

Children's Health Queensland

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029

Safe, Seen, Supported



**DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND**



**Queensland
Government**

Acknowledgement of Country

Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service acknowledges and respects the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we live, work, and care. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders—past, present, and emerging.

We recognise the historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation on the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including intergenerational trauma and racism experienced by members of the community.

We also acknowledge the higher prevalence of disability among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and are committed to ensuring our services and settings are accessible, safe, and welcoming for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families, carers and health care employees.

We appreciate the knowledge and experiences shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which have helped shape the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029: Safe, Seen, Supported.

We honour and respect the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and appreciate their contributions to improving health equity.

Children’s Health Queensland Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029: Safe, Seen, Supported

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An electronic version of this document is available at childrens.health.qld.gov.au/



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Leaders' foreword

It is with great pride that we present the Children's Health Queensland Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025–2029: Safe, Seen, Supported.

At Children's Health Queensland, we're committed to ensuring that all children, young people, families, caregivers and employees—regardless of ability—have equitable access to inclusive, respectful and compassionate healthcare and employment opportunities.

We recognise that disability is diverse and multifaceted, shaped by the interaction between individuals and the barriers they encounter. We also recognise the complex intersection between health and disability.

The voices and lived experiences of people with disability—whether receiving care, caring for others, or working for our organisation—have been central in shaping this plan.

Through the consultation and co-design process, we have been guided by the principle 'nothing about us, without us'.

Importantly, the plan also supports Children's Health Queensland's strategic priority to create an inclusive environment where our employees feel valued, safe and empowered to drive positive change.

Thank you to everyone who shared their experiences, hopes and ideas with us to create this plan. We now have clear, practical actions we will take to remove the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers people with disability face, and nurture a workplace and care environment that embraces diversity in all its forms.

Together, we will build a future where everyone feels safe, seen and supported in every interaction with our organisation.



Frank Tracey
Chief Executive



Heather Watson
Board Chair

Acknowledgement of lived experience

Children's Health Queensland wishes to thank the children, young people, caregivers, employees, consumer advisory groups, and community groups who have contributed their lived experience knowledge, insights, recommendations and feedback to this plan.

We look forward to collaborating with our lived experience partners to implement the actions in this plan, for a better future for children and young people living with disability.

Meet Ruby

Ruby Herrenberg is a Brisbane-based artist whose vibrant works are inspired by her surroundings and popular culture.

Ruby creates original drawings and paintings that celebrate individuality, inclusivity, and creative expression. Ruby won the Emerging Artist Award and the People's Choice Award in the 2025 Brisbane Portrait Prize.

“

*Hi. My name is Ruby.
I love writing words and
sometimes stay up late
into the night writing and
listening to loud music.
My favourite colour is red.
I love my dog, Bella.*

”



We asked Ruby to create illustrations for the priority areas of our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029. You will see her vibrant artwork throughout the following pages. Thank you, Ruby, for sharing your talent and passion with us.

“Ruby has had complex medical needs her whole life. The care and compassion from the Queensland Childrens Hospital has always been first class. We’ve always been made to feel welcome.” Nicole (Ruby’s mother)

Learn more about Ruby and her art at rubysartonstuff.com





Introduction

Children’s Health Queensland is committed to making healthcare welcoming and accessible for all—especially children, young people, their families and caregivers—and to creating a workplace where every employee feels valued, included and supported. Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025–2029: Safe, Seen, Supported sets out our commitment to improving the experiences of people with disability—whether they are an employee, a patient or a family member.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities describes people with disability as

‘those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.’ This includes both visible and invisible disabilities, which may impact on a person’s participation.

We are committed to listening to and respecting the experiences of children and young people with disability, recognising that early, positive relationships with healthcare providers help build lifelong trust and engagement. We also acknowledge that language shapes attitudes and inclusion. While this plan primarily uses person-first language, Children’s Health Queensland respects individual preferences—such as identity-first language—and encourages open conversations that honour each person’s identity.

We understand that experiences of healthcare and employment are shaped by many factors

such as age, gender, identity, sexual orientation and cultural background. We are committed to recognising and supporting these intersectional experiences so that everyone receives the respect, care and support they need.

This plan was shaped through genuine collaboration. We formed a **Disability Inclusion Action Plan Advisory Group** who met regularly to develop the consultation process and provide expert advice on the priorities and actions for the plan. The advisory group included 22 employees from hospital and community services, two consumers with lived experience, and six employees with lived experience.

More than 600 individuals, including children, young people, families, community partners, and employees, were involved in interviews and/or surveys, generously sharing their own lived experience of disability. These valuable insights will help guide meaningful and lasting change at Children’s Health Queensland.

Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan aligns with international, national, and state disability strategies and reforms.

International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

National

- 2023 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
- 2023 Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- 2024 Review of Australia’s Disability Strategy (2021–2031)

Queensland

- Queensland’s Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a Better Queensland
- Queensland’s Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2025–2028



What we know about children, young people, and employees with disability

5.9% of **children** aged 0-4 years had disability ⁽¹⁾

15% Children **5-14 years** in Queensland live with a disability ⁽¹⁾

16.7% **Young people** 15-24 years in Queensland live with a disability ⁽¹⁾

37.5% Children 0 to 14 years who have a disability, also have a **parent with a disability** ⁽²⁾

About **36%** **First Nations** Queenslanders live with some form of disability or long-term health condition ⁽³⁾

2% Children's Health Queensland **employees** identify as living with a disability ⁽⁴⁾

1. Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
2. Children and young people with disability, 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics
3. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, 2022-23 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
4. Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service 2023-2024 Annual Report



“

'Try getting to know us – it's empowering.'

'Think about us, don't just fix us'

*'Hand me the referral or X-ray slip,
not just to my mum'*

*'Look between both of us
(young person and parent)'*

Young person ”

“

*'Not all disabilities are the same
- people may have experience
and knowledge about one type of
disability and not others.'*

*'Highlight and celebrate
inclusion efforts through hospital
communications, showing families
that disability inclusion is a proud
part of your culture.'*

Caregiver ”

“

*'All of my coworkers have been really
accepting and supportive. They make
adjustments where needed to help
me in the workplace.'*

*An inclusive workplace would be...
'Accepting everyone for who they are,
showing respect and kindness.'*

Employee ”

Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2029: Safe, Seen, Supported

The four priority pillars of our plan — Access, Build, Connect and Drive – will progress inclusive and accessible environments, education, partnerships and actions that will improve outcomes for consumers and employees with disability.



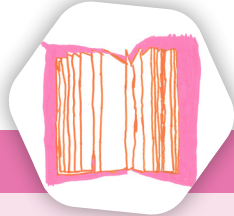
ACCESS

Improve **ACCESS** and provide adjustments to physical and sensory environments, assistive technology, equipment, tools, support services and multi-media information to facilitate independent participation of consumers and employees with diverse disabilities.

Success

Consumers and employees have access to:

- **physical environments** that facilitate safe and easy access to healthcare and workplace activities.
- **sensory-inclusive environments** and adjustments that enhance wellbeing and participation in healthcare and workplace activities.
- **assistive technologies, equipment, tools and support services** that support comfort, safety, participation and engagement.



BUILD

BUILD a disability-confident workforce through targeted training, communication supports, and using feedback and data to drive continuous improvement for consumers and employees with disability.

Success

Consumers and employees are supported by:

- **a workforce who are disability inclusion confident** and promote timely sharing of experiences and knowledge.
- **information about healthcare and workplace services and supports** that is available in accessible and adaptable formats.
- **data and feedback on experiences of people with disability** and active processes to seek, monitor and respond to feedback.



CONNECT

CONNECT teams and services through partnerships that enhance holistic support for consumers and employees with disability.

Success

Consumers and employees with disability:

- **feel safe to identify and connect with others** through lived experience support networks.
- **have health and employment needs supported holistically**, through timely and coordinated inter-agency service provision.
- **are actively engaged, acknowledged, heard and experience** a culture that is inclusive and safe.



DRIVE

DRIVE an inclusive culture by embedding lived experience and recognising the diverse strengths and needs of consumers and employees with disability - including those with intersectional experiences.

Success

Consumers and employees with disability feel:

- **included and empowered to access, adjust and improve** healthcare and workplace activities and experiences.
- **empowered to collaborate** in co-designed **service improvement** projects and activities.
- **empowered to collaborate** in co-designed **research and knowledge translation** projects and activities.

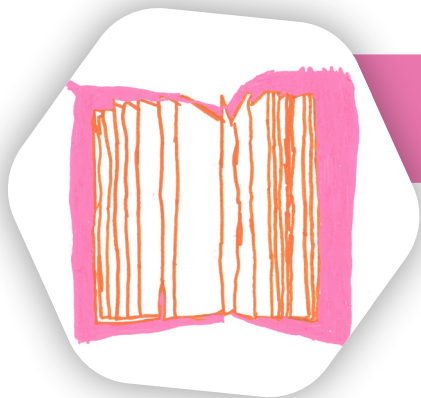


Ruby's response to 'access and adjustment' was to illustrate with a wheelchair.
"Some of my friends use these. They can't go up stairs".

Priority 1: Improve **ACCESS** and provide adjustments

Our aim: Improve ACCESS and provide adjustments to physical and sensory environments, assistive technology, equipment, tools, support services and multi-media information to facilitate independent participation of consumers and employees with diverse disabilities.

What we heard	What we will do	Who?	We will be successful when
Consumers and employees with disability want access to inclusive physical environments for healthcare and workplace activities.	1.1 Support consumers and employees with disability to access physical healthcare and workplace environments, by reviewing and upgrading healthcare and workplace facilities, guided by universal design principles.	Consumers Employees	Consumers and employees have access to physical environments that facilitate safe and easy access to healthcare and workplace activities.
	1.2 Support consumers and employees with disability to access physical healthcare and workplace environments, by reviewing and updating wayfinding and signage, guided by universal design principles.	Consumers Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want access to sensory-inclusive environments that support their wellbeing and participation.	1.3 Support consumers with disability by introducing co-designed sensory-inclusive healthcare environments and providing additional sensory adjustments as needed.	Consumers	Consumers and employees have access to sensory-inclusive environments and adjustments that enhance wellbeing and participation in healthcare and workplace activities.
	1.4 Support employees with disability by introducing co-designed sensory-inclusive workplace environments and providing additional sensory adjustments as needed.	Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want access to appropriate assistive technology, equipment, tools and support services to enhance their comfort, safety and participation.	1.5 Support consumers with disability to access appropriate assistive technology, equipment, tools and support services to enhance comfort and safety, participation and engagement in healthcare .	Consumers	Consumers and employees have access to assistive technology, equipment, tools and support services that promote comfort, safety, participation and engagement.
	1.6 Support employees with disability to access appropriate assistive technology, equipment, tools and support services to enhance comfort and safety, participation and engagement in the workplace .	Employees	



Ruby's response to 'build and bank knowledge' was to illustrate with a book.
"Reading is a good way to learn about things that are different".

Priority 2: **BUILD** confidence and capability

Our aim: BUILD a disability-confident workforce through targeted training, communication supports, and using feedback and data to drive continuous improvement for consumers and employees with disability.

What we heard	What we will do	Who?	We will be successful when
Consumers and employees with disability want a disability-confident workforce who promote inclusive healthcare and workplace practices.	2.1 Develop a CHQ disability and neurodivergence network that consults with consumers to build disability-confident, inclusive healthcare.	Consumers	Consumers and employees with disability are supported by a workforce who understand and facilitate disability inclusion and promote timely sharing of experiences and knowledge.
	2.2 Enable employees to promote inclusion of people with disability at CHQ through access to contemporary disability awareness and inclusion training.	Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want healthcare and workplace information supports that are easy to access and understand.	2.3 Enable consumers with disability and their caregivers to build health literacy through access to healthcare information that is available in accessible and adaptable formats.	Consumers	Consumers and employees with disability can build their health literacy and workplace practice knowledge through information that is available in accessible and adaptable formats.
	2.4 Enable employees with disability and their leaders to access workplace support information that is available in accessible and adaptable formats.	Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want processes to collect and respond to feedback and data about healthcare and workplace experiences.	2.5 Create processes to actively monitor disability-related consumer data and feedback for review and action-focused response.	Consumers	Consumers and employees with disability are supported by processes to actively seek, monitor and respond to data and feedback relating to disability.
	2.6 Create processes to actively monitor disability-related employee data and feedback for review and action-focused response.	Employees	



Ruby's response to 'connect and collaborate' was to illustrate with interlocked hands.
"This is me when I was little, holding my mums hand. Best Mum ever".

Priority 3: **CONNECT** people and services

Our aim: CONNECT teams and services through partnerships that enhance holistic support for consumers and employees with disability.

What we heard	What we will do	Who?	We will be successful when
Consumers and employees want to be connected to peers and supports for people with a lived experience of disability.	3.1 Enable consumers to communicate their support needs and preferences, and ensure this information is shared consistently across services to strengthen connected care.	Consumers	Consumers and employees with disability feel safe to identify and connect with lived-experience informed services and groups.
	3.2 Provide opportunities for employees and managers to connect with peer support from lived experience employee groups.	Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want timely access to disability support services and resources .	3.3 Connect consumers and caregivers with timely disability services, by inter-agency information sharing and strengthening inter-agency systems and processes.	Consumers	Consumers and employees with disability have health and employment needs supported holistically, through timely, coordinated inter-agency service provision.
	3.4 Connect employees and managers with timely disability workplace services, by inter-agency resource sharing and opportunities for professional networking.	Employees	
Consumers and employees with disability want to be part of a diverse culture that is inclusive and safe .	3.5 Ensure that consumer disability-related support needs are proactively identified and addressed, in line with principles of least-restrictive practice.	Consumers	Consumers and employees are actively engaged, acknowledged, and encouraged to contribute to a culture that is inclusive and safe.
	3.6 Include consumers, caregivers and employees in disability awareness and celebration campaigns, events, and recognition programs.	Consumers Employees	



Ruby's response to 'diversity and drive' was to illustrate with different flowers.
"These flowers are beautiful and different like people".

Priority 4: **DRIVE** inclusion and co-design practices

Our aim: DRIVE an inclusive culture by embedding lived experience and recognising the diverse strengths and needs of consumers and employees with disability - including those with intersectional experiences.

What we heard	What we will do	Who?	We will be successful when
Consumers and employees want inclusion and support for people with diverse needs included in daily practices.	4.1 Assist employees and managers to engage in inclusive recruitment and onboarding, higher duties and promotion through a universal approach that includes clear guidance, consistent processes, and accessible resources.	Employees	Consumers and employees with disability feel included and empowered to access, adjust and improve healthcare and workplace activities and experiences.
	4.2 Assist employees to reflect on disability-inclusive healthcare delivery and workplace practices through prompt questions at all levels of the CHQ Leadership Excellence Framework matrix.	Employees	
Consumers and employees want lived experience and knowledge of disability integrated into service improvement.	4.3 Empower consumers with disability to participate in service improvement activities using accessible and inclusive procedures.	Consumers	Consumers with disability have access to, participate and collaborate in co-designed service improvement projects and activities.
	4.4 Empower consumers with disability to collaborate in co-designing, implementing and evaluating service improvement activities.	Consumers	
Consumers and employees want lived experience and knowledge of disability integrated into research.	4.5 Provide opportunities for consumers with disability to participate in research and knowledge translation activities through accessible and inclusive procedures.	Consumers	Consumers and employees are actively engaged, acknowledged, and encouraged to contribute to a culture that is inclusive and safe.
	4.6 Provide opportunities for consumers with disability to collaborate in co-designing, implementing and evaluating research and knowledge translation activities.	Consumers	





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