



**Disability  
Sports**  
Australia

## **Disability Sports Australia 2025 Federal Election Platform**

*Advancing Equitable Sport Participation for  
People with Disability*

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## Why this Platform Matters?

People with disability make up 21.4% of the Australian population, yet still face significant barriers to sport. This platform is a national call to action for an inclusive future—where sport is accessible, representative, and empowering for every body.

## What is an Election Platform?

An election platform is an advocacy tool for organisations to engage with government during an election campaign, highlighting key points they want addressed. It forms a central part of an organisation’s overall advocacy and government relations strategy.

## Purpose of DSA’s Election Platform:

**The purpose of Disability Sports Australia’s (DSA) Election Platform is to articulate our new strategy by:**

- 1) Raising our voice at the federal level
- 2) Initiating and strengthening federal government relations
- 3) Improving our representation in the media
- 4) Highlighting the value of grassroots sports participation
- 5) Emphasising the need for inclusive clubs and facilities

## Background Material

The following background material will underpin the primary Election Platform digital document, This material will also be used to create social media collateral throughout the election campaign.

Our election platform is grounded in DSA’s mission, vision, and purpose, as outlined in our new strategic plan.

It is also aligned with the Australian Disability Strategy (ADS) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), both of which form the foundation for Australian disability policy and legislation.

# About Disability Sports Australia

**Disability Sports Australia (DSA)** is a national charity and sporting organisation championing inclusive grassroots sport for people with disability.

For more than 60 years, we've been at the forefront of wheelchair sports in Australia and were recognised as the peak body for sport for people with physical disability. Today, we take a disability-agnostic approach—working across all types of disability to build the capability of sport to be inclusive and accessible.

We focus on increasing opportunities for people with disability to take part in local sport by promoting awareness of how sport can enrich lives and strengthen communities.

Operating at local, state, and federal levels, we support the creation of sporting environments where everyone is welcomed and supported—regardless of disability. By helping sports organisations build their understanding and confidence, we're ensuring people with disability can engage in sport in the way that works best for them.

Our work is guided by the lived experience of our Disability Advisory Committee, as well as the principles of the **Australian Disability Strategy 2021–2031** and the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.

## **Our Vision:**

Lives and communities changed through the power of sport.

## **Our Mission:**

To improve opportunities for people with disability to be involved in sport in the way they choose.

## **Our Purpose:**

To build the capability of sport to enable participation of people with disability.

## **The Australian Disability Strategy**

The Australian Disability Strategy (ADS) outlines key outcome areas that all levels of Government have committed to. The outcome areas in the ADS include:<sup>1</sup>

- **Inclusive homes and communities**
- **Health and wellbeing**
- **Education and learning**
- **Employment and financial security**
- **Safety, rights and justice and community attitudes**

## **Convention in the Rights of Persons with Disability- Article 30**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by the Australian Government in 2008, is the foundation of Australian disability policy. Article 30 specifically addresses sport and recreation, outlining key measures to ensure equal access for people with disability in these areas :

### **Article 30**

With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

**a) To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;**

b) To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;

c) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;

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<sup>1</sup> [Australia's Disability Strategy - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](http://aihw.gov.au)

d) To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system.

(e) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities.

## **Our Federal Election Asks**

**We are calling on all political parties and candidates to commit to the following:**

### **1. That all candidates support investment in access and choice in sport for people with disability by:**

*"Enhancing Access and Opportunities for People with Disability in Sport"*

- Continuing to increase investment in disability sport organisations to lead adaptive initiatives and recognise their expertise in program design.
- Working with mainstream sports to co-develop inclusive programs that respond to the needs of people with disability.
- Expanding participation opportunities in mainstream sport, promoting genuine choice in how people with disability engage.
- Ensuring universally designed, accessible sport infrastructure is available across the country.

### **2. That all candidates support investment to increase employment opportunities for people with disability in the sport sector by:**

*Create jobs in sport for people with disability*

- Establishing a Disability Sports Employment Program to create dedicated pathways into sport-related roles for people with disability, ensuring inclusive career opportunities across coaching, officiating, administration, leadership, and event delivery.

- partnering with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and sports organisations to develop clear pathways into various roles within the sport sector, supporting long-term career growth and fostering a diverse, inclusive workforce.
- recognising and valuing the expertise of people with disability, promoting the creation of a workforce that mirrors the broader community and reflects the rich diversity of lived experiences in sport.

### **3. That all candidates continue to invest in programs that challenge stereotypes and shift community attitudes about disability by:**

*“Challenging Stereotypes, Shifting Perceptions, and Elevating Leadership in Sport”*

- funding initiatives that promote inclusion, challenge stereotypes, and build understanding of disability,
- supporting programs that elevate the voices and leadership of people with disability through sport, and
- investing in national campaigns and community-led efforts that position sport as a place where every body belongs.

## **Why?**

- People with disability make up a sizeable 21.4% of the Australian community<sup>2</sup>. Yet attitudes towards people with disability remain lodged in disabling stereotypes.<sup>3</sup> To move beyond these stereotypes, we need to have ongoing commitment from government to support programs that uplift the status of people with disability across all aspects of society including sport.
- Sport is a powerful tool for improving health, wellbeing and community cohesion. but sport also has the power to change lives and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/2022>

<sup>3</sup> [Summary of the Australian Government Response to the Disability Royal Commission \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/summary-of-the-australian-government-response-to-the-disability-royal-commission)

communities<sup>4</sup>. Access and inclusion to mainstream sport can improve the lives of all Australians through activity and community cohesion<sup>5</sup>. Whether it's recreational, competitive, or social, people with disability deserve the right to engage in sport in ways that align with their personal choice<sup>6</sup>.

- Employment in sport also offers significant economic and social benefits. Yet, only 48% of people with disability are employed, leaving a substantial gap in opportunities. This highlights the need to integrate disability employment in sport into broader disability employment policies.
- Inclusive clubs, accessible sporting facilities, and programs to change societal attitudes can transform lives, creating a more inclusive society where people with disability can fully participate in everything that Australia has to offer (ADS 2021-2031).
- The 2032 Brisbane Paralympics and Olympics are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create lasting inclusion.
- By investing now, we not only set the stage for a successful Games but also create a legacy of opportunity, where people with disability can thrive in sport and contribute to inclusive communities.

**If Australia is inclusive, people with disability can take part in everything that happens in Australia (ADS 2021-2031).**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.laureus.com/news/sport-can-change-attitudes-change-experiences-and-challenge-the-world>

<sup>5</sup> [https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/3956724/Change-Starts-with-Sport\\_FINAL.pdf](https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/3956724/Change-Starts-with-Sport_FINAL.pdf)

## Our Messages

- Ensure sporting facilities are universally designed and accessible for everyone.
- Ensure that people with disability have equal access to sport.
- Create meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability in the sport sector
- “Every body belongs in sport”

## Support Us: Creating Inclusive Sport for All

Every person with disability should have the opportunity to participate, lead, and thrive in sport. Join us in making sport accessible to everyone.

## Endorse the Platform

**Help us elevate inclusive sport to the national agenda.**

**Here’s how you can get involved:**

- Read and share Disability Sports Australia's 2025 Federal Election Platform.
- Show your support on social media with #EveryBodyBelongs.
- Ask your local candidates about their plans to make sport more inclusive.

## Start the Conversation

**Inclusion starts with listening, learning, and leading by example.**

**Here’s how you can take action:**

- Invite Disability Sports Australia or another disability sport organisation to speak at your club, school, workplace, or community group.
- Share your own story or amplify the voices of others—every voice matters.
- Stay connected with us for more updates on our campaign by following us on social media.