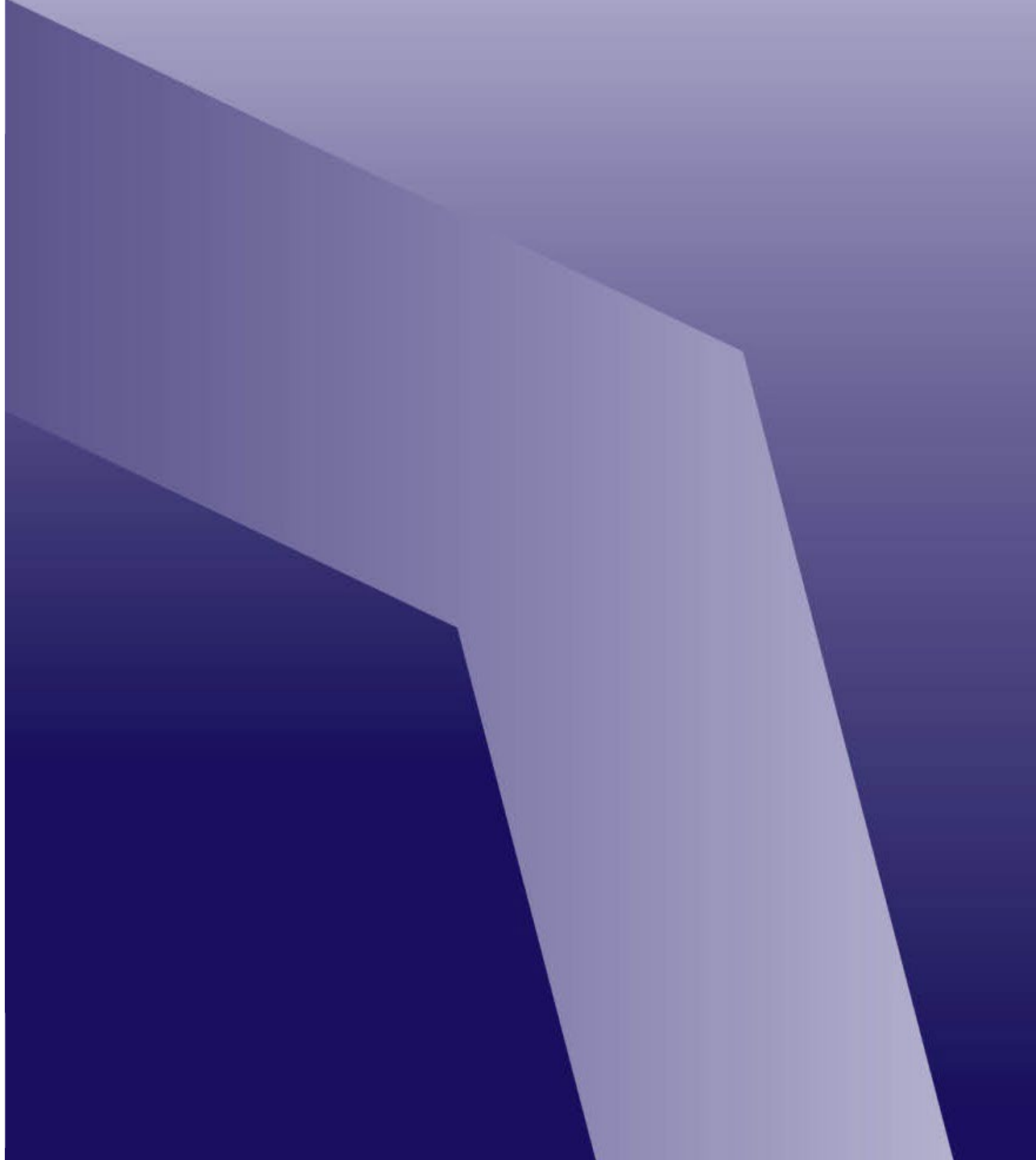
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031

Creating an inclusive community together

Australia's Disability Strategy

Toolkit for Engaging People with Disability in Evaluation

Applied to Australia's Disability Strategy evaluation





Acknowledgement of Country

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we meet today, the Larrakia people, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We would like to extend that acknowledgement and respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

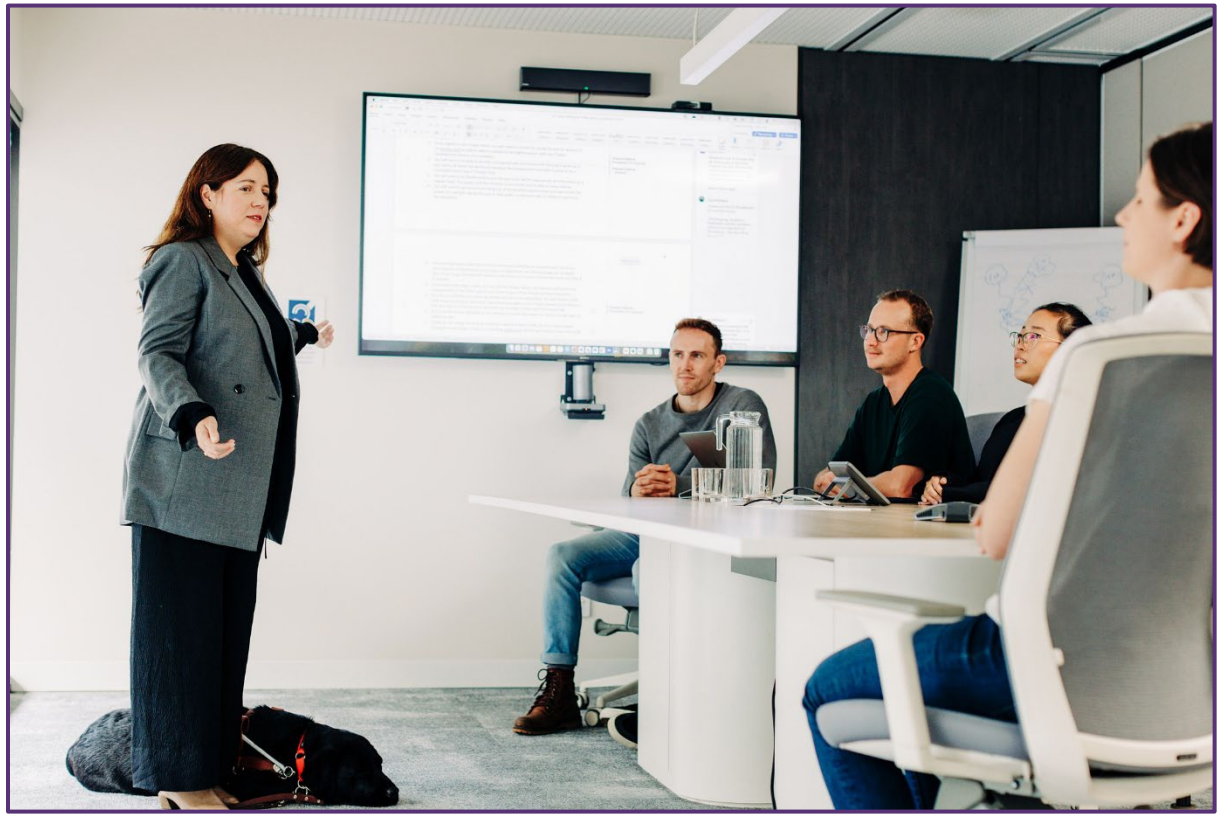
Why a Toolkit for evaluation?

Evaluation should not be a tick box. It should be a mirror, a compass, and a platform. This toolkit helps ensure our evaluations reflect reality, guide inclusive action, and amplify voices often left unheard.

Sisaleo Philavong – ADS Advisory Council



Engage people with disability at every stage



- Plan
- Do
- Use

Part 1: Getting involved in evaluation as a person with disability

- Your voice matters
- What you can expect
- Deciding to take part
- Being involved and recognised in evaluation
- How people with disability can take part

Part 2: For evaluators and evaluation commissioners

- The benefits to involving people with disability in evaluation
- Planning and funding evaluation
- Why take action to make evaluation accessible
- Engaging people with disability at every stage

Part 3: Fact sheets, resources and checklists

Checklists:

Checklist for people with disability, families and allies

Disability inclusive evaluation checklist for evaluators

Fact Sheets:

Fact Sheet 1: Adjustments and supports

Fact sheet 2: Collaborating in evaluation

Fact sheet 3: Safe and inclusive evaluation

Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised

Fact sheet 5: Methods for inclusive evaluation

Fact sheet 6: Ethics

Fact sheet 7: Including diverse voices

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Looking at how the Strategy is working

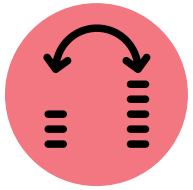
The Australian Government has asked ARTD to look at how the Strategy is working. They have asked us to look at:



how **appropriate** the Strategy is



what **actions** governments are taking



the **difference** the Strategy is making for people with disability



how the Strategy is providing **value** for money.

We are working with people with disability on the evaluation

Our **diverse Lived Experience Team** is planning, doing and reporting on the evaluation with us.

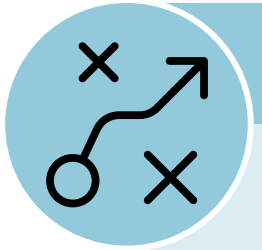
We're working with other lived experience groups to **oversee our work** including the:

- Steering Committee (put together by governments)
- Australia's Disability Strategy Advisory Council

People with disability are making sure:

- we focus on what matters to people
- we include diverse perspectives at all stages of the project and make sure people feel safe and welcome
- we use inclusive consultation methods so people can have a say in a way that meets their needs.

Where we are at



Plan – February to August

Plan how we're going to gather information and make sense of it.

Ethics approval



Do – September to November

Consult with people with disability, their families, carers and kin, governments and other organisations.

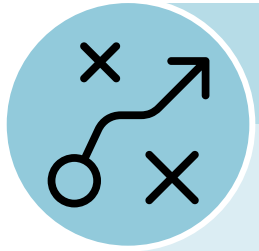
We are here



Use – December to February

Report on what we've heard, including what is working well and what needs to be improved.

What we learned in the plan stage

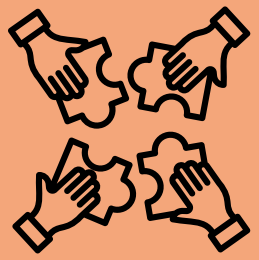


Plan

Plan how we're going to gather information and make sense of it.

Take time to build trust and share power

Work together



- Involve people with disability in the proposal
- Get to know each other
- Plan how you work together, together

Be clear



- What can be decided together and what the evaluation commissioner has decided
- What is in scope and out of scope
- You are genuinely open to deciding what you can together

Prepare for diverse views



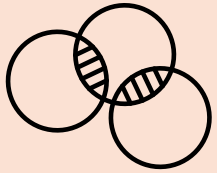
- Support equity of voice through things like speaking order, opportunities to follow up
- Know that in a diverse group people won't all agree
- Take the time to explain decisions
- Re-open discussions if needed

Lived Experience team member perspective



Intersectionality is crucial

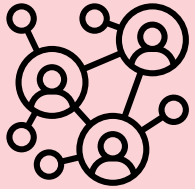
It is important to consider intersectional perspectives



- Disability can be understood differently in different communities.
- Some might not use the word disability, and some may have had negative experiences with disclosure, so consider how you promote opportunities to engage.

Some people have had negative past experiences with governments and services, so a **trauma-informed** and **responsive approach** is essential.

Partner with people from diverse backgrounds



- Have diverse members of oversight committees and project teams, so that intersectional perspectives inform all methods.
- Also have targeted design meetings and consultations for particular communities.

Support the right to be involved

Meaningful participation is a rights-based requirement

- The UNCRPD calls for Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; Non-discrimination; Full and effective participation and inclusion in society; Equality of opportunity, among other principles.

Balance risks

- Being excluded is also a risk – a risk that evaluation will miss what is actually important to the people affected by a policy



Assume capacity to decide with supports

- Provide accessible information – Easy Read, Plain English, video
- Family members, supporters and experienced team members can support decisions

Think about how you ask about disability

Think carefully about when, why and how you ask about disability.

- If you are asking for the purpose of providing adjustments, ask about support needs rather than disability.



If you need to know if people identify as having a disability:

Know there is concern about existing ways of asking about disability.

- e.g., the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Short Disability Module is deficits-based, uses a medical model, difficult to answer and not useful.

Give people choice, ask people to self-describe their disability.

Set consultations up for up success

- Work with people with disability to design the consultations
- Agree on group rules with lived experience facilitators
- Share in advance so participants feel safe and comfortable
- Have co-facilitators with lived experience
- Plan for different scenarios (like distress)

Budget

- For supports across consultations like **Auslan interpreters**, **support workers** to support people to prepare and attend, but also **consider targeted sessions** for people with particular communication needs.

Resource: Fact sheet 1: Adjustments and supports | Disability Gateway

- **Pay people** for their time and work. Be aware of preferences for reimbursements.

Resource: Fact sheet 4: Having your time and work recognised | Disability Gateway

Recognise accessibility is not all universal

Some things support everyone to engage in evaluation e.g., plain language communications.

But, in some cases, **what makes something accessible for one person will not be accessible for others**, for example:

The **chat function** in meetings **supports some** people to engage, but it can be **overwhelming for others** and interrupt the verbal dialogue for people using screen readers.

- To manage this, we have **set up chat functions separate to meetings**, and verbalised relevant information in the chat.

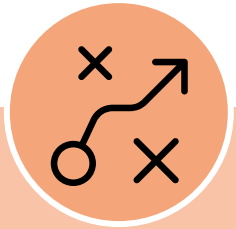
Visuals are useful for some, but people who are blind, or have vision impairments, **need plain text for screen readers.**



Provide different **options and choices across and within methods**

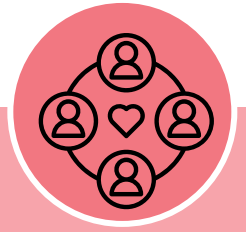
- For example, within focus groups, allow people to respond verbally, in chat, with a gesture or reaction.

Be genuinely trauma responsive



Prepare yourself and your participants

- Clearly explain any potentially triggering questions so people can decide if they want to take part and come prepared
- Be aware what a discussion might bring up for you, and have backup if you need to step back
- Plan for difficult scenarios



In the group be warm, while establishing boundaries

- Listen more than you talk, be open to what people want to talk about, check in
- Have group rules
- Ask people not to go into too much detail about traumatic experiences



Plan for support if needed

- Don't assume if someone is upset they want to leave the group, check in
- Designate a facilitator to provide support if needed
- Provide links to supports



Care for the group and yourself

- Re-ground participants at the end of an interview – one way to do this is to ask people what they have planned for the rest of the day
- Have team debriefing sessions
- Think what you will do for your own self care

Lived Experience team member perspective



Our team

arta CONSULTANTS + Lived Experience Team of 10 members

Our project partners:

TAYLOR FRY

Social Research Centre

keogh bay

ethnolink

afdo Australian Federation of Disability Organisations

amaze Shaping the future for Autism.

More information



https://www.artd.com.au/clients/australias-disability-strategy-evaluation/