



First Peoples  
Disability Network  
Australia

# Policy Platform Federal Election 2019

[fpdn.org.au](http://fpdn.org.au)

## WE ARE FIRST PEOPLES DISABILITY NETWORK (FPDN)

First Peoples Disability Network Australia is a national organisation of and for Australia's First Peoples with disability, their families and communities. Its purpose is to promote respect for human rights, secure social justice, and empower First Peoples with disability to participate in Australian society on an equal basis with others. We are the custodians of the narratives of First Peoples with disability, their families and communities and we recognise this important responsibility.

Because ours is an oral history, we continue this by recognising the value of our peoples' narratives and collecting this as data, which informs our work and the work of others.

**“ We have a vision of a just and inclusive society, in which the First Peoples with disability of the Australian nation are respected and valued for their culture, history and contribution to contemporary life, and in which the human rights of First Peoples with disability are recognised, respected, protected and fulfilled.**

### OUR CORE VALUES



Recognition and respect for human rights, and in particular for the human rights of First Peoples and First Peoples with disability



Equality of outcomes for First Peoples with disability with other members of Australian society through equal opportunity, non-discrimination and affirmative action



Empowerment of First Peoples with disability and their families to direct their own lives and to secure the resources that they need to participate on an equal basis with others in Australian life



Access to justice for First Peoples with disability



Inclusion of First Peoples with disability in all aspects of Australian life



Respect for the Elders of First Peoples nations across Australia and for their efforts over time to secure justice for their peoples and communities. In particular, we honour those Elders who have worked to secure justice for First Peoples with disability and their families



Respect for the culture and history of Australian First Peoples and recognition of the ongoing importance of that culture in our contemporary lives



Recognition and respect for the lived experience of First Peoples with disability and their families as the central driver of our work



Recognition of the richness and diversity of Australian First Peoples communities across Australia

### OUR CORE PRINCIPALS

We work within a social model of disability, which recognises that disability is produced by barriers to equality and participation for people with impairments that must be dismantled.

We work with First Peoples with disability, their families and communities across Australia, to ensure that our work reflects their diversity and priorities.

We work with all First Peoples communities to create and maintain a safe and secure place for the exchange of ideas, the building of alliances, and the formulation of priorities, between and across community divides.

We are passionate, determined, and committed to our work.

We lead change, not react to it.

We are innovative, creative, and solution-focused.

We are accountable in all aspects of our work to First Peoples with disability and their families, our communities, and to the community generally.

## CONTENTS



<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Ten Priorities to address disability inequity</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A solutions focussed approach</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Government investment will address the need of the serious inequity experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their families</b>	<b>7</b>
Invest in Community Infrastructure to build capacity of communities and individuals to understand their rights and entitlements	8
Develop and Support and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce	9
Invest to create a First Peoples Community Controlled service sector	10
Community Directed Research	11
<b>Conclusion and contact details</b>	<b>12</b>

**TABLE: INTERSECTIONALITY ACROSS THE LIFE TRAJECTORY OF AN ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PERSON WITH DISABILITY**



LIFE-STAGE ASPECT	Peri-Natal	Early childhood	Schooling years	Young people	Justice	Health	Ageing
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</b>	Low awareness of disability Environmental factors, increased likelihood of low birth-weight	Low awareness of disability Exposure to trauma Increased likelihood of OOHC - off country, unstable home setting	Low awareness of disability "Bad black kid syndrome" - punitive schooling over supported disability	Less likely to secure employment Increased likelihood of police contact	Denial of rights - over incarceration	Subconscious bias - institutional racism	Reduced life expectancy Disability happens earlier in life and with more co-morbidities.
<b>Disability</b>	Low birth weight and environmental factors in developmental disability	Disability assessments aren't carried out to the extent that they need to be	Undiagnosed and unsupported disability	Less likely to secure employment Communication impairments, reduced capacity to negotiate conflict	Denial of rights - indefinite detention and fitness to plea for people with cognitive and psychiatric disability	Subconscious bias - diagnostic over shadowing	Inadequate public infrastructure especially in remote communities.

Scott Avery (2018) Culture is Inclusion a narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Disability



**Racism, ableism and intersectional discrimination for people at the intersection of two marginalised populations**

## INTRODUCTION

By any measure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities are amongst some of the most disadvantaged of all Australians. This is often because they face multiple barriers to their meaningful participation within their own communities and the wider community.

This election policy platform is created with the context of four key reforms that are due to commence or are being reformed during 2019.

### THESE ARE:

1. Reform of the National Disability Agreement
2. Reform of the National Disability Advocacy Program
3. Further implementation of the National Disability Strategy
4. Closing the Gap



**At FPDN we know that meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities is one of the most critical social justice issues in Australia today.**

Recent detailed data analysis undertaken by FPDN's living our way research program in partnership with the Australian Bureau of Statistics has concluded that not only is there a significantly higher prevalence of disability amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but they are also experiencing significantly higher rates of disadvantage on a wide range of different social measures, including access to education, employment and health services.



**45%**

**of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have some form of disability or long term health condition**

## TEN PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS DISABILITY INEQUITY

Building on our 'Ten Point plan for the implementation of the NDIS in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities', received with bipartisan support in 2013, FPDN launched an updated document in 2018: 'Ten priorities to address disability inequity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities for the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme' to include all First Peoples with disability. A key aspect of our Ten Priorities is the requirement that appropriate companion schemes and services are available and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the long-term. These priorities are intended to form the foundation for a comprehensive national plan collaboratively created to ensure that the services and supports provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disability accessible, culturally appropriate and will work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our Ten Priorities to address disability inequity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities for the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme informs this policy platform in line with our strategic directions.

**The plan should be based on the ten priorities identified by FPDN and be developed by using three pillars:**

1. Build the capacity of communities and individuals to understand their rights and entitlements
2. Invest to create a First People's Community Controlled service sector
3. Develop and support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce

1



Invest to create an Aboriginal Community Controlled Disability Service Sector for the provision of disability supports by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability for their communities

2



Address the barriers facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in accessing the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

3



Prioritise timely intervention to ensure supports and services are provided, and available over the long-term, and at the right time in people's lives

4



Recognise and value the existing knowledge, skills and expertise within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We are leaders in the inclusion of people with disability

5



Resource a community-directed research strategy which specifically focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability

6



Endorse and support peer-to-peer leadership to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability lead the engagement with community themselves

7



Develop and implement an access to justice strategy for First Peoples with disability, particularly those with cognitive impairment, sensory and intellectual disability

8



Develop and implement programs for inclusive education and employment for First Peoples with disability in line with national strategies for their full social participation

9



Create links between the National Disability Strategy and Closing the Gap Framework for coordinated policy and programs at the Commonwealth, State and local levels in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their organisations

10



Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Performance Framework for the independent monitoring of the social and economic outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

## A SOLUTIONS FOCUSED APPROACH

FPDN acknowledge that overarching national frameworks for disability have largely failed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities as is well recognised by the Commonwealth government. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities have been a stated priority at the Disability Reform Council for several years, but despite this there has been little meaningful improvement in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities.

FPDN argues that the case has been well made now in terms of understanding unmet need with current data that demonstrates the very serious disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities.

**45%**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living with disability or long-term health conditions

**19%**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability participate in the workforce

**7.7%**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living with severe or profound disability

**2.1x**

More likely to be living with disability than other Australians

**5x**

More likely to experience mental illness than other Australians



First People with disability participate in cultural activities at the same rate as First People without disability

We are the thought leaders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability, we are committed to working in partnership with government to address unmet need through the implementation of policy reforms.



Create links between the National Disability Strategy and Closing the Gap framework for coordinated policy and programs at the Commonwealth, State and local levels in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability and their organisations



Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Performance Framework for the independent monitoring of the social and economic outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability



Recognise and value the existing, knowledge and skills and expertise within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we are the leaders of inclusion of people with disability

**GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT WILL ADDRESS THE NEED OF THE SERIOUS INEQUITY EXPERIENCED BY ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY AND THEIR FAMILIES**



**Invest in Community Infrastructure to build capacity of communities and individuals to understand their rights and entitlements**

**\$10m** *investment*  
over five years



Address the barriers facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing the NDIS



Prioritise timely intervention to ensure supports and services are provided, and available over the long term, and at the right time in people's lives



Endorse and support peer to peer leadership to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability lead engagement with the community themselves

**Invest to create a First Peoples Community Controlled service sector**

**\$5m** *investment*  
over five years



Invest to create an Aboriginal community Controlled Disability Service Sector for the provision of supports by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability for their communities

**Develop and Support an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce**

**\$25m** *investment*  
over five years



Develop and implement programs for inclusive education and employment for First Peoples with disability in line with national strategies for their full social participation

**Community Directed Research**

**\$4.5m** *investment*  
over four years



Resource and Support a community directed research strategy which specifically focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability



**Invest in Community Infrastructure to build capacity of communities and individuals to understand their rights and entitlements**

**\$10m** *investment*  
over five years

FPDN have developed community education resources that raise awareness of the needs, concerns, value and contribution of First Peoples with disability and their families and community education programs that cover issues for people with disability or for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also cover issues for First Peoples with disability and their families.

To ensure First Peoples communities in which we work show greater recognition and acceptance of the available supports, including but not limited to, the National Disability Insurance Scheme, FPDN have identified the below key initiatives to develop the capacity of First Peoples with disability and their families to obtain and use the resources they need to participate in the community on an equal basis with others.

### **NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LITERACY PROJECT**

The Lester Bostock National Human Rights Literacy Project is to educate and inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people with disabilities and their families about their rights and entitlements under various relevant human rights instruments. The project involves the delivery of training workshops around the country over a 3-year period including urban, regional and remote communities. It is designed to be a legacy program to support individuals and families to become self-advocates.

**\$1 million per year over 5 years to create the curricula and the deliver workshops around Australia.**

### **COMMUNITY RESOURCE HUBS: PEER TO PEER LEADERSHIP PROJECT**

FPDN successfully operate two community resource hubs, the Paterson Street Hub and NuunaRon Art group, designed to provide a soft access point to local services and supports via the guided referrals model. The hubs provide a venue for community to access guidance and support around barriers they face in accessing culturally appropriate support and information across disability, education, health and justice with a focus on skill building for individuals to drive opportunities in community for local economic development.

**Invest in community lead initiatives for economic development: \$1 million per year over 5 years to duplicate the hub concept in other communities.**

#### **OUTCOMES:**

- **First Peoples with disability and their families in the communities in which we work:**
  - **are connected to the services and supports they need in the general community**
  - **receive equitable access to the supports and services available under a human rights framework.**
- **First Peoples with disability and their families can effectively manage the supports and services they receive under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.**
- **First Peoples with disability and their families are assisted, as needed, to effectively engage with and maintain their relationship with the National Disability Insurance Agency and service providers.**
- **First Peoples with disability build confidence, skills and independence through economic development opportunities.**



Invest to create a First Peoples Community  
Controlled service sector

**\$5m** investment  
over 5 years

FPDN will develop the capacity of mainstream specialist disability services, Aboriginal community-controlled services and governments to provide culturally appropriate disability services and supports for First Peoples with disability and their families.

We will work with government to develop and implement procurement policies and processes that will drive culturally competent service development for First Peoples with disability and their families. We will develop educational resources and programs and deliver them to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services to improve their disability-related responsiveness to First Peoples with disability and their families.

### **NATIONAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY PROGRAM (NDAP)**

FPDN welcomes the reform of the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP). Still today access to NDAP funded services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disabilities and their families is dismally poor. The main reason why this continues to occur is due to the lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander providers. However, FPDN has been fulfilling the role of individual advocacy informally for the past decade and we stand ready to fill this gap.

**Investment: NDAP \$5 million per year over the next 5 years for training, resource development and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability advocates located around Australian.**

#### **OUTCOMES:**

- We have developed educational resources and programs that are assisting mainstream disability services to improve their cultural competence for work with First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We have developed and implemented a quality assurance framework for the endorsement of disability services that are culturally competent for work with First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We have developed and implemented a checklist to guide the development of culturally responsive and accessible services for First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We have developed educational resources and programs that are assisting Aboriginal Community-controlled health and community services build their disability-related competence and capacity for work with First Peoples with disability and their families. Australian governments develop and implement procurement policies and processes that are driving culturally competent service development for First Peoples with disability and their families.



**Develop and Support and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce**

**\$25m** *investment*  
over 5 years

Whilst FPDN acknowledges the significance of the creation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) based on our extensive national community consultations we have identified opportunities that the NDIS could provide employment opportunities for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

FPDN have measured great success through development and implementation of the 'Our Way planning training program & community resource. This resource and training program was designed to educate service providers in how to work in a culturally appropriate way with our communities and can be further utilised as a tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community with disability ready and educated about planning for their NDIS package.

We call on the government to establish a Community of practice of First Peoples staff and the establishment of First Peoples specific National Disability Insurance Scheme Local Area Coordination services across Australia this is contributing to the consolidation of knowledge and expertise in support of the development of culturally appropriate and responsive services for First Peoples with disability and their families and implement a quality assurance framework that will endorse services that consistently achieve cultural competence in service delivery

### **NDIS LOCAL AREA COORDINATION PROGRAM**

A National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander NDIS Local Area Coordination program will provide employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Local Area Coordinators for the NDIS. These Coordinators would be located within Aboriginal community organisations and not within the NDIA itself.

**Investment: \$5 million per year over the next 5 years to build an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce**

#### **OUTCOMES:**

- The National Disability Insurance Agency's systems and processes for assessing eligibility, allocating support and managing support are culturally appropriate and sensitive.
- Fully developed culturally appropriate and responsive services for First Peoples with disability and their families.
- An established community of practice of First Peoples staff that is contributing to the consolidation of knowledge and expertise in support of the development of culturally appropriate and responsive services for First Peoples with disability and their families.



## Community Directed Research

**\$4.5m** investment  
over 4 years

FPDN will continue to establish a community directed research program to carry on the momentum that has come from our research publication *Culture Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability*. Working in partnership with our University-based partners, FPDN's research program aims to continue to build a body of research that is grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and has people with disability as active in the research process. After an initial investment to establish the core research infrastructure for a research hub hosted within FPDN, additional investment over a periods of four years will establish seed funding for a succession of community-initiated and led projects, while meanwhile promoting a stable career pathway in research, policy and service delivery for aspiring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers who have a disability.

**Initial investment: \$500,000. This in investment will build the core research infrastructure of a research hub at FPDN, the business partnerships with the University partners; and promote research opportunities amongst the First Peoples disability community.**

**Progressive investment \$4,000,000 over four years (\$1,000,000 per annum). This progressive investment will support start up research projects that are led by the First Peoples disability community up to a point they can secure competitive research grant funding.**

### OUTCOMES:

- To elevate and promote the voices of indigenous people with disability within research and its translation into policy and practice.\*
- We faithfully and respectfully share the narratives and oral histories of the lived experience of First Peoples with disability and their families and this contributes positively to the cultural understanding and decision-making processes of policy makers.
- Community directed research is an emerging area in social policy research, and the participatory method utilised for this research sets a precedent for continued innovation in community based research.\*
- Established research, policy and service delivery career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers living with disability.

\*Scott Avery (2018) Culture is Inclusion a narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Disability

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**FPDN acknowledge the common goals, and respectful partnerships such as those between the national representative disabled peoples organisations, between the First Nations national peak and community controlled organisations, and between FPDN and governments are the key to achieving the outcomes**

- Our communities across Australia continue to recognise us as a trusted and respected national voice of First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We continue to be recognised by governments and the general public as the legitimate and authoritative national voice of First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We have a strong and diverse leadership group that can build our organisation into the future.
- We faithfully and respectfully share the narratives and oral histories of the lived experience of First Peoples with disability and their families and this contributes positively to the cultural understanding and decision-making processes of policy makers.
- We remain closely connected with our communities at a grassroots level across Australia.
- We have developed a clear agenda for improving the life circumstances and outcomes for First Peoples with disability and their families and communicated it to all relevant sectors of the Australian community.
- Government policies and programs and community services recognise, and are responsive to, the needs and concerns of First Peoples with disability and their families.
- We stay actively engaged in, and contribute to, international efforts to improve recognition and responses to the needs of First Peoples with disability and their families.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

First Peoples Disability Network (Australia)  
PO Box A2265 Sydney South NSW 1235

Phone 02 9267 4195  
Email: [enquiries@fpdn.org.au](mailto:enquiries@fpdn.org.au)  
[www.fpdn.org.au](http://www.fpdn.org.au)