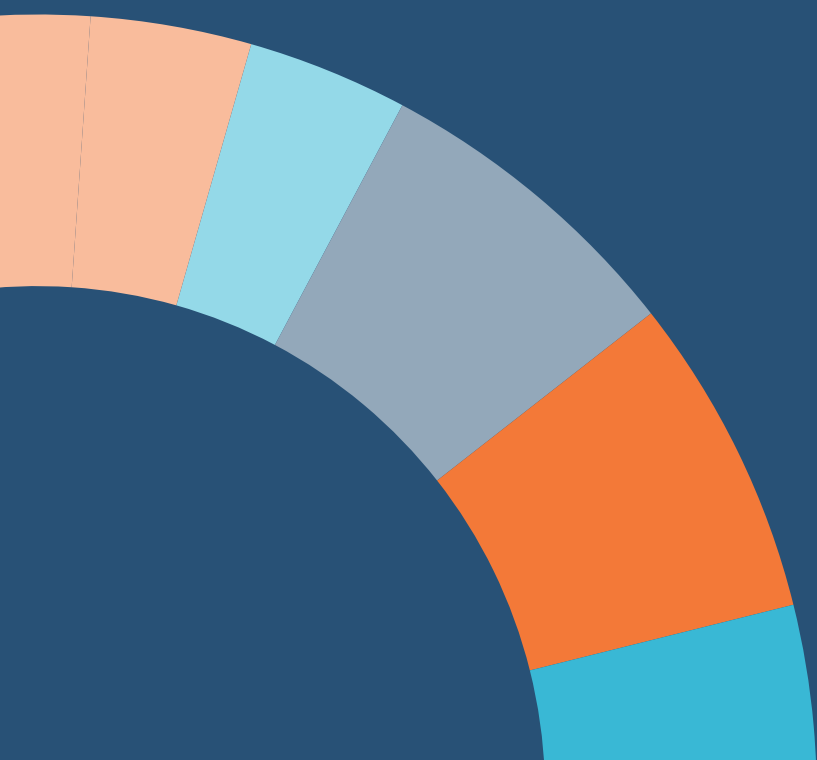




OUR
HEALTHCARE
FUTURE

Disability Health Strategy

**2024-2025
Action Plan**



Priority Area One: Quality



Ensure our health services meet the diverse needs of people with disability through best practice approaches.

Action	
1.1	Continue to support people with complex needs, including those with disability, through the Complex Care Coordinators, navigators, or similar roles at each main hospital site.
1.2	Continue the work under Rethink 2020: <i>A State Plan for Mental Health in Tasmania 2020–2025</i> , the <i>Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023–2027</i> and the <i>Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2024–2029</i> to create a contemporary, integrated health system that is accessible to all Tasmanians, including individuals with disability.
1.3	Ensure that the needs of individuals with disability are considered in the development of the associated implementation plans for Rethink 2020, the <i>Tasmanian Drug Strategy 2024–2029</i> and the <i>Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023–2027</i> .
1.4	As part of the development of the 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy, consult with and consider the preventive health needs of people with disability to inform the development of the strategy.
1.5	Continue to explore the ongoing suitability of the current developmental screening tool used by the Child Health and Parenting Service (the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status), explore possible alternatives to this tool, and make recommendations around the most appropriate developmental screening tool for ongoing use.
1.6	Explore and plan for the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Talking about Raising Aboriginal Kids tool for all Tasmanian Aboriginal children up to five years of age coming into out-of-home care. This action relates to recommendation 9.2 of the Disability Royal Commission.
1.7	Work with the Department of Premier and Cabinet to introduce child health assessments for 18-month old children. These checks will provide an additional connection point with families during a crucial stage for children's language development. This action relates to Priority Recommendation five from the Department of Premier and Cabinet's <i>Lifting Literacy Implementation Plan 2024–2026</i> .
1.8	Continue participating in whole of government activities to support the implementation of key national disability reform in Tasmania. This includes the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, the Independent Review of the NDIS and the development of Foundational Supports.

Action

- 1.9 Develop and release the *Tasmanian Strategy for Improving Access to Healthcare Services for Children and Young People*, which will consider how the Department of Health can better meet the health needs of neurodivergent children.
- 1.10 Continue the operation of the Integrated Discharge Team, which serves as the central contact for disability service providers when patients with disability are admitted or at risk of hospital admission.
- 1.11 Explore collaborative care approaches to support joint case coordination and navigation for vulnerable patients/patients with additional needs, receiving services across the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service.
- 1.12 Ensure the needs of vulnerable groups, including people with disability, are appropriately considered and their needs reflected in our strategic and service planning activities.
- 1.13 Deliver a new GP specialist service for children with ADHD, ensuring families can access a GP with specific interest sooner.

Priority Area Two: Accessibility



Support a holistic approach to healthcare delivery and provide reasonable adjustments to address barriers to access.

Action

- 2.1 Through the *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–2026*, continue to advocate and work across sectors to ensure that Tasmanian neighbourhoods are liveable, supportive of physical activity and accessible to all people, including people with disability.
- 2.2 As part of the implementation of projects identified in the Department of Health masterplan, undertake a staged review of drop-off zones, disability parking bays and taxi infrastructure to identify opportunities for improvement.
- 2.3 In alignment with broader *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (CTH)* compliance requirements, ensure considerations of low sensory areas are included in Department of Health design briefs as part of Department of Health masterplanning.
- 2.4 Expand the composition of reference groups established as part of the implementation of major infrastructure projects to include representation of people with disability to capture a spectrum of views to achieve the best outcomes for design.
- 2.5 Enhance the accessibility of BreastScreen Tasmania services across the State, by replacing the current mobile screening unit with a new vehicle that better supports the accessibility of the service to people with disability.
- 2.6 Consider the needs of people with disability when establishing new population screening and cancer prevention sites and facilities – including the new BreastScreen Tasmania clinic now opened in Rosny.
- 2.7 Support the ongoing delivery of the 'Conscious Sedation Pilot Program' to ensure that people with special needs are able to more easily access dental care in community settings.
- 2.8 Support the ongoing delivery of the Support Schools Screening Program, to ensure that children with special needs can have their oral health assessed in an environment they are comfortable and familiar with.

Priority Area Three: Decision making



Empower people with disability to make informed decisions about their healthcare.

Action

- 3.1 Through the *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–2026*, continue to plan an equity lens across all Healthy Tasmania policies and services to ensure we consider the specific needs of priority populations (including people with disability) and that our actions have no adverse impacts.
- 3.2 Continue to deliver the Department of Health’s Health Literacy Action Plan, which focusses on increasing the health literacy of all Tasmanians (including people with disability) to increase their control over their own health and to achieve better health outcomes.
- 3.3 Explore opportunities to improve engagement with people with disability and disability stakeholders, including opportunities to enhance disability representation on the Department’s Consumer Community Engagement Councils.
- 3.4 Embed a focus on disability inclusion and awareness into key leadership and governance approaches.
- 3.5 Add disability inclusion as a regular item on key leadership and governance meeting agendas.
- 3.6 Establish a governance group, that includes members of the Tasmanian disability community, to oversee the development of the Strategy’s action plans, and monitor and report on the implementation of the Strategy. This group will also support the Department of Health to meet requirements under the *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024*. The Department will consult with this group when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

Priority Area Four: Workforce



Ensure our health workforce has the awareness and knowledge to provide health care that meets the diverse needs of people with disability. Build a health workforce profile which reflects the diversity of our population with disability.

Action

- 4.1 Continue to partner with Primary Health Tasmania in the delivery of the Primary Care Enhancement Program for people with intellectual disability. Key initiatives underway through the program include the distribution and promotion of the 'How to brush someone else's teeth' booklet, and the delivery of education and resources for primary care health providers to build their capacity to consider the impact of oral health on people with intellectual disability.
- 4.2 Support the ongoing development of Oral Health Coaches (dental assistants with extended scope) who will be able to work with priority patient groups, such as people with intellectual disability and their families/carers in providing education and guidance on their oral health needs. This may include hygiene and brushing support, and the application of fluoride varnish. This action aligns with the *National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability*.
- 4.3 Through the *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–2026*, provide leadership, resources, training and support to ensure that our health and community services are delivered in ways that are culturally safe and inclusive for people with disability (as well as other priority population groups).
- 4.4 Establish a program (e.g. intranet page or e-learning) of disability awareness and information sessions for Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service Clinical Staff, to provide these staff with an understanding of the experiences people with disability might have when engaging with Tasmania's public health services, and to strengthen staff awareness of the health needs of people with disability, and the role of their carers, in accessing healthcare. This action will build on the Department's Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Framework, and be led through the One Health Culture program.
- 4.5 Continue using the One Health Culture Communication Hub to foster staff awareness of days of significance for the disability community (such as the United Nations International Day of People with Disability), and continue to produce internal communications which reflect the diversity of the Department of Health.
- 4.6 Undertake a review of the Department of Health's recruitment practices through a partnership with Job Access (Jobability), and use the findings of this review to increase the employment of people with disability.

Priority Area Five: Information systems



Improve our health data on people with disability and ensure accessibility to information.

Action

- 5.1 Explore implementation options to improve information sharing across the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service to support smoother patient experiences. This includes scoping opportunities to:
 - expand or augment the use of pre-op “About Me” form to all areas of the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service, including planned procedures, Emergency Department, general admissions, and community health and mental health services.
 - broaden functionality of recording ‘next of kin’ and ‘carer supports’ information from Emergency Department to all relevant touchpoints across the health system.
- 5.2 Finalise the Department of Health’s *Business System Owner Policy* to embed a requirement to consider Web Content Accessibility Guidelines accessibility standards when procuring and evaluating new information systems to be used across the Department of Health and Tasmanian Health Service.
- 5.3 Deliver native support for accessibility across all Department of Health internet and intranet sites, to ensure each of our websites (both external and internal) are accessible.
- 5.4 Review hospital patient forms, information and other materials to support implementation of information for patients in available and accessible, multiple formats (including plain/easy English and options for people with vision impairment).
- 5.5 Develop a mechanism to capture, report and respond to disability-related feedback and complaints.

