



# DISABILITY SERVICES SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

824

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**  
RECEIVING DEPARTMENTAL ACCOMMODATION  
SUPPORT SERVICES

OVER 30,000

**CLEARANCES FOR PEOPLE TO COMMENCE WORK**  
IN NDIS ROLES THROUGHOUT QUEENSLAND,  
SINCE 1 FEBRUARY 2021

77%

**OF APPROVED**  
ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT PLACES USED

135

**ORGANISATIONS WERE THE SUBJECT OF  
INDEPENDENT AUDITS** RELATED TO COMPLIANCE  
WITH THE HUMAN SERVICES QUALITY FRAMEWORK

1,648

**QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY**  
ASSISTED BY THE ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL TEAM  
(ART) TO ACCESS THE NDIS

## DELIVERED DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY BY:

**IMPROVING** WELLBEING

**CO-DESIGNING** POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**INVESTING** IN QUALITY SERVICES

**INFLUENCING** SERVICE DELIVERY AND  
ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

**SUPPORTING** SAFE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

## STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The department is committed to supporting and advocating for people with disability, working in partnership with the disability sector to create an all-abilities Queensland and monitoring the NDIS to ensure it delivers positive outcomes for Queenslanders with disability. The department's Disability and Seniors Connect team provides the oversight and advocacy to deliver on the sector's strongest demand for people with disability—nothing about us without us.

Accommodation Support and Respite Services (AS&RS) offers supports for daily living for people with a primary diagnosis of an intellectual disability who have standard or high-support needs, to enable them to live as independently as possible.

The Forensic Disability Service (FDS) is a purpose-built, specialist, medium-security residential rehabilitation facility for up to 10 clients with complex needs. All clients of the FDS are subject to a forensic order (disability).

The department is committed to Queenslanders with disability and their families being able to take advantage of the full range of social and economic opportunities available in our state.

### NDIS transition and participation

The department continues to work with the Commonwealth Government to increase the participation of Queenslanders with disability in the NDIS. It also chairs a Queensland Government inter-departmental oversight committee, which monitors the ongoing implementation of the NDIS in Queensland and other priority matters relating to disability reform.

The department is working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to grow the NDIS market in areas where it has not developed as expected, and to identify opportunities for growth in the local workforce.

The department receives complaints and concerns by NDIS participants about NDIS issues impacting them, including plan funding and approval of necessary supports and provider service delivery. The department ensures that NDIS concerns are escalated to the NDIA or the NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission for necessary action. This includes identifying potential systemic issues affecting Queensland NDIS participants.

Through this work, and our relationship with funded advocacy services and peak bodies, the department monitors systemic issues impacting participants, families and guardians and escalates concerns through the relevant governance mechanisms.

Implementation of the new nationally consistent NDIS Worker Screening System in Queensland, from 1 February 2021, has strengthened safeguards for people with disability. The new system includes: the introduction of 'no card, no start'; a strengthened identity checking process; a stronger framework for disqualifying people; and a stronger decision-making framework that focuses on risk and considers a broader range of information. Clearances are now also transferable between states and territories.

The department's implementation efforts included developing a new online, automated application process that interfaces with both the Blue Card system and the NDIS Worker Screening Database.

The Disability Connect and Outreach Program's Assessment and Referral Team (ART) has assisted 1,648 Queenslanders with disability to access the NDIS. Of these, almost half (49 per cent) were previously unsuccessful in accessing the scheme, citing the complexity of the access process as a barrier to success. The total value in NDIS plans for 1,449 people who have been assisted by ART and already have an active NDIS Plan is \$111.5 million.

The department has also partnered with the Queenslanders with Disability Network to provide assertive outreach services to vulnerable Queenslanders who are hard to reach and often experience multiple layers of disadvantage. The Targeted Outreach Project (TOP) works to build trusting and positive relationships with clients, and provide referrals to the Assessment and Referral Team for assistance in accessing the NDIS.

## NDIS Full Scheme Agreement

On 1 October 2020, Queensland officially completed the transition to the NDIS, and the terms of the NDIS Full Scheme Agreement with the Commonwealth Government commenced operation in full. The commencement of the full scheme arrangement in Queensland was a significant milestone and commits Queensland to an enduring financial commitment of over \$2 billion per annum to ensure Queenslanders with disability can access the supports they need. In this reporting period, over 90,000 Queenslanders with disability have NDIS supports, with over 50,000 receiving funded disability services for the first time.

### Key achievements

During the reporting period, the department:

- implemented and aligned state-based disability worker screening with the NDIS Worker Screening System on 1 February 2021, which has both streamlined and strengthened this safeguard
- completed over 30,000 worker screening clearances through the new NDIS Worker Screening System, since 1 February 2021
- prevented 130 high-risk individuals<sup>1</sup> from working with people with a disability through screening processes in Queensland
- officially completed the transition to the NDIS, and the terms of the NDIS Full Scheme Agreement with the Commonwealth Government
- assessed and, where necessary, referred 212 complaints about NDIS-related matters to the NDIA and or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission or another relevant entity
- continued to work with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission to support service providers with the requirements of the co-regulatory system, ensuring robust safeguards for authorisation and use of restrictive practices
- managed the short-term approval of restrictive practices in accordance with the *Disability Services Act 2006* and supported the safety and wellbeing of people with disability through the development of positive behaviour support plans

- safeguarded the human rights of vulnerable adults with cognitive or intellectual disability by ensuring appropriate authorisations were in place for the use of restrictive practices. The department received 533 applications for short-term approval of the use of restrictive practices from service providers, and 334 of these applications were approved.

### Improving the wellbeing of individuals requiring disability services

The development of a new National Disability Strategy has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department has been working with the Commonwealth, other state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association to develop the new National Strategy. Two rounds of national-level public consultation, led by the Commonwealth, took place in 2019 and 2020 as part of the development process. In addition to written submissions, consultation included focus groups and workshops with people with disability and other key stakeholders in locations around Australia, including with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples with disability in Queensland.

In 2020–2021, Disability Ministers signed a further Statement of Continued Commitment to uphold the principles, outcome areas and activities of the current *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* until the new Strategy is released at the end of 2021.

To complement the new National Disability Strategy, the department is now working with people with disability to develop the next state disability plan. The new state disability plan will inform the development of departmental disability service plans under the *Disability Services Act 2006*. This will ensure the Queensland Government has a clear and structured mechanism to support its ongoing commitment to people with disability, and deliver on the commitments under the new National Disability Strategy.

<sup>1</sup> A high-risk individual is a person who has their worker screening clearance suspended or has been issued with an interim bar or exclusion. This includes individuals who have a positive notice cancelled or were issued with a negative notice under the screening arrangements prior to the commencement of the new NDIS worker screening on 1 February 2021.

## Peak and Advocacy Services

During 2020–2021, the department provided \$3.6 million to eight disability peak organisations to maintain ongoing service delivery to support people with disability during the reporting period. This funding enabled the peak and representative bodies to: provide information and referral services for people from specific cohorts with disability; provide opportunities for greater community and economic engagement for people with disability; and provide capacity-building initiatives across the disability sector. This funding has been extended as part of Queensland’s ongoing commitment to people with disability and the carers and sector that supports them.

The department also provided \$8.1 million over two years, from 2019 to 2021, to 14 organisations to deliver advocacy services to Queenslanders with disability. Additional one-off funding was provided to regional advocacy services in 2020, due to increased workloads during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the year, over 20,000 hours of disability advocacy support was delivered to approximately 2,000 individuals. Current advocacy funding has been extended through to 30 June 2023, the allocation of which will be determined through an open grants process in 2021–2022.

*Performance measure: Percentage of funded services that meet the needs of people with disability. This measure is currently under review and therefore unable to be reported in this reporting period.*

*Performance measure: Satisfaction of industry partners with their engagement with the department—the survey instrument for this measure is currently under development. Performance will be reported in a future Annual Report.*

## Safeguards

The department has maintained a program of service quality audits under the *Human Services Quality Framework* (the Framework). The Framework provides the quality assurance and safeguarding framework for 372 human services organisations funded by five Queensland Government departments.

The Framework includes a set of standards and assesses the quality of service delivery to clients through independent audits, self-assessment and recognition of other accreditation. In 2020–2021, 135 organisations were the subject of independent audits.

*Performance measure: Increase in satisfaction with the effectiveness of the Human Services Quality Framework—the survey instrument for this measure is currently under development. Performance will be reported in a future Annual Report.*

## Key achievements

During the reporting period, the department:

- established the All Abilities Queensland Working Party, with the majority of members having lived experience of disability. The working party will report to government on how the next state disability plan can best meet the needs of Queenslanders with disability
- redesigned the disability advocacy program to ensure it best meets service user needs
- extended the funding for the disability peak and representative bodies to maintain ongoing service delivery to support people with disability
- expanded eligibility for the Comprehensive Health Assessment Program (CHAP) to include access to medical and allied health practitioners in order to improve availability and increase use of the tool
- administered the *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* which protects the public access rights of dogs and their handlers (including NDIS participants) that have been through a certification process
- conducted 395 engagements with people with disability and organisations in the disability sector.

During the reporting period, the department’s Accommodation Support and Respite Services:

- provided in-home accommodation support to 504 clients, and 320 clients accessed respite services
- administered state funded continuity of support arrangements to 17 previous disability services clients aged under 65 years, and who have been deemed by the NDIS as ineligible under the Commonwealth’s scheme because of disability or residency requirements
- maintained its certification status against the *Human Services Quality Standards*
- provided 786 accommodation and respite supports to clients that contribute to the goals in their NDIS plans
- facilitated access to comprehensive annual health plans for 138 clients.

*Performance measure: Satisfaction of families and guardians with service quality—this measure has been unable to be reported this reporting period due to COVID-19. Performance will be reported in the next Annual Report.*

## Provision of disability supports outside of the NDIS

Under the Queensland Government's mandate for the continuity of services, Accommodation Support and Respite Services, in conjunction with Queensland Health, provides accommodation and coordination of ongoing specialist disability supports for clients aged over 65 years.

During 2020–2021, Accommodation Support and Respite Services supported 38 clients who have been residing with the service for many years and, due to their age, are not eligible for the NDIS.

Disability Accommodation, Respite and Forensic Services administered funding to 17 previous Disability Services' clients aged under 65 years and who are deemed ineligible for the NDIS, to ensure individuals are supported to achieve similar outcomes to those they were achieving prior to the introduction of the NDIS.

### Forensic Disability Service

The Forensic Disability Service is a medium-security 10-bed facility at Wacol for the involuntary detention and care of people who have been found unfit to stand trial as a result of an intellectual or a cognitive disability. The facility is operated by the department with oversight from the Director of Forensic Disability.

#### Key achievements

During the reporting period, the department:

- supported the participation of Forensic Disability Service clients in 1,091 Limited Community Treatment events in line with the conditions of their Forensic Order and assessed risk
- implemented the restructure of the Forensic Disability Service, providing a new suite of treatment programs and the model of care.

## Representing the views and interests of Queenslanders with disability

As the lead agency supporting the shareholding Minister for the NDIS, the department worked to ensure the views and interests of people with disability and the disability sector were at the forefront of inter-governmental negotiations and inquiry processes.

The Disability Reform Ministers Meeting (DRMM) was established after National Cabinet endorsed the report of the Review of Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Councils and Ministerial Forums on 23 October 2020. The DRMM was created to continue to provide a forum for Ministers to discuss national disability issues and identify courses of action. Since the inaugural meeting on 4 December 2020, the department has supported the Honourable Craig Crawford MP, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services, and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, to represent Queensland's interests at the DRMM and work to protect the security, and support the interests, of people with disability in Queensland.

The department also monitors closely the operation of the NDIS and, through established governance mechanisms, acts to ensure the views and interests of Queenslanders are thoroughly represented.

#### Key achievements

During the reporting period, the department:

- continued to support the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services to work with Disability Reform Ministers to advocate for improvements under the NDIS to ensure Queenslanders with disability can access necessary supports, including the cessation of the roll out of independent assessments under the NDIS
- led key submissions to key inquiry processes, such as the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS inquiry, the inquiry into independent assessments under the NDIS, and the inquiry into the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.

Further information about these submissions can be found at:

[www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/disability-services/disability-connect-queensland/national-disability-insurance-scheme/inquiry-independent-assessments-under-ndis](http://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/our-work/disability-services/disability-connect-queensland/national-disability-insurance-scheme/inquiry-independent-assessments-under-ndis)

[www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Disability\\_Insurance\\_Scheme/QS\\_Commission/Submissions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme/QS_Commission/Submissions)

Further, the department led the Queensland Government's submission to the Queensland Productivity Commission's (QPC) inquiry into the NDIS market in Queensland.

The department provided two submissions to the QPC inquiry; at the issues paper stage and the draft report stage. Through these submissions, the department identified critical issues in the NDIS market and provided QPC with accurate and insightful information to ensure the QPC's final report will provide effective advice and recommendations to improve market development and participant outcomes in Queensland.

## **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) provides a significant opportunity to contribute to better outcomes, enhanced quality of life, greater inclusion and accessibility, and strengthened protections for Queenslanders with disability. The department leads the Queensland Government participation in the Disability Royal Commission, including coordination of the Queensland Government's input into notices to produce information and the preparation of witness statements for Disability Royal Commission public hearings.

## **COVID-19 response**

The department contributed to the Queensland Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure Queenslanders with disability received critical health and disability supports. This contribution ensured the interests of Queenslanders were represented at the Disability Reform Ministers Meeting as part of considerations regarding the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic for people with disability, including NDIS participants.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been significant ongoing engagement with service providers, people with disability, advocates, and peak and representative bodies. As a result, the department was well informed on the issues impacting the disability sector. The department worked closely with Queensland Health to ensure the needs of people with disability were considered in the COVID-19 response

along with the issues relevant to service providers in the sector. Collaboration with Queensland Health, the Commonwealth Government and the disability sector ensured information was available in accessible formats. This cooperative approach also ensured vaccine rollouts were informed by sector input and issues impacting the sector were considered in a rapidly evolving environment.

The department also reviewed specialist worker exemptions for the disability sector. This review ensured exemptions were considered against the relevant public health directions and services for people with disability were delivered while maintaining community safety.

The Assessment and Referral Team worked intensively with Queensland Health during the COVID-19 pandemic to expedite NDIS access for eligible people with disability to facilitate their release from hospital with appropriate supports, such as safe longer-term accommodation. Work undertaken included complex case coordination and evidence management for urgent applications to the NDIS.

The department provided advice to the disability sector and other stakeholders via the publication of COVID-19 electronic emails on relevant public health directions, vaccine rollout and the needs of people with disability.

## **Key achievements**

During the reporting period, the department:

- maintained quality services to 824 accommodation and respite clients without any disruption
- worked with Queensland Health and Industry partners to coordinate timely responses to the ongoing pandemic for all of its disability accommodation services, under the directions provided by Queensland Health's Chief Health Officer
- assisted clients, their families and carers in registering and attending appointments to receive COVID-19 vaccinations.

**Promote inclusion and access to programs and services, by:**

- ensuring Queenslanders can access the disability supports they need through effective governance provisions for the NDIS
- supporting Queenslanders with disability to participate as equal citizens in Australian society, and maximising opportunities by working with the Commonwealth Government, and other key stakeholders, to develop and implement Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031
- delivering the next state disability plan co-designed with people with disability
- partnering with participants, families, guardians and the NDIA to ensure participants' needs are regularly assessed and funded
- working with other jurisdictions to achieve a more nationally consistent authorisation process for restrictive practices
- engaging primary health networks to ensure people with disability have access to regular comprehensive health assessments
- delivering NDIS access and outreach services to Queenslanders in remote and regional locations
- working with Queensland Health to develop an improved service delivery model for the forensic disability service system in Queensland
- participating in national NDIS worker screening forums to monitor implementation and share learnings with other jurisdictions
- working with the Attorney-General, and relevant Ministers, to integrate screening processes and realise efficiencies, including in the areas of working with children checks and disability screening
- providing funding to support disability peak bodies to deliver outcomes for Queenslanders with disability
- providing funding to disability advocacy services for people with disability
- maintaining a program of funded service quality audits under the *Human Services Quality Framework*
- embedding continuous improvement and internal quality review programs to inform quality service improvements
- working with the Commonwealth Government, the NDIA, and relevant Queensland Government agencies to implement the Commonwealth's *Younger People in Residential Aged Care Strategy 2020–25* in Queensland
- supporting the Queensland Government to embed inclusion and accessibility into the design of its policies, programs and services
- working with strategic partners, including disability service providers, to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Increase engagement through co-design, by:**

- representing Queensland on the Disability Reform Minister's Meeting
- partnering with people with disability to develop the next state disability plan.

**Influence social and economic outcomes, by:**

- maximising employment and business opportunities for people with disability
- monitoring the NDIS workforce in Queensland and collaborating on initiatives with the Commonwealth Government and disability sector
- working with the Commonwealth Government, the NDIA, and other Queensland Government agencies to implement the full scheme NDIS arrangements in Queensland to ensure Queensland's investment in the NDIS delivers value through improved participant outcomes, job creation and skills development, and increased workforce participation
- working with the Commonwealth Government, NDIA and NDIS providers to promote development of the NDIS market in Queensland, including in relation to specialist behaviour support
- responding to the final report of the Queensland Productivity Commission's inquiry into the NDIS market in Queensland.

**Foster safe and connected communities, by:**

- supporting the implementation of the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026*, and the strategies within *Queensland's Framework for Action — Reshaping our approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence*, and *Queensland's Plan to respond to domestic and family violence against people with disability*
- leading the Queensland Government's participation in, and response to, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability.

**Strengthen capability, innovation and governance, by:**

- ensuring the department's Disability Service Plan is contemporary and actions are implemented.