



Australian
National
University

Disability Action Plan (DAP)

2026–2028

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Foreword from the Executive Sponsor for Disability

Professor Merryn McKinnon Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)

The Australian National University (ANU) has a national mission and mandate. We were founded with a role to support the development of national unity and identity, improve our understanding of ourselves and our neighbours, provide our nation with research capacity amongst the best in the world, and education in areas vital for our future.

To achieve this mission, we need to enable staff and students to fully participate in education, research and life at ANU. When everyone can fully contribute and participate, everyone benefits.

The ANU Disability Action Plan (DAP) is a roadmap for building an environment where accessibility is embedded in everything we do. Disability inclusion is not an optional extra but a core part of who we are as a university.

Our ANU colleagues, students, and advocates generously share their insights and expertise, and their voices have shaped this plan. I am grateful to them for their ongoing contributions to all facets of ANU life and look forward to working with them as implementation of this DAP progresses.

The DAP acknowledges the barriers that still exist and we have work to do as an institution.

Implementing this plan will require ongoing effort from all of us.

Inclusion is not the responsibility of a single office or portfolio; it is a shared endeavour that touches every classroom, laboratory, meeting room, and digital space. When we design with accessibility in mind, we create environments that benefit everyone.

I firmly believe that the greatest strength of ANU is our people; our community mindedness, our willingness to collaborate, innovate, and hold ourselves accountable. We strengthen the whole ANU community when we recognise and value the diversity of experiences.

I look forward to working with all of you to strengthen the ANU community.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian National University (ANU) acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land upon which the University's Acton campus is located. This Ngunnawal and Ngambri-Kamberri land continues to support students, staff, and community members throughout their time at ANU.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Indigenous peoples, past, present and future, and acknowledge that this land from which we benefit has an ancient history that is both rich and sacred.

We recognise that learning and connection to Country must be inclusive and accessible to all. We honour the diverse ways people engage with this land, including those living with disability, and commit to creating spaces that are physically, culturally, and intellectually welcome and support everyone.

This land will continue to hold a space for future generations to come together, to learn from Country and from one another. The ANU community makes a commitment to always respect the land upon which we stand and to ensure that the voices of this land's Indigenous peoples are both heard and listened to, so that we may move towards a future marked by cooperation, mutual respect, and inclusion.

Acknowledgement of People Living with Disability

ANU acknowledges and honours lived and living experience of people with disability and whose diverse experiences, knowledge, and contributions enrich every part of University life.

We recognise the courage, leadership, and advocacy of people living with disability, and the role they continue to play in advancing inclusion, accessibility, and systemic change within ANU and beyond. Their insights and lived experience are central to building a university culture grounded in respect, equity, and understanding.

ANU acknowledge that many people living with disability continue to face barriers to full participation in education, employment and community life. The University reaffirms its commitment to removing these barriers through proactive action, inclusive design, and continuous improvement.

We also acknowledge the carers, families, allies, and advocates who support people living with disability and contribute to our shared vision of a more inclusive and equitable community.

Our vision for access and inclusion

ANU affirms its commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable and culturally safe environment in which all members of the community are empowered to participate fully in the life of the University. In alignment with our national mission and institutional values, we adopt the social model of disability, recognising that disability arises not from individuals but from the interaction with systemic, environmental and attitudinal barriers. Our responsibility is to identify and remove these barriers to ensure that all individuals can thrive.

As Australia's national university, ANU is uniquely positioned to lead cultural change. We are committed to embedding disability inclusion across our operations, teaching, research and engagement activities. This commitment is underpinned by our values of fairness, justice, transparency and accountability, and reflects our strategic priorities in workforce development, cultural safety, and inclusive practice.

We recognise that disability does not exist in isolation but intersects with other aspects of identities, relationships and social factors. ANU is committed to understanding and addressing these intersecting factors to ensure that our policies, practices, and environments are inclusive of the full diversity of our community.

We recognise that trust is foundational to inclusion. ANU will build and sustain trust through meaningful engagement with people with disability: listening to lived experience, co-designing solutions, and ensuring our policies and practices are responsive, transparent and accountable. We will promote inclusive leadership and ensure that disability representation is embedded across decision-making structures and institutional processes.

We will endeavour that our infrastructure, digital environments, and service delivery models are designed to be accessible, flexible and responsive to diverse needs. The Accessibility team is now embedded within the Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion portfolio, strengthening multidisciplinary and evidence-informed practice through professional expertise across allied health and inclusive education disciplines. The introduction of a case management model enables more consistent, personalised and ongoing support for students. In parallel, existing workplace adjustment and case management model provide coordinated, confidential and timely support for staff members. While transitional workforce challenges are acknowledged, ANU is committed to strengthening workforce capability and aligning organisational culture with the principles of equity, respect and belonging to support a professional, responsive and sustainable service.

This Disability Action Plan has been developed for a shorter cycle than previous plans. This reflects a period of anticipated change, including forthcoming legislative reforms. A shorter cycle enables ANU to remain responsive, recalibrate priorities, and align future actions with emerging obligations, governance arrangements, and strategic direction.

Legislative framework

As a public institution established under the Australian National University Act 1991, ANU is bound by Federal and Territory legislation and agreed Standards relating to disability and discrimination including, but not limited to, the following:

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\)](#)
- [Disability \(Access to Premises - Buildings\) Standards 2010](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2004 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Discrimination Act 1991 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#)
- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)

In addition, ANU acknowledges its role as a party to international conventions that promote human rights and equality, including the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(2006\)](#), which affirms the inherent dignity, rights and equal opportunities of all people. We also acknowledge related United Nations conventions that address issues of human rights, non-discrimination and equality.

This legislative framework guides the ANU Disability Action Plan, ensuring that our commitments are grounded in enforceable standards. It provides the foundation for a whole-of-University approach to dismantling barriers, embedding inclusive practices, and advancing the University's role in disability access, rights and equity.

Plan of action

ANU reaffirms its commitment to advancing equity, access, and inclusion for people with disability. This Disability Action Plan (DAP) outlines a strategic framework for embedding inclusive practices across all aspects of university life.

The plan was developed through consultation with staff, students, and key stakeholders across the university, using a multi-channel approach including an online consultation form, targeted staff and student focus groups independently facilitated by the Australian Disability Network, and written submissions.

The resulting DAP reflects the principles of the social model of disability, recognising that barriers, rather than impairments, limit participation.



The DAP is structured around six key Focus Areas, each with defined goals, actions, responsibilities, measures, and time frames, with no order of preference or priority.

Focus areas

1. Inclusive culture and leadership

Embed disability inclusion into the University's values, leadership, and everyday practices.

2. Digital accessibility

Ensure that our policies and practices support digital environments which are accessible to students, staff and, visitors with disability.

3. Accessible environment and systems

Ensure physical spaces and facilities are accessible, inclusive, and aspired to go beyond minimum compliance standards.

4. Inclusive employment

Support staff with disability to thrive through recruitment, career development, and workplace participation.

5. Inclusive education

Ensure students with disability have equitable access to pathways into the University, learning, support, and supported to achieve academic success.

6. Engagement and continuous improvement

Ensure accountability, transparency, and ongoing improvement in disability inclusion.

The implementation of this Plan will be overseen by the Chief People Officer and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education). The Plan will be submitted to the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to demonstrate a commitment to reducing discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

Progress will be monitored by People and Culture in collaboration with Inclusive and Respectful Communities through biennial reviews, feedback mechanisms, and lived experience engagement.

The Plan will remain a living document, responsive to emerging needs, legislative changes, and community input.

Focus area one: Inclusive culture and leadership

Goal: Embed disability inclusion into the university's values, leadership, and everyday practices.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
1.1 ANU will nominate at least one Executive Sponsor who will be responsible for progressing access and inclusion for people with disability.	People and Culture	- Executive Sponsor formally appointed. (Achieved April 2026). - Annual progress report published.
1.2 ANU will incorporate disability awareness and inclusive practice into recommended training modules.	People and Culture	- Disability Awareness module promoted as part of onboarding and probation training. - Disability Awareness module promoted in People Manager Essential program.
1.3 ANU will engage and consult staff and student with disability about the accessibility and inclusiveness of our strategies, policies, and projects.	People and Culture Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	- Standing consultation group established (Staff Disability Network & Disability Student Association). - Ensuring DEI checklist is used as part of policy creation and review process.
1.4 ANU will report regularly on disability inclusion initiatives and outcomes.	People and Culture	- Biennial DAP progress reports published on ANU website. - Regular updates published in On Campus. - Promotion of key disability and accessibility awareness days through internal communications.
1.5 Deliver targeted leadership development programs for supervisors and managers on inclusive leadership, cultural safety, and disabilities rights.	People and Culture	- Inclusive leadership and cultural safety content included in the People Manager Essentials program. - Participation rates in the People Manager Essentials program are tracked and reported.

Focus area two: Digital accessibility

Goal: Ensure that our policies and practices support digital environments which are accessible to students, staff, and visitors with disability.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
2.1 Improve the ANU digital environment by embedding accessibility assurance activities into the ANU Digital Plan.	Information Technology Services	• ANU developed products have evidence of accessibility compliance or an approved accessibility improvement plan (WCAG2.2 AA). • Digital Products introduced by the ANU Digital Plan require evidence of accessibility compliance or an accessibility improvement that is contractually agreed to with vendors (WCAG2.2 AA).
2.2 Make a formal written commitment to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for ANU systems at a minimum of WCAG AA.	Information Technology Services	• Commitment to latest WCAG accessibility compliance standards is embedded in ANU policy. • ANU Digital Design standards include compliance with accessibility standards.
2.3 Embed accessible procurement of digital products.	Information Technology Services	• Embed specific relevant standards (Australian ICT procurement standard AS EN 301 549 (EN301)) around procurement of accessible ICT into the assessed functional/non-functional elements of the software platform.
2.4 Engage staff with disability in digital product processes.	Information Technology Services	• Embed representation of staff with disability into Digital Plan governance. • Embed representation of accessibility capability into key Information Technology Services stream, capability and design leadership groups.

Focus area three: Accessible environment

Goal: Ensure physical spaces and facilities are accessible, inclusive, and aspired to go beyond minimum compliance standards.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
3.1 Establish targeted consultation mechanisms for major projects, with feedback integrated into key design review stages and tracked to resolution where feasible.	Campus Environment	• Accessibility consultation embedded in design review processes for major or high-impact capital projects. • Key themes and design implications from consultation documented and considered at concept and detailed design stages. • Decisions and outcomes from consultation recorded and reported, including rationale where feedback cannot be fully implemented.
3.2 Mandate Universal Design principles for major projects, with compliance verified at defined design and pre-handover gateways. Scaled requirements will apply to lower-value works.	Campus Environment	• Universal Design principles mandated for major/high-impact projects, with compliance reviewed at concept design, detailed design, and pre-handover stages. • Scaled accessibility checklists applied for lower-tier projects, proportionate to scope and risk. • Campus Environment design guidelines updated to reflect Universal Design principles and referenced in project briefs. • Complete Accessibility Audit of car park and public transport access points.

Focus area three: Accessible environment (continued)

Action	Responsibility	Measures
3.3 Ensure all emergency evacuation procedures and drills are inclusive of people with disability. Install visual, auditory, and tactile emergency alerts when there is a new full building refurbishment or a new build.	Campus Environment	• Inclusive evacuation considerations incorporated into emergency management planning, procedures, and drills, including consideration of mobility, sensory, and cognitive access needs. • Visual, auditory, and tactile emergency alert systems installed in new builds and fully refurbished buildings, in line with relevant standards. • Accessibility requirements for emergency systems included in project briefs for applicable capital works. • Opportunities to improve evacuation inclusivity in existing buildings identified and prioritised through ongoing building upgrades or refurbishments, where feasible.
3.4 Embed accessibility requirement into procurement processes, with compliance obligations proportionate to the value, risk, and nature of the procurement.	Campus Environment	• Accessibility requirements embedded in procurement documentation for relevant goods, services, and works, proportionate to procurement value and accessibility risk. • Full accessibility compliance evidence required for high-value or high-risk procurements, including building works, fit-outs, and high-use public assets. • Standard accessibility specifications applied to low-risk or routine procurements where appropriate. • Accessibility clauses aligned to AS 1428.1:2021 included in relevant contracts.

Focus area four: Inclusive employment

Goal: Support staff with disability to thrive in recruitment, career development, and workplace participation.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
4.1 Include a standard statement in all job advertisements encouraging applications from people living with disability.	People and Culture	• Inclusive statement added to all job ads. • Monitor number of applicants with disability
4.2 Review and redesign recruitment processes to ensure accessibility at every stage (advertising, application systems, interviews). Provide accessible recruitment materials (e.g., screen-reader friendly application forms, alternative interview formats).	People and Culture	• All recruitment materials tested for accessibility. • Alternative interview formats offered. • Guidelines on accessible documents are provided to hiring managers.
4.3 Provide a dedicated centralised fund for disability-related workplace adjustments, ensuring timely support without financial barriers to units.	People and Culture	• Fund established and accessible to all staff. • Annual usage and impact report produced.
4.4 Celebrate contributions of staff with disability through awards, profiles, and storytelling campaigns	People and Culture Marketing and Communications	• Quarterly On Campus or internal publication features inclusion stories.
4.5 Actively support candidates and staff members with disability to access adjustments for all recruitment and career development opportunities.	People and Culture	• Reasonable adjustment policy reviewed and promoted. • Adjustment guidance and resources made available to all recruitment panel. • Relative to opportunity guideline reviewed and promoted.
4.6 Strengthen a consistent, high quality and organisation wide approach to workplace adjustments across the employment life cycle through clear standards, defined processes and effective accountability	People and Culture	• By 31 December 2026, all information on workplace adjustments across the employee lifecycle will be published on a central, accessible platform, communicated through at least two formal channels, and achieve at least 80% staff awareness as measured by a staff survey tool. • By 31 December 2027, workplace adjustments will be applied consistently across all Colleges and Portfolios, demonstrated by at least 80% compliance with agreed policies and procedures and an employee satisfaction rating of 80% or higher from those who have requested adjustments.

Focus area five: Inclusive education

Goal: Ensure students with disability have equitable access to learning, support, and academic success.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
5.1 Provide accessible digital learning content support through the continued development of web-based resources and delivery of training.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)	• Accessible digital learning content resources are available, findable and current. • Accessible Digital Content training is available to teaching academic and professional support staff. • Ad hoc support is available for specific accessible digital learning content questions or problems.
5.2 Provide evidence-based inclusive course design support.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)	• Inclusive/universal learning design web-based support resources are available, findable, and evidence-based. • Training in inclusive learning design/universal design for learning is available to teaching academic and professional support staff. • Ad hoc support is available for specific inclusive learning design/ universal design for learning questions or problems.
5.3 Provide evidence-based inclusive teaching practices support.	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)	• Inclusive teaching practices support resources are available, findable, and evidence-based. • Training in inclusive teaching practices is available to teaching academic and professional support staff.
5.4 Improve students' awareness of access, equity and inclusion, including disability inclusion and accessibility supports, and inherent requirement.	International and Future Students Division	• Accessibility and support information is visible, accessible, and consistently communicated across prospective student materials. • Attendance and engagement levels at events (e.g. Open Day, Orientation Week) where accessibility and inclusion information is promoted.

Focus area five: Inclusive education (continued)

Action	Responsibility	Measures
5.5 Initiate consultation and co-design practices with students with disability for key student engagement projects and resources.	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	- Track the number and type of structured engagement opportunities in consultation and co-design activities for students with disability, including participation in the Student Advisory Forum. - Collect participant feedback on whether their contributions were included and communicated back to them.
5.6 Strengthen the development and delivery of Education Access Plans (EAPs) through allied health case management model and ongoing service improvement.	Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	- Implementation of a case management approach for EAP development, enabling ongoing engagement rather than single-point interactions. - Improved consistency and quality of EAPs, as evidenced through staff and student feedback



Focus area six: Engagement and continuous improvement

Goal: Ensure accountability, transparency, and ongoing improvement in disability inclusion.

Action	Responsibility	Measures
6.1 Require regular reporting on DAP progress to Safety and Wellbeing sub-committee and make outcomes publicly available.	People and Culture	- DAP report publicly available on ANU website. - Performance tracked against year-to-year data.
6.2 Ensure the ANU Brand Identity resources and templates are accessible.	Marketing and Communications	- Accessibility audit completed by 2026. - Accessible templates available on ANU Brand Identity Hub.
6.3 Create ongoing feedback mechanisms (surveys, forums, focus groups) to capture lived experience and measure effectiveness of initiatives.	People and Culture Experience, Wellbeing and Inclusion	- Accessibility and inclusion questions included in Pulse Survey - Direct feedback and evaluation surveys conducted with staff who have workplace adjustments. - Student perspectives captured through Disability Student Association input and student survey results.
6.4 Review marketing and communication materials for accessibility and representation. Celebrate successes and share stories of impact through University communications.	Marketing and Communications	- Quarterly On Campus or internal publication features inclusion stories. - Annual campaign for International Day of People with Disability.
6.5 Participate in the Australian Disability Network (AusDN) Access and Inclusion Index biennially as an external benchmark to assess and inform progress on accessibility and inclusion.	Marketing and Communications	Completion of the AusDN Access and Inclusion Index in 2027 and use of results to identify strengths, gaps, and priority actions for continuous improvement.

Appendices

Appendix One – DAP 2026–2028 Working Group

Sponsor: ANU Executive Sponsor for Disability, Professor Merryn McKinnon, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) Learning and Teaching. The DAP 2026-2028 is overseen by Chief People Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

Department	Representative
Campus Environment	Mark Talbot Associate Director, Operations
Corporate Communications and Engagement	Deborah Poulton Interim Senior Manager, Corporate Communications and Engagement
Inclusive and Respectful Communities	Larissa Siliezar Mendoza Head, Inclusive Communities
Information Technology Services	Kim Neville Digital Accessibility Practice Lead
International and Future Students Division	Nirmalo Wilkes Director, Brand and Marketing
Learning and Teaching	Professor Merryn McKinnon Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
People and Culture	Lauren Sayers Manager, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ingrid Krauss Manager, Injury Prevention and Wellbeing
Student Safety and Wellbeing	Leeanne Kelly Head, Student Health and Wellbeing Beatrice Hannah Manager, Student Wellbeing and Accessibility

Appendix Two - Communication

A comprehensive communications plan will be developed in collaboration with ANU Marketing and Communications and other local areas as needed.

The Disability Action Plan 2026–2028 (DAP) will be communicated to staff, students, and people with disability and the broader ANU community through the following:

- ANU Executive Sponsor for Disability all staff communication
- web banner
- staff networks
- On Campus staff and student newsletters
- publication on the ANU website
- College and School IDEA Committees (or equivalent)
- to students via information provided to ANU Student Association and Disability Students Association (DSA)
- People Manager Essentials training
- Access and Inclusion Student Mailing List.

The DAP will be available in accessible formats and will be actively promoted in external facing communications as well as through our enrolment and recruitment strategies.

The ongoing work of the DAP will be communicated through regular reports to the University Executive Committee via Executive Sponsor and the safety and wellbeing sub-committee, which will also further communicate the outcomes of this activity to the ANU community.

This Disability Action Plan is intended to be a living document and, in order to keep it relevant, and through all communication channels, the University welcomes input or feedback from students, staff and visitors about any matter regarding access and inclusion.

Contact us

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