with a disability.
2. Invest in programs that support digital inclusion and digital safeguards.
3. Invest in the implementation across States and Territories of the Disability Inclusive Emergency Management toolkit and progress the national agenda for Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction.



Inclusive health care

We need you to commit to:

1. Continue to act on the reforms outlined in the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability.
2. Develop a national disability health navigation framework.
3. Work with state and territories to develop specialist disability training programs for health professionals.
4. Expand Medicare Mental Health Centres in city, regional and remote areas and include more options for telehealth and video consultations.
5. Increase funding for NDIS participants to have their support workers with them in hospital.



It's time to act for.....



Accessible and affordable housing

We need you to commit to:

1. Establish a long-term national housing plan that includes a National Disability Housing Strategy co-designed with people with disability.
2. Through the Housing Australia Future Fund, deliver a targeted strategy and investment around affordable and accessible housing for people with disability as a priority cohort.
3. Deliver strategic and targeted investment of NDIS funding to encourage a range of living options.
4. Develop and invest in a scheme to increase the supply of new and affordable rental dwellings by providing financial incentives.
5. Enhance the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation's (NHFIC) mandate to include borrowing for accessible and affordable housing.
6. Lead all states and territories to adopt the Livable Housing Design in the National Construction Code (NCC) to ensure all housing stock is accessible in Australia.



Safe and accessible transport

We need you to commit to:

1. Co-design new specific aviation disability standards.
2. Ensure co-design, universal design principles and relevant CRPD articles are adhered to in the reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Standards (DSPAT).
3. Work with states and territories to continue the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS).



It's time to act for.....

The delivery on disability reforms including the disability royal commission and the NDIS review

Queenslanders with disability have been strong contributors to the Disability Royal Commission and the NDIS Review over the past five years. We want to ensure that the outcomes of these two significant inquiries deliver real outcomes and real change.

The recommendations and pathway forward from the Disability Royal Commission and NDIS Review mean a time of significant transformational change and the implementation of complex reforms that cross over federal, state and territory boundaries and multiple systems and parts of the service delivery ecosystem.

The Australian Government in collaboration with state and territory governments and the disability community has a responsibility to deliver on the disability reforms and ensure the NDIS is delivering for all people with disability.

QDN calls on all parties to:

1. Involve people with disability and their families at every stage of co-design, consultation, implementation, and evaluation of any NDIS reforms and the establishment of Foundational Supports.
2. Foster collaboration among federal, state, and territory authorities to create a unified approach in supporting people with disability. Recognise and respect the unique roles of states and territories to ensure consistent and effective implementation of reforms and supports, tailored to local needs.
3. Ensure that any reform is not rushed, allowing adequate time for genuine co-design.
4. Provide people with disability and disabled person organisations with longer timeframes to offer feedback to relevant government departments.
5. Ensure feedback process allows for meaningful input and consultation with participants, families, and stakeholders.

Key Focus for NDIS:

QDN calls on all parties to:

- Provide information and guidance that clearly defines the roles of navigators and specify who can access this support.
- Establish strong mechanisms and guidelines to ensure assessments and internal reviews are conducted by staff with the appropriate skills, qualifications, and an understanding of complex needs and cultural safety.
- Increase choice and control about home and living decisions specifically supported independent living (SIL) arrangements, particularly when participants are required to live with a co-tenant and transition into 1:2 or 1:3 living arrangements.
- Commit to ensuring accessible digital platforms and diverse communication formats for people with disabilities. We urge you to implement a clear strategy to communicate all changes in an accessible manner, providing support, training, and resources as needed.

Key Focus Foundational Supports

QDN calls on all parties to deliver:

- A clearly defined scope of Foundational Supports, including specific supports included, eligibility criteria and well-defined pathways for service delivery.
- Expanded and increased funding for existing services.
- Increased collaboration with state and territory governments to ensure a coordinated approach.
- Continued interim funding for programs such as Information, Linkages, and Capacity Building (ILC), Peer support, Capacity-building initiatives
- Continuation of funding for disability related support until full consultation, funding, and implementation of Foundational Supports is achieved.
- Focus on addressing the unique needs of:
 - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
 - First Nations communities
 - LGBTQIA+ communities
 - People in regional and remote areas



It's time to act for.....



Inclusive employment and greater financial security

As we navigate an era of increasing economic challenges, it is paramount that income support and wages are responsive to the changing cost-of-living and economic pressures. The cost-of-living crisis has disproportionately impacted people with disability, who often face higher living expenses and financial stress. Changes to the Disability Support Pension (DSP) are urgently needed to reflect these rising costs and to provide a safety net that allows for a dignified standard of living.



Employment is a significant barrier for people with disability, with only 56.1% of working-age individuals with disability being employed, compared to 82.3% of those without disability. This disparity highlights the systemic obstacles that prevent equal access to employment opportunities, including discrimination, lack of accessible workplaces, and insufficient support services.²

QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Commit to increasing the Disability Support Pension (DSP) to reflect the rising cost of living. We urge the removal of partner income and asset testing to promote financial independence, enabling individuals to cover living and medical costs. We also ask for the income-free threshold to be raised, allowing people to earn more without losing their support. These changes will empower individuals to increase their economic participation through employment and unlock their full potential.
2. Prioritise employment for people with disability by implementing disability procurement targets that promote entrepreneurship and incentivise businesses and recruitment companies to hire people with disability. These measures will help build confidence, foster inclusion, and shift community attitudes towards disability.
3. Implement Disability Action Plans in both public and private sectors to create inclusive and accessible workplaces that uphold the rights of people with a disability.
4. Increase disability representation in leadership and board roles across businesses and organisations.
5. Expand the Energy Bill Relief Refund to support electricity bill rebates, particularly for individuals with medical or disability-related equipment, to help with cost-of-living increases.



It's time to act for.....



Stronger disability legislation, reform, and advocacy to protect our human rights.

The Disability, Ageing and Carers Australia: Summary of Findings states 40.2% of people with a disability of working age in the workforce have experienced discrimination by their employer and 37.7% from their work colleagues.³ The Disability Royal Commission highlighted recommendations in their final report that involved improving laws, policies and frameworks that could provide better protections for people with disability.



QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Strengthen and modernise the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992 to include positive duty, requiring workplaces to take proactive steps to prevent disability discrimination, rather than just responding to it after it occurs.
2. Work towards creating an Australian National Human Rights Act to establish national standards to protect the rights of people with a disability and give them a course of action if their rights are breached.
3. Commit to establishing a legal framework for artificial intelligence (AI) in Australia that includes people with disability in future consultation and co-design processes. This framework should ensure that Australian AI systems and regulations are inclusive and accessible, addressing potential biases, discrimination, and lack of inclusivity.
4. Fully implement all Disability Royal Commission recommendations made in the final report, NDIS Review recommendations and continue to work with all states and territories to implement Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.
5. Increase funding for individual and systemic advocacy, NDIS appeals, and self-advocacy programs. Advocacy plays an integral role in creating systemic change and making sure individuals have independent support to navigate complex systems, know their human rights and have their voices heard.



It's time to act for.....



The safety and wellbeing of people with disability

It is critical that the safety and wellbeing of people with disability is central to all government programs and services, whether they are supports in our day-to-day lives or in times of emergency or disasters. It is an important responsibility of the Australian Government to provide direction, leadership, strategy and services that ensure people with disability are safe, protected, and have access to quality services and supports.



The Disability Royal Commission and research highlights the unacceptable high levels of violence, poverty, physical, emotional, financial, sexual abuse, and exploitation that people with disability experience in comparison to people without disability. This includes in person and online. More than a third of people with disability report experiencing violence or abuse, and almost 50% of people with disability report feeling unsafe where they live.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 highlighted safety and wellbeing and the need to focus on risk management and disaster preparation.

QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Invest in programs that support digital inclusion, and safeguards would result in people with a disability to stay safe, connected, and informed.
2. Expand the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 to give specific protections to women and children with a disability including development of accessible training and awareness of coercive control.
3. Invest in implementation of the Disability Inclusive Emergency Management toolkit and advancing the national Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction agenda to keep people with a disability informed and safe during natural disasters.
4. Deliver on the targets set in the Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) Strategy and fund the program that provides younger people under the age of 65 and their families with targeted support to navigate the disability, health and housing systems to access age-appropriate accommodation and support services outside residential aged care.



It's time to act for.....



Inclusive health care

People with disability have the right to quality, accessible, inclusive, timely and affordable health care and to the same health outcomes as Australians without disability. However, people with disability continue to have poorer access, negative experiences and poorer outcomes.

People with intellectual disability are twice as likely to suffer a potentially avoidable death compared to the general population. People with intellectual disability experience a large range of potential risk factors for early death, including heart problems, high blood pressure and obesity, and experience challenges accessing health care, in part due to communication issues and active discrimination. People with mental health and psychosocial disability also experience poorer health outcomes and additional challenges with accessing the right care owing to negative attitudes and a lack of awareness around their health rights.



QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Prioritise the health and well-being of people with intellectual disability by continuing to implement the reforms outlined in the National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability. We urge candidates to ensure these reforms are a priority in the next National Health Reform Agreement, addressing high rates of hospital admissions and neglect in health services.
2. Increase collaboration with states and territories to develop a national disability health navigation framework for consistency, ensuring people with a disability have access to navigators who understand their needs and can assist with coordinating their healthcare.
3. Invest in a partnership between the federal, state, and territory governments to develop specialist disability awareness training programs for health professionals to communicate more effectively with people with disability.
4. Increase funding and expand Medicare Mental Health Centres in urban, regional, and remote areas, ensuring all centres offer telehealth or video consultation options for those unable to attend in person.
6. Ensure people with disability can access the disability support they need when in hospital around their personal and nutritional care to be able to get support from their NDIS support workers in hospital and access clear information on additional funding for reasonable adjustments during their stay.
7. Require health professionals to undertake mandatory training and learning and development opportunities around disability.



It's time to act for.....



Affordable, inclusive, and accessible housing

A place to call home is important to all Australians. A place to call home that is accessible, affordable, secure and safe is fundamental to people with disability to be able to live and be part of community.

As of June 2023, 1 in 3 (33%) individuals and families receiving Commonwealth Rent Assistance and Disability Support Pension were in rental stress. In 2023-24, around 9.5% (25,900) of Specialist Homelessness Services clients had a disability⁵. QDN believes that the four housing principles of choice, control, rights and inclusion need to underpin and guide all policies, procedures and program investments to improve housing outcomes for Australians with disability.



Australia's housing crisis has had a significant impact on all parts of our community and led to rising property and rental prices, significantly impacting people with disability. Long waiting lists for public and social housing persist, and accessible, affordable housing is urgently needed.

QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Act on improving housing security by increasing investment and availability of housing options for people with disability across public, community and private dwellings.
2. Introduce specific strategies to the Australian Government's National Housing and Homeless Plan to improve housing outcomes for people with disability.
3. Implement a National Housing Strategy for People with Disability in consultation with people with disability, key housing and disability sector stakeholders and a National Housing Planning Council that includes representation of people with disability.
4. Through the Housing Australia Future Fund, deliver a targeted strategy and investment around affordable and accessible housing for people with disability as a priority cohort.
5. Expand participation in the Commonwealth Help to Buy Scheme and consider a national Pathways Shared Equity loan scheme, like Queensland's, to help more people with a disability own their homes.
6. Provide incentives for owners of private rentals to offer more accessible housing.
7. With the lack of any specific program that focuses on rental affordability, develop and invest in a new scheme to increase the supply of new and affordable rental dwellings by providing financial incentives.
8. Lead all states and territories to adopt the Livable Housing Design in the National Construction Code (NCC) to ensure all housing stock is accessible in Australia.



It's time to act for.....



Inclusive and accessible transport

People with disability require accessible and sustainable modes of public and private transport. Transport is fundamental to people's access to services and support as well as enabling social and economic participation – to be able to be part of community, get to work including travel by air, rail or road. The built environment is also a critical enabler.

Australia needs to uphold United Nations treaties and protocols regarding safe and accessible transport and the focus of Australia's Disability Strategy.

QDN calls on all political parties to address the following commitments:

1. Ensure that people with disability and their representative organisations in all states are included in the consultation and co-design process of the new aviation disability standards outlined in the Aviation White Paper. It is crucial to provide safe, accessible, and inclusive aviation experiences for people with disabilities.
2. Provision of accessible and inclusive transport systems including co-designing standards and phases of work around Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Standards (DSPAT). Specific focus is required to ensure universal design principles are being adhered to, and that United Nations CRPD Article 4 (general obligations), Article 9 (accessible transport) and Article 21 (access to information) are followed.
3. Ensure the Australian Government works collaboratively with the Queensland Government to resolve NDIS and mainstream issues regarding access to transport and subsidies, including the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS). With the current arrangement in place until 31 October 2025, we urge the state and federal governments to devise a permanent solution.⁶

References:

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