



2025 Pre-Election Submission

“Doing what’s right for people with significant intellectual disability in WA ...”

Disability Assembly WA (DAWA) seeks Government and Shadow Government commitment to the requested priorities, below. We welcome this opportunity to have input into the State and Local Governments’ plans, policies and improvements directed at creating more inclusive communities for people with disability.

This is not a budget priorities statement. This submission addresses the issues facing the especially vulnerable sub-group of people with significant intellectual disability (PWsID).

To advance opportunities, community participation and quality of life for people with significant intellectual disability, DAWA presents three prioritised requests directly related to the Pillars of the *A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030* (SDS).

On behalf of DAWA membership, contributors and collaborators, we request:

1. **A new and specific role within the Office of Disability be created to provide connectedness and specialist support for people with significant intellectual disability who are unable to navigate existing pathways to access support they require to live a good life.**

Aligned with Pillar 1: Participate and Contribute

Rationale: This role will facilitate greater involvement of PWsID by providing the necessary support to navigate services, ensuring they can actively participate in community life.

2. **Office of Disability be designated as accountable for whole-of-State Government coordination of intersectional needs of people with significant intellectual disability (Communities/ Health/ Housing/ Justice/ Education/ Local Government).**

Aligned with Pillar 2: Inclusive Communities and Pillar 3: Living Well

Rationale: This coordination promotes a holistic approach to meeting the diverse needs of individuals, fostering inclusive communities and ensuring people have access to comprehensive support that enhances their well-being.

3. **Increased funding allocated for systemic advocacy for disability in WA.**

Aligned with Pillar 4: Rights and Equity

Rationale: This funding will strengthen advocacy efforts, ensuring that the rights of PWsID are upheld and that they have equitable input and access to necessary resources and support.

This submission reflects the input from many hundreds of people in the Western Australian disability ecosystem. It has been generated by partnering and collaborating with people with lived experience of disability and those who care for and about them; a large proportion of disability provider organisations; advisory boards, committees and academics; and representatives of the disability peak body (NDS), Local Governments (WALGA), and Department of Communities.

DAWA's three requests (above) stem from DAWA's report, "*What We Heard ...*". ([Link to Report](#)) which was created with information, opinion and data gathered across four (4) face-to-face Summit meetings, two (2) live streams to regional areas, and two (2) online 'sibling opinion' interview groups.

The DAWA Summits are a vital initiative addressing significant issues for people with disabilities and those who care for and about them. These events bring together a diverse group of participants, including people with disabilities, families, carers, advocates, service providers, experts, and government representatives. Attendees participate in focused discussions, hear from experts, and engage in Q&A sessions. Insights and recommendations from these discussions are compiled into a report presented to government officials and other decision-makers, informing our pre-election requests and advocating for meaningful change.

Refer to the "Supplementary Details" (page 4) for how DAWA's three priority requests align with the four Strategic Pillars of *A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030*. The outcomes from our Summit Meetings have been mapped against these Pillars, forming the basis for our prioritised pre-election requests..

This submission aims to drive change that works for all people with disabilities, including those with significant intellectual disabilities, by presenting actionable recommendations. It also considers relevant reforms, including the *State Disability Strategy* and the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability*.

Our experience working on the issues faced by Western Australians with disability is broad and deep, and drives our desire to share the top priority, necessary and realistic-to-achieve actionable recommendations at this critical time in the WA disability journey. (Full list available in "*What We Heard ...*" report. ([Link to Report](#)))

The Office of Disability has been created to promote the rights and interests of people with disability and the disability sector more broadly, and, as such, this submission is addressed to:

- The Minister for Disability Services, Hon Don Punch
- The Shadow Minister for Disability Services, Ms Merome Beard
- Ms Marion Hailes-MacDonald, Office of Disability
- Mr Mike Rowe, Director General, Department of Communities
- Mr Kane Blackman and Dr Scott Hollier, co-chairs of Western Australian Disability Advisory Council (WADAC).

This submission will be shared with key stakeholder groups including those who contributed to the data collection; government Members, Senators and Candidates; policy departments and central agencies. This submission is publicly available on the [DAWA website](#).

DAWA aims to broaden the opportunities and continue to promote and nurture improved services and supports across Western Australia for people with disability by amplifying the voice of collective opinion and needs. DAWA is open to creative partnerships with government and other community agencies to realise these requests.

Contact information

Name	Position	Email address	Phone
Dr Sarah Love	Chief Executive Officer	sarah.love@disabilityassemblywa.org	0414 322 669

Disability Assembly Western Australia (DAWA) is an independent not-for-profit systemic advocacy organisation governed by a Board of Directors. DAWA's vision is to unify, support and champion a thriving disability ecosystem in WA to ensure world leading and sustainable outcomes for people with disabilities, their families and carers.

Our purpose is bringing together people with disability, families, carers, peak bodies, advocates, providers, experienced stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and the policy- and change-makers of the day.

We generate informed, impartial discussion and debate on the big issues. We are a team of innovative people with lived experience and/or professionals in the disability field who hold a diversity of perspectives.

DAWA is a safe place for meeting and sharing knowledge and expertise.

DAWA is your local community of local people who know disability.

It is DAWA's privilege to represent the collective voice and share the views of Western Australians with disability and those who care for them and about them.

We are the collective voice...the power of one.

Supplementary Detail

The outcomes of our Summit Meetings have been mapped against the Pillars of the Strategy, It is from this list that we have prioritised the three pre-election requests.

These three priority requests of DAWA are mapped directly to the four published Strategic Pillars of *A Western Australia for Everyone: State Disability Strategy 2020-2030* (the Strategy):

1. **Participate and Contribute** where everyone including PWsID is involved
2. **Inclusive Communities** where places and attitudes are welcoming towards all, including PWsID, where people are happy and healthy, with the support they need
3. **Living Well** where people are happy and healthy, with the support they need
4. **Rights and Equity** where *everyone* is treated fairly, in the knowledge that equity implicitly means each sub group or vulnerable cohort has access to what they specifically require.

Pillar 1. Participate and Contribute where everyone including PWsID is involved

Strategic Priorities	The optimal outcomes identified
We heard...	The need for promotion and facilitation of active participation and meaningful contributions from PWsID and those who care for and about them, ensuring their voices are heard and valued in all aspects of community life.
Inclusive education and training settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the full range of education/ schooling options be continued and supported ... Access for students of <i>all abilities</i> to select their style of education from mainstream class through to Education Support school, and all options in between • That post-school options be planned and commenced at the beginning of high school years and PWsID have opportunities and networks that support participation in the way the person and their family choose, that are geographically appropriate
Jobs and economic participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the option of group employment facilities and safe supported group work environments remain as options for PWsID • That meaningful work attracts award remuneration
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PWsID require representation in all decision-making settings related to living in WA and opportunities for their representative family/ carer/ kinship structures to be present in a co-design approach
People with high and complex needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy outlines this as a separate priority and states <i>“supports and networks available to people with high and complex needs will be strengthened, to make sure that all people with disability are included”</i> • It is considered more appropriate that PWsID/ high and complex needs be included across every pillar and priority of The Strategy in a way that ensures equity across all issues and opportunities People with high and complex needs are considered in every aspect of the Strategy
Our request	A new and specific role within the Office of Disability be created to provide connectedness and specialist support for people with significant intellectual disability who are unable to navigate existing pathways to access support they require to live a good life. (SDS Pillar 1)

Pillar 2. Inclusive Communities where places and attitudes are welcoming towards all including PWsID

Strategic Priorities	The optimal outcomes identified
We heard...	Western Australians want to cultivate inclusive communities where people with disabilities are embraced and valued, ensuring that all spaces and attitudes are welcoming and accessible to everyone.
Access and inclusion planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum standards of design be expanded to address sensory, communication and cognitive disability • A mandated system be established to accredit and endorse Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). Regulations with meaningful monitoring and auditing. Institution of an Accreditation [perhaps not unlike the current system for Reconciliation Action Plans]. • Strong stewardship to bring connectedness and homogenisation of process and approach and achieve equity and excellence in all LGAs • A mechanism/ process be established to oversee and ensure effective co-design, innovation in practice and community connectedness
Sport and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strategy’s aim of “<i>moving beyond participation</i>” to full integration and inclusion is supported, however not to the exclusion of sport and recreation opportunities designed for PWsID where they may best participate in groups with people of similar capabilities • A full range of options of inclusive as well as activities designed, modified, and specified for PWsID must be made available. • Establishment of a Carer’s Card system • Mandated adherence to DAIPS once they are submitted and accredited
Community attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability training in primary schools, secondary schools, TAFES and tertiary qualifications is essential
Our request...	Office of Disability be designated as accountable for whole-of-State Government coordination of intersectional needs of people with significant intellectual disability (Communities/ Health/ Housing/ Justice/ Education/ Local Government). (SDS Pillar 2 and 3)

Pillar 3. Living Well where people are happy and healthy, with the support they need

Strategic Priorities	The optimal outcomes identified
We heard...	Western Australians want to foster a vibrant community where PWsID are empowered to live well, ensuring they have access to the necessary support, resources, and opportunities for health and happiness.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of a home for life: accessible and tailored to sensory and cognitive needs as well as complex high physical needs • Government policy and resource to address the housing shortage by creating a variety of specific independent living options for people requiring 24/7 support • Cluster homes and group homes should continue to be an option open to PWsID alongside more contemporary options • Specific Government resource and planning of Independent Living Options (ILO) to meet the geographic needs of this cohort

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government commitment to address the rural and remote housing shortage • Government to address the housing shortage On Country • A Government policy of collaboration between jurisdictions to break the siloed funding approach to accommodation eg between disability and health • Safe, accessible, geographically appropriate respite services need to be established in metro, rural and regional WA
Disability services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authentically co-designed, defined state services delivered in a timely way eg Foundational and Navigation supports that dovetail perfectly with the services adopted by the NDIS after review, that leave no gaps in timing or service provision, nor any PWsID <i>'no-worse-off'</i> • Establishment of a specialist officer role in the Office of Disability with the 'portfolio' of PWsID • State Government resources to fund local rural and remote disability worker training, and appropriate remuneration allowances for professional services • State Government support and resources for skilled culturally-safe drive-in/ drive-out specialist service delivery to achieve equity for PWsID in rural and remote areas (<i>or an alternate fit-for-purpose transport and travel scheme</i>)
Health and mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability awareness and competency training in schools, TAFEs and universities (especially within the tertiary-trained caring professions) • Establishment of a specialist officer role in the Office of Disability with the 'portfolio' of PWsID to facilitate access to existing services and optimise interactions • Mandated inclusion of disability in health practitioners' undergraduate training to increase competency and confidence levels of health practitioners when caring for PWsID • Post graduate reporting against ongoing competency and currency. • State-funded Health, Wellness and Screening services, including but not limited to mental health, with appropriate physical resource, time resource and staff trained to address physical, sensory and cognitive disability eg dental care, breast checks, women's and men's health services
Workforce capacity and capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-based training and accreditation courses established and linked to greater remuneration and a formalised career path with tenure and appropriate contracts • Urgent clarity and timelines on Support Coordination and on Navigator roles • Minimum ratios required for domestic assistance in group and ILO homes, with associated appropriate funding mechanisms to allow support workers to focus on the social and emotional domains of the life of the PWsID • State-endorsed recognition and support for the unpaid carer (Parent-carer, Sibling-carer, Grand-carer)
Our request...	<p>The Office of Disability be designated as accountable for whole-of-State Government coordination of intersectional needs of people with significant intellectual disability (Communities/ Health/ Housing/ Justice/ Education/ Local Government). (SDS Pillar 2 and 3)</p>

Pillar 4. Rights and Equity where *everyone* is treated fairly, in the knowledge that equity implicitly means each sub group or vulnerable cohort has access to what they specifically require

Strategic Priorities	The optimal outcomes identified
We heard...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build a community where PWsID experience rights and equity where everyone is treated fairly.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution of the disability advocacy sector includes increases to funded systemic advocacy
Legislation and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandated legislative safeguards • Creation of a freely-available State Government resource that mandates and ensures the safety and security of PWsID that is easy for the layperson to navigate
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a Specialist Disability Officer at State level addressing issues for people with significant and severe intellectual impairment
Our request...	Increased funding allocated for systemic disability advocacy in WA. (SDS Pillar 4)

