



**Disability  
Sports  
Australia**

# **Disability Sports Australia and its members**

**Play Well Participation Plan**

**2026-2029**



# Acknowledgment of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Disability Sports Australia and its members acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

We also recognise the outstanding contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make to society and sport in Australia and celebrate the power of sport to promote reconciliation and reduce inequality.



# About This Plan

**This Participation Plan outlines how Disability Sports Australia and its members will work together to strengthen participation in grassroots sport for people with disability.**

It complements Disability Sports Australia's Strategic Plan by identifying priority areas, shared actions and measures that support meaningful participation across our member network.

This plan has been developed through ongoing consultation with Disability Sports Australia members, reflecting the diversity of roles, sports and approaches across our membership.

Disability Sports Australia is not a single-sport organisation. We represent a diverse network of member organisations across many sports and roles, united by a shared focus on disability sport at the grassroots level.

The initiatives in this plan reflect a shared way of working. Not every initiative will be relevant to every member, but together they provide a flexible framework to support collaboration, alignment and collective progress.

This plan aligns with the Australian Sports Commission's *Play Well Participation Strategy*.

# Our priority areas for success

From 2026 to 2029, Disability Sports Australia and its members will focus on the following five priority areas to strengthen participation in grassroots sport for people with disability.



## **Every Body in Sport, for Life**

Oversee the delivery of participation programs and products that support lifelong involvement in sport and improve awareness of accessible local sport options for people with disability.



## **Enabling Connection**

Collaborate across the sport sector to strengthen relationships, clarify roles, and enable Disability Sports Australia and its members to work together to improve participation outcomes for people with disability.



## **Building Capability Together**

Support sporting organisations to design and deliver inclusive strategies and initiatives that remove barriers, improve accessibility, and create more opportunities for people with disability to participate in sport in the way that works best for them.



### **Sharing Stories that Matter**

Share authentic stories that promote awareness of disability sport and highlight its social value, impact and contribution to communities.



### **Building the Evidence Base**

Establish consistent participation data collection and analysis across Disability Sports Australia and its members, building a strong evidence base to guide decision-making, strengthen impact, and support system-wide improvement.



# Our Commitment to Play Well

**Disability Sports Australia is dedicated to aligning its initiatives in this strategic plan with the Australian Sports Commissions (ASC) Play Well Participation Strategy.**

This strategy aims to create a more active nation through quality sports experiences, promoting lifelong participation, and enhancing the health and well-being of Australians.

By making sport accessible to everyone, we can help ensure it has a place for everyone.

We also recognise the importance of building the capability of others to be more inclusive of people with disability.

We are dedicated to playing our role in the sector to support the delivery of this strategy.







# Priority Area 1: Every Body in Sport, for Life

Oversee the delivery of participation programs and products that support lifelong involvement in sport and improve awareness of accessible local sport options for people with disability.

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## Disability Sports Australia will:

- Deliver multi-sport introduction events that promote lifelong participation and raise awareness of accessible local sport options for people with disability, including Abilities Unleashed and Try Para-Sport initiatives.
- Develop and refine participation products that support entry, re-entry, and ongoing involvement in sport across different life stages.

## With our members, we will:

- Recognise and reflect the range of grassroots programs, sports and competitions delivered by members that support meaningful participation for people with disability.
- Provide clear, accessible information to help people with disability understand local participation options.
- Act as a central referral point to guide people with disability into and through sport, regardless of the length or nature of their involvement.
- Explore and deliver Sporting Schools initiatives to reach more children with disability.

## Measures

- Number of grassroots programs, sports and competitions delivered by members annually.
- Evidence of member-delivered participation programs being recognised and reflected in DSA reporting and communications.
- Annual calendar of multi-sport introduction events delivered.
- Increase or maintenance of program participant numbers year-on-year.
- Number of referrals made to member organisations and local sport providers.
- Number of member organisations receiving referrals through DSA.
- Number of member organisations involved in delivering Sporting Schools initiatives.
- Number of Sporting Schools initiatives delivered that include children with disability.





## Priority Area 2: Enabling Connection

Collaborate across the sport sector to strengthen relationships, clarify roles, and enable Disability Sports Australia and its members to work together to improve participation outcomes for people with disability.

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### **Disability Sports Australia will:**

- Establish and maintain an active Disability Advisory Committee to provide lived-experience guidance.
- Host an annual Member CEO Forum to share progress and align priorities.

### **With our members, we will:**

- Establish a Play Well Group to oversee progress of the Participation Plan.
- Strengthen partnerships with education departments to embed disability sport into school systems.
- Strengthen supported participation pathways by connecting sport with allied health and community services.

## Measures

- Disability Advisory Committee established and maintained.
- Annual Member CEO Forum delivered.
- Member feedback indicating improved alignment and shared understanding of priorities.
- Play Well Group established with agreed terms of reference.
- Progress against Participation Plan milestones reviewed and reported.
- Number of active partnerships with education departments.
- Number of active partnerships with allied health and community organisations supporting sport participation.
- Number of people with disability supported through coordinated referrals between sport, allied health and community services.
- Increase in participation rates and participant-reported experience through standardised feedback measures.





## **Priority Area 3: Building Capability Together**

Support sporting organisations to design and deliver inclusive strategies and initiatives that remove barriers, improve accessibility, and create more opportunities for people with disability to participate in sport in the way that works best for them.

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### **Disability Sports Australia will:**

- Provide mechanisms for members to co-brand and deliver DSA initiatives, such as the Accessibility Champion course, to extend local reach and impact.
- Support members to strengthen governance and organisational capability through adoption and use of the Australian Sports Commission's Game Plan platform.
- Develop and maintain a national suite of proven initiatives that members can adapt and deliver locally, supported by clear delivery standards and shared evaluation tools.

### **With our members, we will:**

- Scale and nationalise well-performing initiatives to extend their reach across multiple states and territories.
- Deliver education and training for coaches and organisations to strengthen inclusive practice and accessibility.
- Create pathways for people with disability to be involved in sport both on the field of play and off the field, including leadership and support roles.

## Measures

- Number of member organisations co-branding and delivering DSA initiatives.
- Number of members adopting and actively using the Australian Sports Commission's Game Plan platform to assess and improve organisational capability.
- Number of member organisations delivering locally adapted initiatives from the nationally aligned suite.
- Increase in confidence of coaches and sport administrators to deliver inclusive sport opportunities for people with disability.
- Annual growth in the number of people registering for and completing DSA and member-supported education and training.
- Number of member organisations involved in delivering nationalised initiatives across multiple states and territories.
- Number of member organisations offering non-playing roles for people with disability.





## Priority Area 4: Sharing Stories that Matter

Share authentic stories that promote awareness of disability sport and highlight its social value, impact and contribution to communities.

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### Disability Sports Australia will:

- Deliver Changing Lives Through Sport as an annual flagship storytelling campaign, with opportunities for member co-branding and participation.
- Develop and maintain a member-accessible library of stories, statistics and campaign assets for use across the sport sector.
- Establish media guidelines to support positive, inclusive representation of people with disability in sport.

### With our members, we will:

- Highlight barriers faced by people with disability and share authentic stories of participation, progression and impact across grassroots sport.

## Measures

- Annual delivery of the Changing Lives Through Sport flagship campaign, with member participation.
- Growth in reach and engagement across digital channels, including increases in social media followers, comments and shares.
- Annual growth in website visits and engagement with disability sport content.
- Increase in positive media coverage and inclusive representation of people with disability in sport.
- Number of member organisations contributing stories or using shared storytelling assets.
- Adoption and use of media guidelines supporting positive and inclusive representation.
- Improved awareness and understanding of disability sport and its value, as reflected through engagement metrics, feedback and brand visibility indicators.





## Priority Area 5: Building the Evidence Base

Establish consistent participation data collection and analysis across Disability Sports Australia and its members, building a strong evidence base to guide decision-making, strengthen impact, and support system-wide improvement.

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### Disability Sports Australia will:

- Establish and maintain a shared CRM to capture, manage and report participation data across DSA and member-delivered programs.
- Support members to adopt and use the shared CRM for consistent participation data collection and reporting.
- Develop and implement a national framework to measure organisational and member impact.
- Implement an annual participation survey to measure participation rates and identify barriers experienced by people with disability in sport.

### With our members, we will:

- Use the shared CRM to contribute participation data and insights that inform reporting, evaluation and strategy.
- Contribute to a State of the Sector insights report to inform future strategy and sector advocacy.
- Adopt and apply consistent participant definitions to support reliable and comparable data collection.

## Measures

- Shared CRM established and operational across DSA and member-delivered programs.
- Number and proportion of member organisations actively using the shared CRM to capture participation data.
- Participation data captured through the CRM across DSA and member-delivered programs, including participant numbers and program activity.
- National impact measurement framework implemented and applied to DSA and member activity.
- Annual participation survey completed, identifying participation rates and barriers experienced by people with disability.
- Increase in the number of people with disability who report improved understanding of their participation options, as measured through the annual survey.
- State of the Sector insights report produced with data and contributions from members.
- Percentage of members adopting and applying agreed participant definitions.
- Evidence of effective use of participation and impact data to inform reporting, program refinement and strategic decision-making.

“ For more than 60 years, Disability Sports Australia and its predecessors have worked alongside member organisations to support disability sport participation across Australia. Our members have different roles, remits and responsibilities. While this creates complexity, we share a responsibility to expand access to sport for people with disability. People with disability remain significantly less likely to participate in sport than other Australians. This Participation Plan builds on that history, providing a clear, shared direction for how we work together to change that collectively. ”

**Ayden Shaw, CEO,  
Disability Sports Australia**

“ This plan represents a critical step forward in aligning national ambition with state-level action. In Western Australia, we see both the gaps and the opportunities that exist across systems, services, and communities. The Play Well Participation Plan provides a shared framework to address these challenges, bringing governments, sport, and the disability sector together to build a more connected, capable and inclusive system. At WADSA, we see this as a genuine opportunity to strengthen pathways, improve access, and ensure participation in sport and recreation becomes a lifelong, achievable outcome for all people with disability.”

**Conor Mahady, CEO,  
WADSA**

**Our Members' Pledge:**

# Our Commitment

Disability Sports Australia and its member organisations are committed to upholding the vision and purpose of the *Disability Sports Australia Play Well Participation Plan*. We are focused on delivering this plan in a practical and meaningful way across our membership base to ensure more people with disability can access grassroots sport.



Disability Sports  
Australia



Wheelchair Sports  
NSW/ACT



Sporting Wheelies  
Queensland



One Culture



Rebound WA



Paraquads Tasmania



Australian Powerchair  
Hockey Association Inc.



Australian Powerchair  
Football Association



NSW Powerchair  
Football Association



Cerebral Palsy Sporting  
and Recreation Association



Disability Sport  
and Recreation



Western Australia Disabled  
Sports Association



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