

Interim Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2026 – 2029

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Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Department of Education acknowledges the Ongoing Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, who are the keepers of knowledge, songlines, and stories.

We are committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual connections to land, waters, and seas, as well as their enduring contributions to society.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are more likely to experience disability than other Australians and often face greater challenges in accessing support. We recognise and value the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with disability who have contributed to this plan.

Secretary's foreword

Public education is built on the belief that every student, educator, and support staff member feels included and valued in all that they do. The NSW Department of Education is committed to developing an equitable and outstanding education system marked by equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for every learner and colleague.

Equity cannot be achieved without the voices of people with lived experience. Our students and staff with disability, parents and carers, and workplace leaders are the reason this document exists and its most valued contributors.

The level of support, passion and deep subject knowledge our stakeholders brought to the consultation process for this DIAP has prompted us to publish this interim DIAP to allow further time for genuine, ongoing and collaborative consultation beyond the initial feedback already incorporated.

The final iteration of our 2026-29 DIAP is expected to be published by the end of September 2026. It will incorporate a defined and comprehensive set of outcomes measures, and a deeper articulation of the alignment to key commitments and priorities. We will continue to hold dialogue with our key stakeholders to ensure the DIAP strongly defines our commitment to improving the lives of people with disability throughout NSW.

I extend my deepest gratitude to those who are contributing to the ongoing development of this action plan. I look forward to sharing the final plan with you soon. For now, let's get started.

About the Interim DIAP

Our commitment

We are committed to building an equitable and outstanding education system where people with disability — including students, staff, families and community members — are respected, valued and supported to participate fully, safely and confidently.

The NSW Department of Education is one of the largest public education systems in the world. Our scale gives us both a unique responsibility and a unique opportunity to lead disability inclusion across schools, workplaces and communities.

People with disability bring expertise, insight and strengths that enrich our system. Yet barriers in attitudes, environments, processes and systems continue to limit access and participation.

NSW Government committed to a 5.6% target rate for the employment of public sector employees with disability by June 2026.

This plan aligns with the Department's Our Plan for NSW Public Education, reinforcing our commitment to an equitable and outstanding education system where every student, staff member and community member can learn, grow and belong.

The Interim DIAP 2026–2029 sets out a clear, practical three-year roadmap to:

- remove barriers to learning, work and participation.
- strengthen disability confidence across the workforce.
- embed inclusive design into every environment and system.

- ensure people with disability are partners in shaping solutions.
- build a culture where inclusion is the norm, not the exception.

This strategy is a commitment to sustained, system-wide change – grounded in evidence, informed by lived experience, and aligned to National, NSW Government, and department commitments and priorities.

Acknowledgement of people with disability

The NSW Department of Education acknowledges the expertise, lived experience and guidance of people with disability and the broader community in shaping this plan. Their insights have directly informed the priorities, commitments and measures within the Interim DIAP.

We also recognise the significant contributions of our Disability Employee Network, the Disability Strategy Reference Group, and the NSW Disability Council. Their advice has strengthened our understanding of barriers across the department and helped refine the actions we will take to improve accessibility, inclusion and equity.

The commitments in this plan draw on these contributions, alongside feedback from staff across the department and alignment with NSW Government priorities. Together, this input has ensured the Interim DIAP reflects what matters most to people with disability and the communities we serve.

Consultation

The department sought feedback on the draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029 from a diverse range of stakeholders across the department and the broader disability community, including unions, professional associations, staff and student representative groups, and key NSW Government Stakeholders such as the NSW Disability Council and Disability Strategy Reference Group.

In order to more comprehensively engage with the feedback we received, the department has committed to releasing this Interim DIAP and continuing the rich and constructive conversations that started through our initial consultation process.

Development

The Interim DIAP was developed by a working group represented by staff from each division of the department and our Disability Employee Network (DEN). The working group synthesised key priorities and commitments, planned and proposed initiatives, and identified opportunities for improvement to develop a proposed set of initiatives aligned to the structure and intent of the [NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2026-2029](#) (NSW DIP).

The draft DIAP was shared with external stakeholders for consultation, intended to understand:

- whether the draft DIAP reflects the priorities and lived experiences of people with disability.
- which initiatives stakeholders believe will have the greatest impact.
- what challenges or risks may affect implementation.
- where further clarity, resourcing, or system changes may be required.

Consultation activities included written submissions, targeted discussions, and feedback from advisory groups, staff networks, and representative bodies. Rich feedback and discussion prompted the department's decision to release an Interim DIAP and allow time for further collaborative consultation.

Purpose

The department's Interim Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2026–2029 sets out the key actions the department has committed to or will deliver to improve disability inclusion across education settings and workplaces.

It is a requirement of section 12 of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (NSW) (the Act) and is underpinned by the principles and objectives of the Act. Under the Act, Public Authorities must develop Disability Inclusion Action Plans. Public Authorities are NSW government departments, local councils and some other government entities.

Over recent years, there have been significant disability reforms at both a national and state level. As the policy landscape continues to evolve, so too will the work of the NSW Government and department to reduce barriers to inclusion for people with disability and deliver accessible services.

About our community

In Australia, in 2025:

- 1,125,502 school students received an educational adjustment due to disability. This represents 27.0% of total enrolments, up from 25.7% in 2023 and 18.0% in 2015.
- 2.8% of all school students were provided with extensive adjustments to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as other students. A further 5.2% were provided with substantial support, 11.7% were provided with supplementary support, and 7.4% were supported through quality differentiated teaching practices.
- among school students who received an educational adjustment due to disability, 53.0% of adjustments were provided to students with cognitive disability, 36.3% to students with social-emotional disability, 8.3% for students with physical disability, and 2.4% for sensory disability.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, School Students with a Disability, 2025

At the NSW Department of Education, in 2025:

- Employees with disability made up 1.7% of the department's workforce according to Workforce Profile data, and 7.2% according to the People Matter Employee Survey (PMES).
- Employees with disability requiring work-related adjustments made up 0.5% of the department's workforce according to Workforce Profile data, and 3.3% according to the PMES.

- According to the 2025 PMES, the overall engagement score for all staff was 67.5%. For staff with disability with a workplace adjustment in place, engagement was 65.3%. For staff who needed a workplace adjustment but didn't have one, engagement was 52.9%.

Foundational concepts

Language used in the NSW Department of Education Interim Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029

In this document we use person-first language for example, 'people with disability'. This is to focus on the person rather than their disability.

We acknowledge that many people prefer identity-first language, for example 'disabled people'. It is also important to acknowledge that some people may prefer to identify with a community with a shared identity.

Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and multicultural communities may have a very different understanding of disability, and in many languages there is no word for disability in the way it is broadly understood in English.

The NSW Government recognises and respects these individual and community preferences and will use them when applicable.

Understanding disability

Disability can take many forms. It can be physical, mental, intellectual, neurological, and/or sensory. When combined with an inaccessible society, it can affect a person's ability to participate in the same way as everyone else. Disability can be short-term or long-term, temporary or permanent, and can be present at birth or acquired later in life. People can and often do have multiple disabilities.

The language in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) currently reflects **a medical model of disability** by viewing disabilities as medical conditions requiring diagnosis and treatment. By framing individuals with disabilities as having an innate ‘problem’ needing resolution, this often leads to harmful stereotypes and people experiencing social exclusion.

The **social model of disability** acknowledges that a person’s disability is not what is disabling. Instead, the barriers they experience are from a society made up of inaccessible physical spaces, attitudes, and communications. The NSW Government is committed to removing or reducing barriers so that people with disability can fully participate and contribute to their community.

The **human rights model of disability** emphasises that disability is natural and valid and that people with disability have the same rights as everyone else. In 2008, Australia agreed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This means the NSW Government and community have a responsibility to ensure people with disability can exercise their rights, make informed decisions, and have their dignity respected.

Together, the social and human rights models shape how the NSW Department of Education works to build a more inclusive society. This includes actively involving people with lived experience of disability in the design of policies affecting them.

In its work, the department strives to develop a culturally safe education system that ensures the cultural, social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations people with disability as a priority. The department recognises the cultural strengths, identity, and community connections that keep First Nations people with disability strong.

The NSW Department is committed to addressing ableism – attitudes, behaviours and systems that prioritise the needs of people without disability and create barriers for people with disability. This commitment is not only conceptual; it directly informs how we design and deliver our work. Reducing ableism means embedding inclusive practices in our schools and workplaces, including:

- inclusive decision-making: ensuring people with disability and their representatives shape policies, programs and environments.

- accessible systems and processes: removing structural barriers in recruitment, technology, communication and service delivery.
- respectful workplace behaviours: building cultures where disability is understood as a valued aspect of human diversity, not a deficit.
- inclusive teaching and learning environments: designing school practices that anticipate diverse needs rather than requiring students to 'fit' existing systems.

By naming and addressing ableism, the department is strengthening its commitment to creating environments where people with disability can participate fully, feel respected and experience equitable access to education and employment.

Intersectionality

It is important to recognise the diversity of people with disability. The department recognises that diversity of experience is a core part of the communities we serve. Our approach is to design systems, supports and services that are inclusive and responsive to this diversity from the outset.

Disability can intersect with other parts of a person's identity including but not limited to age, Aboriginality, cultural and linguistic background, gender, religion, and sexuality. This can result in multiple and compounding forms of discrimination which can lead to a person being further marginalised.

The Act recognises that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability may face multiple disadvantages. It acknowledges that cultural, language and other differences may create barriers to accessing supports and services.

Women and children with disability are potentially more vulnerable to risk of abuse or exploitation.

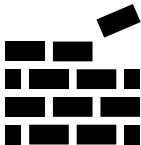
The Act also specifies that supports and services provided for LGBTIQ+ people with disability must be inclusive, culturally safe, and informed by ongoing, community-led engagement.

People with disability from multicultural communities, as well as members of the Deaf community, may also experience challenges accessing supports due to language and cultural barriers.

For people with disability living in regional, rural or remote communities, barriers often increase due to fewer services, transport options, reduced digital connectivity, and geographical distance.

Universal design

Universal design means creating an environment that is accessible to everyone, regardless of age, disability or other factors.

Some examples of universal design			
			
Built environment	Digital systems	Communication	Representation
Step free entry, ramps and 'speaking' lifts. Accessible toilets with automated sliding doors. Visual and audio emergency alerts. Quiet rooms.	Digital content that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Digital services which meet the Digital Inclusion Standard. Printers which have large screens and 'speak'. Digital systems which work well	Online meetings which have automated captioning. Providing contact details which include both text-based (e.g. email) and verbal (e.g. phone) methods. Documents that meet the NSW Design Standard.	Consulting with people with disability. Boards and advisory bodies have representation from people with disability.

Some examples of universal design

Adjustable lighting.	with screen readers.	Easy Read versions of key documents.	
Hearing loops.			

What guides the Interim Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The department's Interim DIAP is designed to align with a range of legislation, government reports and commitments.

It is structured according to the 4 key pillars of the NSW DIP, ensuring alignment with the NSW DIP's whole-of-government priorities and significant agency-led actions. These pillars are as follows:

- Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability.
- Creating liveable and safer communities.
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence.
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The department's Interim DIAP is designed to put the principles outlined in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* (the Act) into practice by promoting the rights, inclusion and independence of people with disability.

Section 4 of the Act states that people with disability have the right to:

- be respected for their worth and dignity as individuals.
- participate in, and contribute to, social and economic life and should be supported to develop and enhance their skills and experience.
- realise their physical, social, sexual, reproductive, emotional and intellectual capacities.
- make decisions that affect their lives (including decisions involving risk) to the full extent of their capacity and to be supported in making those decisions, if they want or require support.
- be respected regarding their cultural or linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.
- privacy and confidentiality.
- live free from neglect, abuse and exploitation.
- access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background and enables them to make informed choices.
- pursue complaints, like any other member of the community.

The Interim DIAP is also underpinned by the 2023 Disability Royal Commission recommendations, which call for Australian schools to deliver a more disability inclusive education via enhanced workforce training and support, improved data collection and use, stronger oversight, and greater accountability.

Breaking Barriers Report

In 2025, the department wrote and released internally the *Breaking Barriers: The experiences of staff with disability at the NSW Department of Education* report.

Drawing on 2024 PMES data and focus groups with staff with disability in schools and departmental workplaces, the report identifies the key barriers that shape the everyday experiences of our workforce.

The findings highlight persistent challenges in accessing workplace adjustments, navigating systems, and feeling safe to disclose disability at work. These insights confirm that staff with disability do not consistently experience equitable access to employment, career progression, and workplace support.

As one of the largest employers in NSW, the department has a critical role in modelling inclusive employment practices. The report's 12 recommendations – spanning workforce participation, workplace adjustments and leadership capability – directly informed the priorities and initiatives in this Interim DIAP. They have shaped our focus on strengthening accountability, simplifying systems, improving the consistency of workplace adjustments, and embedding inclusive design across recruitment, onboarding and career development.

By grounding this plan in the voices and experiences of our staff with disability, the Interim DIAP sets a clear pathway for meaningful, measurable change across the department.

Our Plan for NSW Public Education

The department's Our Plan for NSW Public Education: Transforming lives through learning 2024–27 sets the strategic direction for an equitable and outstanding education system across NSW.

The plan emphasises that every student should learn, grow and belong, with a strong focus on advancing equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences for all learners. It recognises that addressing inequity and removing barriers is critical to ensuring every student can achieve their potential.

Equity and inclusion are central to the Plan for Public Education, including a commitment to:

- eliminating barriers to participation and achievement.
- embedding inclusive practices across learning environments.
- supporting staff to feel valued, included and equipped to perform at their best.
- embedding the voices of students, families and staff in decision-making.

The Interim DIAP supports these priorities by translating the Plan's system-level commitment to equity into practical actions that improve access, participation and outcomes for people with disability across schools, workplaces and communities.

Through this alignment, the Interim DIAP strengthens the department's ability to deliver an education system where inclusion is embedded by design, and equitable outcomes are achieved for all.

Our Plan for NSW Public Education focus area	How the Interim DIAP aligns	Related actions
Advance equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences	Addressing barriers and improving participation, access and outcomes for people with disability across schools, workplaces and communities.	All actions contribute to this focus area.
Strengthen trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff	Addressing staffing shortages and ensuring a sustainable pipeline of Inclusive Education teachers via a workforce supply strategy, staff development on disability inclusion, and embedding accountability in leadership.	2.1, 2.2 and 3.3.
Deliver outstanding leadership, teaching and learning	Improving capability through professional learning on disability; enhancing guidance and resources on reasonable adjustments for schools.	2.1 and 2.2.
Strengthen student wellbeing and development	Strengthening safe, inclusive and supportive environments where students with disability are known, valued and cared for, and can participate fully in school life.	2.2.

Our Plan for NSW Public Education focus area	How the Interim DIAP aligns	Related actions
Provide meaningful post-school pathways	The Interim DIAP will improve availability and access to meaningful post-school pathways in education, training, and employment for school leavers with disability. The actions that contribute to this goal include a Career Education Framework, introduction of new career advisor/coordinator roles and updated teacher approval practices.	3.2 and 3.4.
Support services	Improving system supports for workplace adjustments, improve digital systems access.	3.1, 4.1 and 4.2.
Support infrastructure	Improving the design, planning and delivery of school infrastructure in all school settings.	2.3.

How we will measure our progress

This Interim DIAP is supported by a detailed implementation plan, which will be used for regular initiative tracking and progress reporting.

The department will compile an annual progress report that:

- outlines the actions taken in the year to date.
- provides a status update for each initiative.
- notes any changes in NSW Government or department priorities that may have impacted initiatives.
- evaluates system and cultural change through measurable metrics:
 - An increase in NSW People Matters Employee Survey (PMES) scores for staff with disability.
 - An increase in disability representation in workforce profile reporting.
 - My Say My Way and NSW Public Schools Survey data.

Interim DIAP progress reports will be provided to the department's Disability Steering Committee and Equity, Wellbeing and Aboriginal Education Sub-Executive Committee.

The department will also deliver progress reports to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, in line with whole-of-government reporting requirements.

Our Interim DIAP plan

The department's Interim DIAP is guided by the 4 focus areas of the NSW DIP, which are linked to outcome areas of Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031. These 4 focus areas are as follows:

- Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability.
- Creating liveable and safer communities.
- Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence.
- Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

The Interim DIAP sets out 30 actions across 12 initiatives, aligned to the 4 pillars, and designed to:

- foster positive community attitudes and empower people with disability.
- work to reduce barriers in education so that students, staff and community members with disability are supported to thrive.
- improve the experience of staff with disability through improved systemic support.
- improve how people interact with department systems.

This Interim DIAP will run from July 2026 to December 2029 (until replaced by the final DIAP).

Pillar 1: Developing positive community attitudes and upholding the rights of people with disability

Aim: To increase public awareness of the abilities and contributions of people with disability, to foster positive community attitudes and empower people with disability to exercise their rights.

Public attitudes and behaviours can be among the most significant barriers to full access and inclusion for people with disability. They can impact a person's ability to exercise their rights and their access to opportunities to participate in everyday life. People with disability deserve to experience respectful, inclusive attitudes and behaviours across all interactions.

Our goal

The department will foster positive community attitudes and empower people with disability by strengthening the provision, uptake and effectiveness of disability inclusion professional learning offerings, implementing strong measures to develop and recognise the contributions of staff with disability and increase awareness of disability and disability experiences.

Our outcomes

- Build awareness and understanding about disability to create a more accepting and inclusive culture.
- Increase opportunities for staff and students to learn about disability experiences.
- Improve visible representation and recognition for people with disability.

Our initiatives

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 1.1 Improve leadership capability around disability inclusion.			
Develop new and targeted training programs for leaders.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2026.	Our Plan for NSW Public Education (Our Plan) focus areas 1, 2, and 4. Disability Royal Commission (DRC) Recommendation 7.8.
Ensure all existing and new training offerings are both accessible and disability informed.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 1, 2027.	Our Plan focus areas 1, 2 and 4. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Promote programs and evaluate engagement.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Ongoing.	Our Plan focus areas 1, 2 and 4. DRC Recommendation 7.8.

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Explore options to include disability awareness training content into mandatory training for people managers.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 2, 2027.	Our Plan focus areas 1, 2 and 4. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Action 1.2 Implement and promote programs that build positive attitudes and understanding.			
Implement the Hidden Disability Sunflower program in Education Support Staff offices and participating schools.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2026.	Our Plan focus area 2. National Autism Strategy 2025-2031.
Deliver department-wide recognition programs that promote disability inclusion, such as Disability Recognition Week, Global Accessibility Awareness Day, and International Day for People with Disability.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Ongoing.	Our Plan focus areas 1 and 5. National Autism Strategy 2025-2031 – Commitment 1(a).
Promote and monitor uptake of videos and associated curriculum resources to build awareness in students about disability.	Inclusion and Wellbeing (Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing).	Ongoing.	Our Plan focus areas 1 and 5. National Autism Strategy 2025-2031 – Commitment 1(a).

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 1.3 Implement and promote programs that support and recognise staff with disability.			
Explore opportunities to celebrate contributions of people with disability through formal recognition programs.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2027.	Our Plan focus areas 1 and 2. National Autism Strategy 2025-2031 – Commitment 1(a).
Deliver a mentoring program that connects staff with disability with senior leaders to promote two-way learning and understanding.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 4. DRC Recommendation 7.8.

Contribution to Our Plan for NSW Public Education

- Advances equitable outcomes, opportunities and experiences by building understanding of disability and reducing attitudinal barriers.
- Strengthens workforce capability by improving leadership confidence and awareness of disability inclusion.
- Supports inclusive school and workplace cultures where people with disability are recognised, valued and able to contribute fully.

Pillar 2: Creating liveable and safer communities

Aim: Enhance the participation of people with disability in all areas of community life by addressing barriers in housing, education, transport, health, social and cultural engagement and overall wellbeing.

A truly liveable community needs to be accessible, safe and inclusive for everyone, including people with disability.

Our goal

The department will work to remove or reduce barriers in education so that students with disability are supported by teachers and support staff who are equipped to respond effectively to their needs, in school environments that promote inclusive access for students, staff and communities.

Our outcomes

- Improved staff capability and confidence to make adjustments aligned with student need, contributing to improved learning participation and engagement.
- Increased consistency and quality of inclusive education practices across NSW public schools.
- Physical infrastructure in new builds and upgrades is accessible for staff and students.

Our initiatives

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 2.1 Ensure a sustainable supply of Inclusive Education teachers.			
Develop and implement a workforce supply strategy for the Special and Inclusive Education workforce to address current teacher vacancies, strengthen teacher capability and build a more sustainable supply of inclusive education teachers.	School Workforce (People Group).	Term 4, 2029.	Our Plan focus area 2.
Action 2.2 Build inclusive practice to support students with disability.			
Enhance guidance and resources on reasonable adjustments for schools.	Inclusion and Wellbeing (Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing).	TBC	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 5. DRC Recommendation 7.8
Review and update the Personalising Learning with Technology PL course.	Inclusion and Wellbeing (Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing).	TBC	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 5. DRC Recommendation 7.8

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Promote uptake of professional learning on disability, neurodiversity and inclusive education, including a suite of professional learning on intellectual disability.	Inclusion and Wellbeing (Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing)	TBC	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 5. DRC Recommendation 7.8

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 2.3 Improve inclusive design in all school settings, including mainstream, supported learning classes and SSPs, to benefit staff and students.			
Update the Educational Facilities Standards and Guidelines to improve design requirements to ensure school infrastructure is inclusive and that school facilities are not a barrier to inclusion, including ensuring suitable amenities and access to teaching and learning spaces are provided in all school settings, removing systemic environmental barriers.	Strategic Infrastructure Services (School Infrastructure).	Term 4, 2028.	Our Plan enabler 2.

Contribution to Our Plan for NSW Public Education

- Advances equitable outcomes by reducing physical and systemic barriers to participation in education.
- Supports inclusive learning environments through improved accessibility, design and inclusive teaching practice.
- Contributes to safe, inclusive and supportive school communities that enable all students to participate and succeed.

Pillar 3: Supporting access to meaningful employment and independence

Aim: To boost the meaningful employment of people with disability, allowing them to plan their future, make choices and enhance their economic security.

Employment rates for people with disability are significantly lower than those without disability across all sectors.

Meaningful employment is vital to support people with disability to attain economic security, social interaction and mental health, and increase opportunities to support individual choice and control.

Our goal

We will focus on improving the experience of staff with disability by strengthening accountability, simplifying systems, and embedding workplace adjustments as a standard part of how work is designed and supported – not an exception.

Our outcomes

- Staff with disability are supported, valued and able to progress equitably.
- Inclusive employment opportunities for school leavers, with clear and accessible information for parents, carers and students.
- Systems, processes and governance support accessibility and inclusion.

Our initiatives

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 3.1 Improve access, capability and systems to support workplace adjustments.			
Improve workplace adjustment support and accountability through a robust end-to-end future state and governance framework.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2026.	Our Plan focus area 2. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Implement a centralised funding source for workplace adjustments.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 2, 2028.	Our Plan focus area 2. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Create and reinforce touchpoints for regular conversations about adjustments throughout the employee life cycle.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 2, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 2. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Enhance and promote the Workplace Adjustments Hub to support workplace adjustment processes for employees with disability and their managers.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Ongoing.	Our Plan focus area 2. DRC Recommendation 7.8.

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 3.2 Embed and improve accountability for accessibility and inclusion.			
Embed accessibility checks into executive approval processes.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 2, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 2. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Ensure staff have access to and confidence in clear and independent complaints and reporting pathways.	Professional and Ethical Standards (People Group).	Term 4, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 2.
Embed disability inclusion metrics into executive performance agreements.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 2.

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 3.3 Ensure pathways to employment are inclusive and accessible.			
Review and update teacher approval practices and recruitment practices to improve accessibility and inclusion and implement standardised accommodations.	School Workforce (People Group).	Term 4, 2028.	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 6. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Provide clear, tailored and accessible guidance about the Approval to Teach process.	School Workforce (People Group).	Term 4, 2026.	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 6. DRC Recommendation 7.8.
Review training for hiring managers and interview panellists to ensure coverage of accessibility and inclusion.	Talent Capability and Performance (People Group).	Term 4, 2026.	Our Plan focus areas 2 and 6. DRC Recommendation 7.8.

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 3.4 Improve availability and access to meaningful post-school pathways in education, training, and employment for school leavers with disability.			
Deliver a career education framework for NSW Government schools.	Skills and Pathways (Education and Skills Reform).	Term 4, 2027.	Our Plan focus area 6. DRC Recommendation 7.8. National Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025-2026 – Commitment 8, Action 3.
Establish Equity Career and Pathways Adviser and Equity VET Support Coordinator roles.	Skills and Pathways (Education and Skills Reform).	Term 4, 2028.	Our Plan focus area 6. DRC Recommendation 7.8. National Autism Strategy Action Plan 2025-2026 – Commitment 8, Action 3.

Contribution to Our Plan for NSW Public Education

- Strengthens trust and respect for the teaching profession and school support staff by improving workplace inclusion, support and career pathways.

- Enhances workforce capability by embedding inclusive practices across recruitment, development and workplace adjustments.
- Supports meaningful post-school pathways and employment outcomes for students and staff with disability.

Pillar 4: Improving access to mainstream services through better systems and process

Aim: To ensure that people with disability are able to make informed choices and access services, including mainstream government services and other community opportunities.

Complex systems and processes can create barriers for students, staff, and families with disability when accessing information, supports, and services.

Our goal

We will improve how people interact with departmental systems by making digital platforms, school processes, and service pathways more accessible, consistent, and user-friendly.

Our outcomes

- Students, staff and community members can easily access information on department websites.
- Systems and processes are not a barrier to accessing specialised support.

Our initiatives

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Action 4.1 Improve access to digital systems and information.			
Upgrade the NSW Department of Education website and school website service.	Information Technology Directorate (Operations Group).	TBD.	Our Plan focus area enabler 1.
Embed accessibility requirements into digital design and enterprise architecture standards.	Information Technology Directorate (Operations Group).	TBD.	Our Plan focus area enabler 1.
Action 4.2 Improve application processes for support programs			
Implement a new Access Request system and streamlined process to enable students and families to seek specialised support.	Information Technology Directorate (Operations Group).	TBD.	Our Plan focus area enabler 1.

What we will do	Who will lead it	When it will be done	Why this is important
Upgrade the Assisted School Travel Program platform.	Information Technology Directorate (Operations Group).	TBD.	Our Plan focus area enabler 1.

Contribution to Our Plan for NSW Public Education

- Improves access to mainstream services by making systems, processes and information more accessible and easier to navigate.
- Supports student wellbeing and participation by enabling easier access to supports and services.
- Contributes to equitable outcomes by ensuring systems are not a barrier to inclusion.

Appendices

Acronym List

DIAP – Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

LGBTIQ+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and other sexually or diverse people.

NSW DIP – New South Wales Disability Inclusion Plan.

P&C Association – Parents and Citizens Association.

SSPs – Schools for Specific Purposes.

UNCRPD – United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

VET – Vocational Education and Training.

Glossary

myPL – online professional learning platform used by the department.

P&C Associations are volunteer groups of parents and citizens who play an important role in public school communities.

Schools for Specific Purpose – Schools for specific purposes (SSPs) provide specialist and intensive support in a dedicated setting for students with moderate to high learning and support needs including students with a diagnosed intellectual or physical disability, autism, mental health considerations, sensory processing disorder or behaviour disorders.

Career Advisor – A secondary teacher who is qualified to provide information, guidance and advice to help students explore their education and career options, create a resume, search for jobs, apply for jobs and/or apply for further study. Careers advisers liaise with parents, teachers, employers, community agencies and training providers.

Careers and Pathways EdBuy Marketplace – an electronic catalogue, managed by the department, which is used by schools.

Regional, Rural or Remote – areas considered outside the major cities of Australia.

Staff Portal – the main department online staff platform to access department functions and resources.

Managers' Resource Hub – an internal department intranet hub offering essential information, guidance, and tools across key areas including people management, digital tools, project management, policies and compliance, budget and finance as well as leadership and strategy.

Leadership Learning Hub – an internal department intranet hub for leadership resources, programs, and professional development opportunities.

Regional Industry Education Partnerships program – connects employers with secondary schools across NSW.

Educational Pathways Program – designed to improve higher education and career outcomes for young people.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – sets standards that make web content more accessible to a wide range of people with disability.

Digital Inclusion Standard – sets the Australian requirements for designing and delivering inclusive and accessible digital government experiences.

NSW Design Standard – sets the NSW best practice when building government services in NSW, including privacy, security, accessibility and branding.

Statewide Staffrooms – online forums for curriculum specialists across a range of subjects and specialities to collaborate and share knowledge.

Staff Noticeboards – a digital noticeboard used by the department to make announcements to staff.

Disability Employee Network – the department's official staff-led network for staff with disability.

Public Education Awards – annual awards to showcase exceptional work across NSW public education, by schools, students, teachers, staff, parents, and volunteers.

NSW Training Awards – awards to recognise outstanding achievements in the vocational education and training sector.

Workplace adjustment – changes, modifications or alterations to a work process, procedure, practice or environment to enable a person to safely and productively perform their role in a workplace.

Disability Council NSW – the official advisory body to the NSW Government on matters relating to people with disability and disability inclusion.

ApprovDial to teach process – the department's approval process to teach in NSW public schools.

School leaver – a person who has recently finished their secondary education, typically after Year 10 or Year 12, and is transitioning to employment, training, or university.

Disability Recognition Week – an annual department initiative held with the goal of fostering a sense of belonging for staff and students with disability, while building capability in understanding accessibility and adjustment procedures, and fostering inclusive environments.

International Day for People with Disabilities – a United Nations-observed day held on 3 December each year to promote community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability.

Support services

Wellbeing and support (staff and their immediate families)

- The department's Employee Assistance Program (**1800 951 198**) provides free, independent and confidential counselling services to department staff and their immediate family members to assist with both personal and work-related matters.

Wellbeing and support (general)

- Beyond Blue (**1300 224 636** or beyondblue.org.au) provides mental health information and support.
- Lifeline Crisis Support (**13 11 14** or lifeline.org.au) provides 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.
- 13YARN (**13 92 76** or 13yarn.org.au) provides 24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.
- 1800 Respect (**1800 737 732** or 1800respect.org.au) provides confidential information, counselling and support services 24/7 for people impacted by domestic, family, or sexual violence.

Wellbeing and support (students)

- Kids Helpline (**1800 55 1800**) offers free and confidential phone and online counselling for young people.
- ReachOut Australia (au.reachout.com) is an online mental health service providing practical support, tools and tips for young people.

Wellbeing and support (parents and carers)

- Parentline (**1300 1300 52**) offers free telephone counselling and support services for parents and carers with children aged 0 to 18 years who live in NSW.
- Raising Children Network (raisingchildren.net.au) provides free, reliable, up-to-date, independent and ad-free parenting.

Disability support services and information

- Disability Gateway (**1800 643 787** or disabilitygateway.gov.au) helps people with disability, their families and carers find the information, services and support they need in Australia.
- Disability Council NSW (dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/advisory-councils/disability-council-nsw.html) is the official advisory body to the NSW Government on matters relating to people with disability and disability inclusion.
- NSW Disability Advocacy Providers (dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/disability-and-inclusion/disability-advocacy-futures-program.html) – a list of disability advocacy providers.

- NSW Ageing and Disability Commission (**1800 628 221** or ageingdisabilitycommission.nsw.gov.au) provides information or services to report concerns of abuse, neglect or exploitation of an older person or adult with disability.
- National Disability Insurance Agency (**1800 800 110** or ndis.gov.au) implements the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (**1800 035 444** or ndiscommission.gov.au/complaints) to report an issue or make a complaint about an NDIS provider, worker, support, or service, or the NDIS Commission.

Sources

Breaking Barriers: The experiences of Staff with Disability at the NSW Department of Education.

[Our Plan for NSW Public Education.](#)

[NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2026 – 2029.](#)

[Parliamentary Inquiry into Children and young people with disability in New South Wales educational settings 2024](#)

[2023 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.](#)

[National Autism Strategy 2025–2031.](#)

[National roadmap for improving the health of Australians with intellectual disability.](#)

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