

Luther Cora, a proud Yugambeh man and prominent Gold Coast performer with the Yugambeh Aboriginal Dancers

Image credit: [gettyimages](#)
Photographer: Chameleonseye

Acknowledgement – Queenslanders with Disability Network

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet. We pay our respects to the Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the community.

QDN also acknowledges people with disability who have come before us and died in institutional settings, as well as those who are still trapped in institutions or silenced by institutional practices. We take on the responsibilities of being clear about the rights of ALL people with disability and, where necessary, speak in an informed and considered manner, for those who cannot speak for themselves.

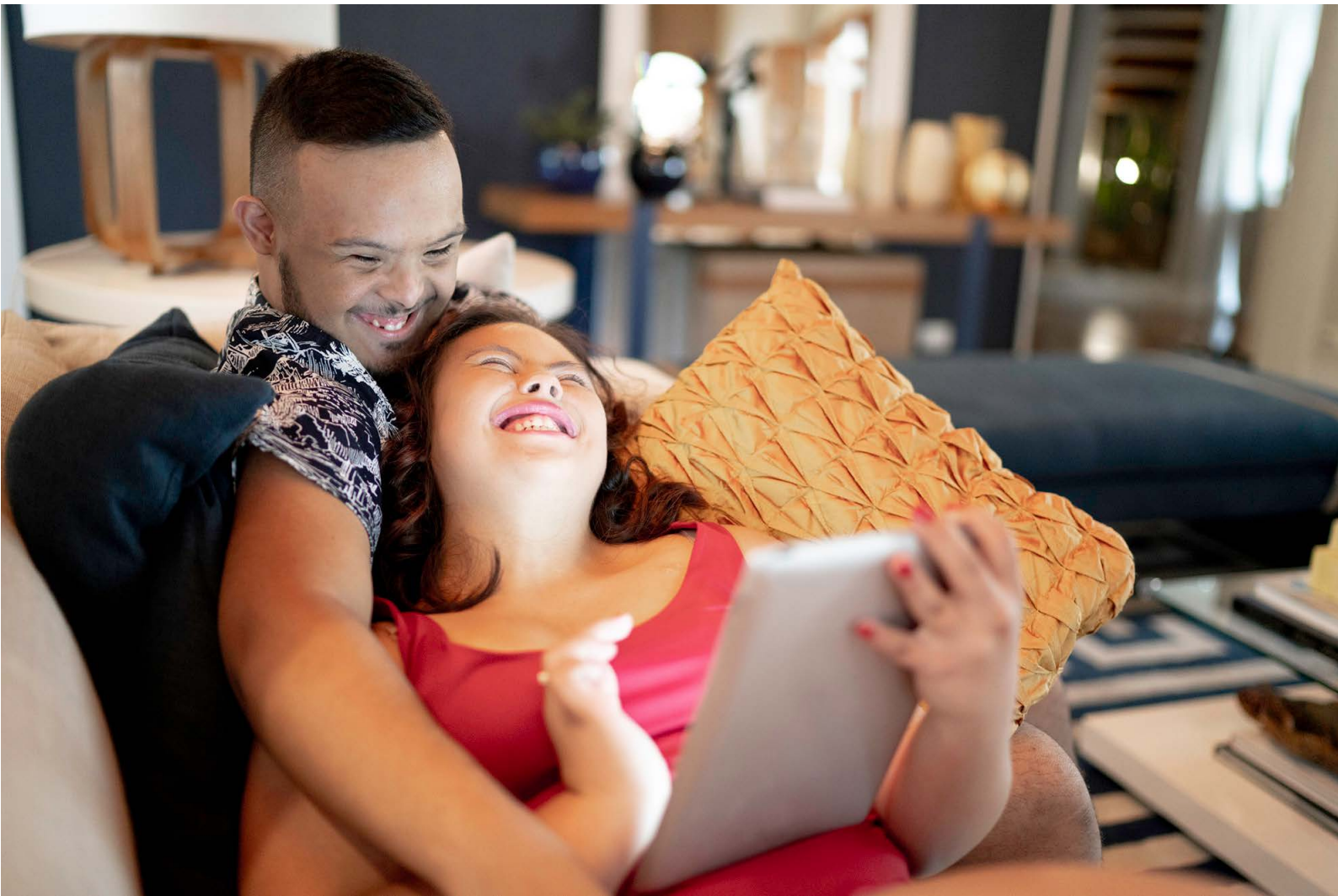


Image credit: **gettyimages**
Photographer: FG Trade

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Foreword

A message from Dr. Dinesh Palipana OAM

2021 Queensland Australian of the Year,
Griffith University researcher, QDN member.

They say that good work is good health. Work that is individually meaningful for each of us, therefore, is important. However, the employment challenge for people with disability is significant. While we have antidiscrimination laws and treaties that speak to the right of people with disability to work, employing people with disability just makes good business sense. Organisations that are diverse employers are more profitable, innovative, and happy.

Although good work contributes to good health, people with disability still experience a health gap. Access to healthcare routinely is difficult. And, this community experiences a high rate of complications and mortality during emergencies like pandemics.

Health and employment are fundamental rights, but so is housing. Appropriate housing, quite literally, provides a homebase to build these things out of. Yet again, housing access is not easy for a person with a disability.

In an economic powerhouse like Australia, where we invest so much in the well-being of our citizens, there is a little reason not to improve these basics for people with disability. Apart from them being our obligations under various treaties, they make economic sense.



Dr. Dinesh Palipana OAM

It is imperative that we pursue a good human society where all people can be healthy, employed and living comfortably in the community. This would be an asset to our state, but it is only possible if we learn as much as we can about what to change and how to make things better. I commend to you The Voice of Queenslanders with Disability and encourage you to participate as much as you can, so we can become a louder voice in the future.



Image credit: **gettyimages**
Photographer: FatCamera

Introduction

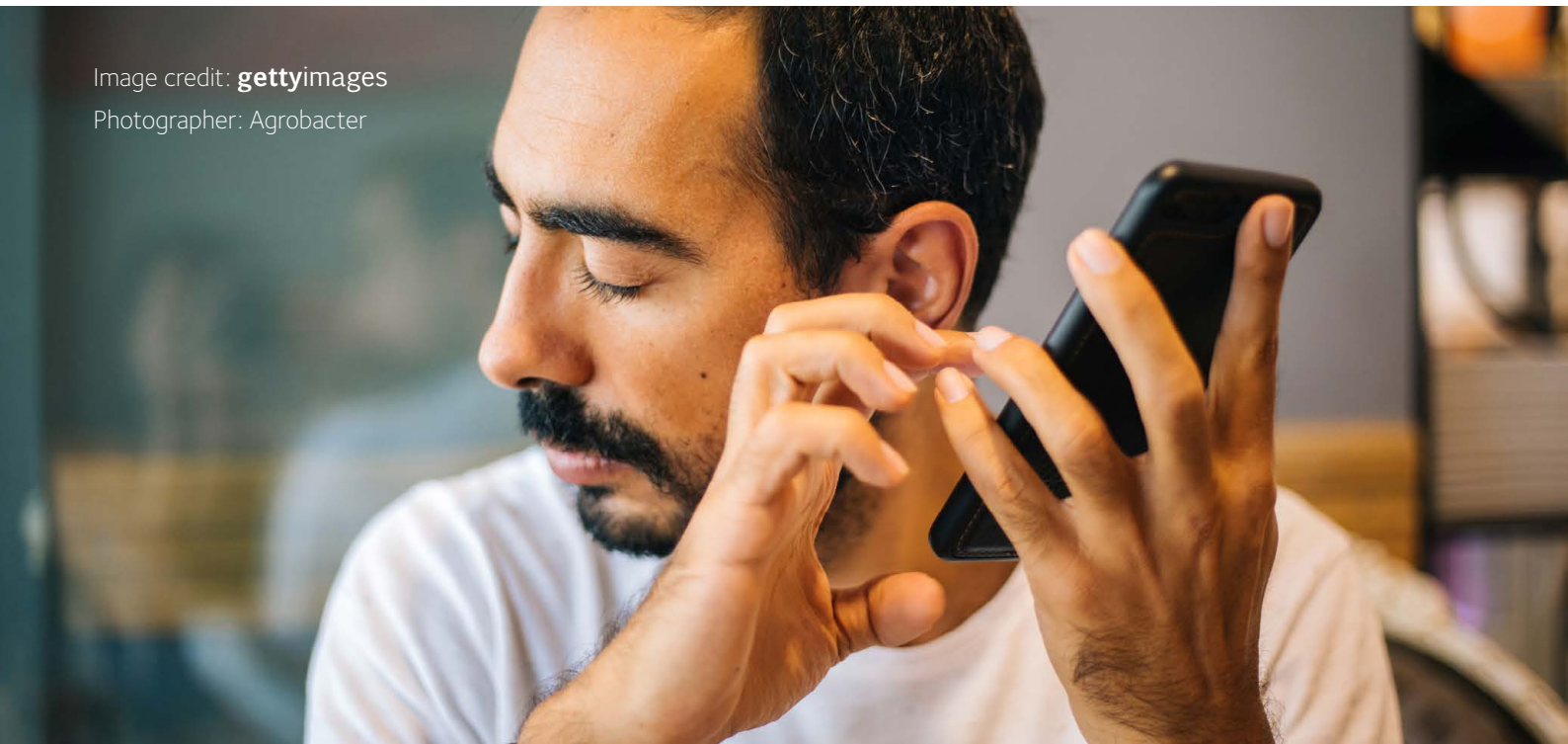
International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a United Nations observance day to increase awareness, accessibility, inclusion, and remove barriers that limit the participation of people with disability in the global society. The theme for IDPwD 2022 is “Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world” (<https://www.idpwd.com.au/about/about-idpwd/>). New and improved solutions can work faster to break down barriers, like the increased use of technology and telehealth to support health care delivery during COVID-19.

It is important for all of us to live, work, learn and play in a Queensland that is accessible, welcoming and inclusive for people with disability and their family/carers. This includes all Queenslanders with a disability, not just those who receive services funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

There is a lot of information about the barriers in Australian society, as well as in Queensland. However, there are few opportunities to access Queensland-specific disability information across a variety of areas and in a format that is accessible to everyone.

Image credit: **gettyimages**

Photographer: Agrobacter



Griffith University, Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN), and the Queensland Government are using innovative techniques to uncover how inclusive, accessible, and welcoming it is for people with disability living in Queensland and how this situation changes over time.

The new 'Voice of Queenslanders with Disability' annual report will provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences, successes and challenges across the seven areas of Queensland's Disability Plan:

- Working and earning money
- Inclusive homes and communities
- Rights, fairness and safety
- Getting support
- Learning and skills
- Health and wellbeing
- Community attitudes.

The aim of the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability report is to help government, business, service funders and providers, people with disability and the community understand what is happening in each area, celebrate achievements and address any challenges.

The statistics and in-depth insights contained in this document highlight some of what is already known about (1) working and earning money, (2) inclusive homes and communities, and (3) health and wellbeing, three extremely important areas that contribute to quality of life for people with disability. We encourage you to use this information—in either infographics or text—to consider the way in which you, your organisation and community become more inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to Queenslanders with disability.

In January 2023, we will be launching a number of different ways for you to share your stories and have your say, including online questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. If you are interested, you can get more information and register at The Dignity Project (<https://www.hopkinscentre.edu.au/vqd>).

Who do we want to hear from?

We are particularly interested in hearing from:

- People with disability
- Families and carers of people with disability
- Disability service providers
- Peak and advocacy organisations relating to disability.

The Voice of Queenslanders with Disability

Employment and financial security (working and earning money)

Australia's Disability Strategy aims to make Australia a place where people with disability can fulfil their potential as equals (be who they are, live the lives they want to live, and be treated the same as others).¹ Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-2027: Together, a better Queensland will help to achieve this across the state, in a way that recognises Queensland's unique peoples, regions and diversity.²

Queensland's Disability Plan has seven outcome areas:



Working & earning money



Inclusive homes & communities



Rights, fairness & safety



Getting support



Learning & skills



Health & wellbeing



Community attitudes

The **Voice of Queenslanders with Disability** will find out how these areas are changing over time. You can start having your say in early 2023 and we will produce an annual report that summarises what is happening for Queenslanders with disability.

Where do we want to be in ten years?

Good jobs, career opportunities and income can help people with disability live good lives.¹ Queenslanders with disability should have:



Preparation for employment and access to work-related training, skills and experiences.



Opportunities to get good jobs (and promotions) and start their own businesses.



Enough money to live well, plan for their future, and have choice and control of their own lives.¹



Share your opinion in the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey from 2023.



What do we know about jobs and money for Queenslanders with disability now?



Queenslanders with disability are less likely to be working or looking for work than those without disability (54% compared to 85%), less likely to be employed (49% compared to 80%), and less likely to have full-time jobs (31% compared to 55%).³



Those that are looking for work often struggle to find it. Unemployed Australians with disability find it harder to get work than those without disability (93% compared to 83%).⁴



However, people with disability need to access more money to achieve the same standard of living. Australian households with someone who has a profound or severe disability need \$173/week more than they earn, and those with someone with mild or moderate disability need an extra \$87/week.⁵



Two in five Australians living in poverty (38%) have disability.⁶



Intersectionality matters

Australia's First Peoples are more likely to have a disability and live in poverty than other Australians.⁷ More than two in five First Peoples households with a family member receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP) could not afford basic living expenses.⁵



What do Queenslanders with disability say about work?

Why are people with disability less likely to be in the workforce? Workplaces don't always value their skills, talents, qualifications and abilities.⁸



"People make assumptions about my disability and fail to recognise my abilities. This occurs when people apply stereotypes to you."

"When on the pension and looking for employment, I was told to aim for factory or data entry work (despite holding two Masters' degrees)."



"For a high-achieving career-driven accomplished intelligent individual, I want the opportunity not to 'watch-paint dry!'."



Why are people with a disability not getting jobs when they want one? Workplace barriers can include discrimination, a lack of reasonable adjustments and unsupportive team environments.

"I find that you need to jump through a lot of hoops and it's very time consuming to access supports... this excludes a lot of applicants and may be a blocker to accessing and retaining gainful employment."



"Most of my experiences surround others not understanding my disability or being ignorant to my needs or workplace adjustments required."



"I was bullied by my manager who excluded me from meetings. When I was in meetings, I had no agenda, minutes, or written record that I could read. When I asked for a quick catch up to go over important points in meetings, she declined."

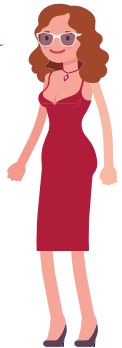


What helps people with disabilities get and keep jobs? Disability-friendly workplaces value equality and develop creative solutions to challenges.

"My colleagues have supported me and treated me as an equal and valued member of the team. It has been a wonderful experience, and has restored my faith in my own ability, as well as that of society."

"In my new role I have been introduced to many new technologies... that will help in the long term."

"Taking the time to look for solutions."



Where to next?

Queenslanders with disability and their family/carers (as well as disability organisations and service providers) will be able to share their experiences on the vision and seven areas of Australia's Disability Strategy and Queensland's State Disability Plan in early 2023. More information and an opportunity to register your interest is available on the Hopkins Centre Website (scan the QR Code).



1. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Social Services. (2021). Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. <https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads>
2. Queensland Government. (2022). Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-27. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/campaign/queenslands-disability-plan/about-plan/queenslands-disability-plan-2022-27>
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4. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2022). People with disability in Australia 2022. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-2022-in-brief/contents/about>

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The Voice of Queenslanders with Disability

Inclusive homes and communities

Australia's Disability Strategy aims to make Australia a place where people with disability can fulfil their potential as equals (be who they are, live the lives they want to live, and be treated the same as others).¹ Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a better Queensland will help to achieve this across the state, in a way that recognises Queensland's unique peoples, regions and diversity.²

Queensland's Disability Plan has seven outcome areas:



Working & earning money



Inclusive homes & communities



Rights, fairness & safety



Getting support



Learning & skills



Health & wellbeing



Community attitudes

The **Voice of Queenslanders with Disability** will find out how these areas are changing over time. You can start having your say in early 2023 and we will produce an annual report that summarises what is happening for Queenslanders with disability.¹

Where do we want to be in ten years?

Queensland homes and communities have to meet the needs of people with disability. Our homes need to be available, affordable and accessible, so Queenslanders with disability can find somewhere to live, pay their rents/mortgage, and go inside and move around safely. People should have choice and control over where they live, who they live with, and who comes into their homes. They should have a home for as long as they need it.¹

Queenslanders with disability can:

- ✓ access all spaces and places (e.g., buildings & parks)
- ✓ use transport services (e.g., buses & trains)
- ✓ spend time with their family and friends
- ✓ do fun things such as sport and recreation
- ✓ take part in religious and cultural events.¹

Accessible communication and information sharing is also important.¹

Share your opinion in the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey from 2023.



What do we know about homes for Queenslanders with disability now?



Queenslanders with disability are more likely to live alone (19%) or in supported accommodation (4%) than those without disability (7%, 0%).³



Thirteen per cent (13%) of Queenslanders with disability require home modifications. These modifications can include structural changes, changes to toilets, bathrooms and laundries, and the installation of grab rails and ramps.³



All Queenslanders with profound core activity limitations (100%) need help with at least one activity. For those aged 64 and under, this mostly relates to mobility, cognitive or emotional tasks, self-care and health care. For those aged 65 and above, this relates to mobility, health care, transport and household chores.³



What do Queenslanders with disability say about homes?

There is not much information on housing for Queenslanders with disability.⁴ Here is what we do know.

People with disability often struggle to find homes that meet their needs.



"Everybody, no matter who they are, wants a place of their own to live. That means different things to different people."⁴

"When I left hospital, I had no money. I had nowhere to live. I had no one to support me."⁵

"A lot more people are using the words 'choice and control' and I feel those are just words and they're not being honoured and they're conditioning people into thinking that we have choice and control in scenarios when actually we really don't."⁵



"When you live in a group home you don't get any choice about who you live with, and the service moves people around to different houses, and sometimes you live with people you don't know."⁴

People with disability need to be able to access all the areas in their homes. New Universal Design laws will make sure that new homes are designed to be more accessible. Older homes may need more intensive accessibility modifications.

"We live, learn and earn in our community. We need to be able to live in our community. We need accessible housing. It's about the whole community. It's about living with people."⁶

"I think the biggest barrier to inclusion, is environmental factors as well—not being able to get into places. This means you're segregated."⁵

"The adoption of Universal Design standards works for everyone at every life stage. The inclusion of simple and low-cost features at the time of construction is an important part of making homes accessible for everyone. This hasn't happened voluntarily, so we need to push for changes to the Building Code."⁶



Home modifications can help with independence and dignity.



"I've had a lot of people say to me, instead of getting a bathroom modified, which would mean I could shower myself, just get a support worker to come and shower you. Well, where's my dignity in that?"⁵

"Where I live is a flood zone. Being in a wheelchair—makes that really inconvenient. It's old, like the area is an old town, so nothing is new, and nothing has Universal Design or ramps or anything that is now in legislation."⁵

Where to next?

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2. Queensland Government. (2022). Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/campaign/queenslands-disability-plan/about-plan/queenslands-disability-plan-2022-27>
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020). Disability, ageing and carers, Australia. Data download (Queensland). <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia-2022-in-brief/contents/about>

4. Queenslanders with Disability Network. (2021). Submission to the National Disability Insurance Agency Home and Living Consultation. An Ordinary Life at Home. https://qdn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/QDN-Submission_Home-and-Living_2021_Final.pdf
5. Griffith Inclusive Futures, Dignity Project (2020–22). Unpublished data from Dignity Project research projects. <http://www.hopkinscentre.edu.au/the-dignity-project>
6. Queenslanders with Disability Network. (2020). Submission-Consultation RIS: proposal to include minimum accessibility standards for housing in the National Construction Code. <https://bit.ly/3AWg6mM>

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The Voice of Queenslanders with Disability

Health and wellbeing

Australia's Disability Strategy aims to make Australia a place where people with disability can fulfil their potential as equals (be who they are, live the lives they want to live, and be treated the same as others).¹ Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a better Queensland will help to achieve this across the state, in a way that recognises Queensland's unique peoples, regions and diversity.²

Queensland's Disability Plan has seven outcome areas:



Working & earning money



Inclusive homes & communities



Rights, fairness & safety



Getting support



Learning & skills



Health & wellbeing



Community attitudes

The **Voice of Queenslanders with Disability** will find out how these areas are changing over time. You can start having your say in early 2023 and we will produce an annual report that summarises what is happening for Queenslanders with disability.¹

Where do we want to be in ten years?

Good health and wellbeing can help people with disability enjoy their lives.¹ Queenslanders with disability should:



Be able to access health services that meet their needs.



Get appropriate and timely mental health care and support.



Feel safe in the community through appropriate emergency plans.¹



Share your opinion in the Voice of Queenslanders with Disability Survey from 2023.



What do we know about health and wellbeing for Queenslanders with disability now?



People with disability are more likely to rate their health as fair or poor (42%) than people without disability (7%), and less likely to rate their health as excellent or very good (24% compared to 65%).³



They are also more likely to experience a high or very high level of psychological distress (42% of people with disability compared to 7% for people without disability).³



Some people with disability (8%) delay or avoid seeing a GP due to cost.³

Intersectionality matters



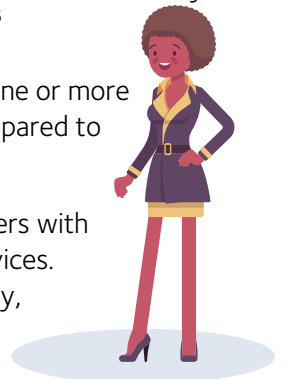
First Nations Queenslanders are more likely to have disability (35.6%) than other Queenslanders (18%).⁵



63% of First Nations Queenslanders have one or more current long-term health condition(s), compared to 41.8% of other Queenslanders.⁵



Around 140,000 First Nations Queenslanders with disability have trouble accessing health services. The biggest barriers are cost, being too busy, dislikes, and deciding not to seek care.³



What do Queenslanders with disability say about health and wellbeing?

Health and wellbeing can be difficult when health care environments, staff, and systems are not safe, dignified and welcoming for people with diverse needs.⁶

"Health is a full-time job. It's really hard to be in the things that you really wanted to ... it takes a lot of work not to be some of the symptoms of your condition."

"The kind of world that we live in, is one where documentation surrounding injury has more weight than the person themselves."

"An allied health person, when discussing my condition with another allied health worker, did not include me in the conversation."



How did COVID-19 impact health and wellbeing?

"I have used telehealth appointments during COVID-19 for medical appointments. This has worked well, and is important to me, as I have secondary health conditions related to my disability which puts me more at risk."

"The increased use of technology to connect, such as telehealth, has enabled me to stay connected and live better."

"Life saving care and regular care was not always easily available or accessible for disabled people (during the pandemic)."



What helps people with disability feel healthier and more well?

"I use an app which lists all my medication. It's a not-for-profit app and I found that before I did that, I couldn't cope."

"I have a 2-sided full page that I carry in my phone case with all my health conditions, allergies, medications and specialists. My doctor gets a copy of that."

"All of my doctors now will turn off the artificial light above my head and change the lighting. They do that before I even come in the room now. If it's a new doctor, they've usually been briefed by who has referred me."

"I feel healthy and well when I am given the opportunity to express myself like other people."

Where to next?

Queenslanders with disability and their family/carers (as well as disability organisations and service providers) will be able to share their experiences on the vision and seven areas of Australia's Disability Strategy and Queensland's State Disability Plan in early 2023. More information and an opportunity to register your interest is available on the Hopkins Centre Website (scan the QR Code).



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2. Queensland Government. (2022). Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-27. <https://www.dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au/campaign/queenslands-disability-plan/about-plan/queenslands-disability-plan-2022-27>
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6. Griffith Inclusive Futures, Dignity Project (2020-22). Unpublished data from Dignity Project research projects. <http://www.hopkinscentre.edu.au/the-dignity-project>

Voice of Queenslanders with Disability

It is important for all of us to live, work, learn and play in a Queensland that is accessible, welcoming, and inclusive for people with disability and their family/carers. Share your stories in a state first report on what life is like for Queenslanders with disability in co-designed research with Queenslanders with Disability Network and Griffith University.

Queenslanders with disability, family members of people with disability, carers and service providers

Are you a Queenslander with disability or a family member/carer of a Queenslander with disability?
Is improving the lives of Queenslanders with disability important to you?
How are Queenslanders with disability included in:



Working & earning money



Inclusive homes & communities



Rights, fairness & safety



Getting support



Learning & skills



Health & wellbeing



Community attitudes

Scan the QR Code to register your interest in sharing your stories via the **Voice of Queenslanders with Disability** and **The Dignity Project**.



More Information

Please call to speak to a researcher about questions, concerns or to register your interest.

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Your Information Stays Private

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