

Frequently Asked Questions

Step 3 – Consultation to inform a new Disability Support Quality and Safeguarding Framework and Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy

What is the Disability Support Quality and Safeguarding Framework and the Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy?

The Australian Government (the government, we, us) wants to improve safeguards for people with disability. The government has committed to developing a Disability Support Quality and Safeguarding Framework (the Framework) and a Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy (the Strategy).

The Framework and the Strategy will aim to provide a unified approach to quality and safeguarding for disability support. We want the Framework and the Strategy to help ensure people can access quality supports and use safeguards, through being equipped, confident and empowered to do so and by having improved quality and safeguarding arrangements in place.

The Framework and the Strategy aim to:

- set the standard and culture of the systems, services, supports, people and organisations that meet the needs of people with disability
- empower people with disability to access quality supports and use safeguards
- unify and strengthen safeguards for people with disability.

The Framework and the Strategy will be shaped by what people with disability have already told us in past consultations, and by what they tell us in these consultations. We will use this consultation to learn how people with disability and their families, advocates, carers and support networks feel about quality and safeguarding for people with disability. What we learn will inform the development of the Framework and the Strategy.

What does ‘safeguarding’ mean?

The 2016 NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework (the 2016 Framework) defines a ‘safeguard’ as any action which protects the right of people with disability to be safe from harm, abuse and neglect, while also protecting their freedom of choice. When we talk about ‘safeguarding’, we are talking about these actions.

We plan on ensuring this definition remains fit for purpose to cover safeguarding for all people with disability. We will use the feedback we collect during this consultation to refine this definition.

Why are governments creating the Framework and the Strategy?

Governments are creating the Framework and the Strategy to improve safeguarding for people with disability.

The Australian Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (the DRC) was set up in 2019 by the government. The DRC helped us better understand the violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation people with disability can experience.

The DRC released its final report in September 2023, advising all governments about how safeguards for people with disability can be improved. The final report says people with disability face safety concerns such as violence and abuse at much higher rates than people without disability. It also says that people with disability are more likely to be the victim of a crime.

The DRC made the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 11.1 Nationally consistent adult safeguarding functions
- Recommendation 11.2 An integrated national adult safeguarding framework.

In developing the Framework and the Strategy we will work, together with states and territories, to further consider these recommendations.

The Independent Review into the NDIS (the Review) was announced in October 2022. The Review looked at how to improve the way the NDIS works and how NDIS providers could better support people with disability.

The Review released its final report in April 2023. The report recommended all governments take actions to support the independence of people with disability and provide better safeguards. This includes the following actions:

- Action 16.1 - The Disability Reform Ministerial Council should agree a Disability Support Ecosystem Safeguarding Strategy to coordinate activities to support the safeguarding of people with disability
- Action 19.1 - The Disability Reform Ministerial Council should agree a Disability Supports Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

As part of the initial response to the Disability Royal Commission, we have committed to establishing the Framework and the Strategy to unify quality and safeguarding arrangements for people with disability across Australia. The government will have the Framework and the Strategy endorsed by the Disability Reform Ministerial Council prior to implementation.

The government created the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework in 2016. What will be different in this new Framework and Strategy?

As part of the Review, the government published an [issues paper](#) on the 2016 Framework in April 2023. The government found that:

- the 2016 Framework did not account for how things had changed between 2016 and now
- the 2016 Framework only applies to people with NDIS supports, instead of all people with disability
- there was a poor balance between giving people with disability protections while also letting them have freedom of choice
- not enough focus was on safeguarding measures which help people with disability protect themselves

- it was not clear what roles different people and organisations play in providing safeguards for people with disability.

The government will consider these findings while developing the new Framework and Strategy.

The 2016 Framework only applies to people with NDIS supports. The Framework is intended to have a broad focus, including being able to apply to all people with disability and their supports, whether they are participants in the NDIS or not. Initially, the Framework is expected to apply to quality and safeguarding functions, activities and reforms within the NDIS.

How long is the consultation open for?

The Disability Safeguards Consultation is a 3-step process. The consultation was previously a 4-step process, but Steps 3 and 4 have been combined to better align the consultation to the drafting process.

Step 1 was a round of public consultation. This step started on Monday 10 November 2025 and closed on Monday 22 December 2025.

Step 2 was a round of targeted consultation with department-identified stakeholders. This round started on Thursday 12 February 2026 and closed on Thursday 2 April 2026.

Steps 3 and 4 have been merged into a single step, Step 3.

The third step will involve interviews with stakeholders from across the disability community. This step will start on Monday 7 September 2026 and end on Friday 30 October 2026.

If you would like to participate, please read information about Step 3 on the department's [consultation website](#) to find out how to express interest.

Who can share their thoughts on the development of the Framework and the Strategy?

We want to know the thoughts of the disability community about the Framework and the Strategy:

- all people with disability (whether you are an NDIS participant or not), including First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- families of people with disability
- communication partners of people with disability (those who provide alternative or augmented communication)
- representative organisations, advocates and supporters of people with disability
- the disability support sector, including providers and workers (in NDIS services or state and territory government services that provide disability support)
- people working in relevant mainstream services (education, health, etc.)
- academics, researchers and specialists in quality and safeguarding, disability and disability service provision.

How will views of the community shape the Framework and the Strategy?

We will use the thoughts of the disability community to inform the Framework and the Strategy and ensure they meet the community's needs and support safety. We will also ask people with disability to review draft versions of the Framework and the Strategy as we progress.

What is the government's vision for the Framework and the Strategy?

We want a disability community where people with disability are safe, feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and can access quality supports.

To ensure a nationally consistent and unified approach, the government and states and territories have committed to working together.

We have agreed to uphold the human rights of people with disability in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD). We want the Framework and the Strategy to enable us to achieve the standards of the UNCRPD.

We want the Framework and the Strategy to ensure that:

- people with disability have a high quality of life, are able to participate in their communities, and can maximise their independence
- people with disability are at the centre of the Framework and the Strategy. People with disability are directly involved in shaping the Framework and the Strategy to make sure each one meets their needs.
- safeguards are evidence-based. Evidence helps us know what leads to high quality and effective safeguards, and what doesn't work.
- 'quality' and 'safety' are understood by everyone.
- we continuously improve by monitoring data on what works and what doesn't work. By monitoring data as we go, we can keep doing what works and stop doing anything that doesn't work. We will also ask people with disability to review draft versions of the Framework and the Strategy as we progress.

How long will the Framework and the Strategy take to develop?

The Framework and the Strategy is expected to be developed and implemented over 5 years.

What is the relationship between the Framework and the Strategy and *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031*?

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (ADS) sets out practical changes Australia can make to improve the lives of people with disability. The vision of ADS is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfil their potential, as equal members of the community.

The new Framework and the Strategy will help protect people with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and it will assist people with disability to uphold their rights. This will help people with disability lead independent lives and make their own choices in their communities.

Policy Priority 1 under the Safety, Rights and Justice Outcome Area of ADS is that people with disability are safe and feel safe from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The new Framework and the Strategy will support this policy priority directly.

Policy Priority 4 under the Safety, Rights and Justice Outcome Area focuses on promoting, upholding, and protecting the rights of people with disability. The rights listed in the UNCRPD are core values in the development of the Framework and the Strategy. The safeguarding measures brought about by the new Framework and the Strategy will do a better job of protecting those rights.

What's the relationship between the NDIS and the Framework?

The Framework is intended to have a broad focus, including being able to apply to all people with disability and their supports, whether they are participants in the NDIS or not. Initially, the Framework is expected to apply to quality and safeguarding functions, activities and reforms within the NDIS.

We are working with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, the National Disability Insurance Agency and states and territories, to support the development of the Framework and the Strategy.