



## **First Peoples Disability Network input into the Social Services Portfolio Submission**

FPDN is committed to working in partnership with all governments to embed the Priority Reforms and indeed all aspects of both the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Australia's Disability Strategy, including ensuring there is a cross cutting focus for First Nations People with disability.

We are pleased to have developed some opportunities for genuine two way conversations and means of collaborating with the Commonwealth. These have included information sharing and collaborative approaches on the Disability Royal Commission, strengthening the Community Controlled Sector through the development of the Disability Sector Strengthening Plan and FPDN's National Disability Footprint, FPDN as a Disability Representative Organisation and our recent work in the Individual Advocacy space. We very much look forward to continuing these positive ways of working together which ultimately will lead to improved outcomes for mob with disability.

It does need to be noted that these sound relationships are often dependent on the goodwill of individuals with departments, rather than structures that enable collaboration and shared decision making. With some departments we can often encounter the need to re-educate on FPDN and its work, our accountability to privileging the voices of First Nations People with disability, and battling against a 'governments are the experts' assumption, which goes against the very principles of shared decision making in the Agreement.

We are concerned that there has not been investment by the Commonwealth in regards to a Policy Partnership for disability, despite disability being identified as a targeted sector in Priority Reform 2, and the recognition that shared decision making is critical to ensuring the meaningful implementation of all the priority reforms.

The elements of shared decision making articulated in Priority Reform 1 do not appear to have been adopted in relation to disability.



While a disability Policy Partnership is critical, there also needs to be further work undertaken in the current and further policy partnership functions; mechanisms etc to enable genuine shared decision making, rather than a forum for discussion with little accountability from governments.

Establishment of the First Nations Advisory Council has been a very positive step towards shared decision making, however this initiative is specific to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and does not allow for broader systemic work or a focus on non-NDIS disability issues. FDPN is committed to ensuring that accountability of culturally inclusive, and Disability rights informed policies, programs and services exist throughout government and funded services. This needs a stand alone governance structure. We require both DSS and NIAA to jointly own this as until Closing the Gap and Australia's Disability Strategy both address this, FDPN are lumbered with the cross cutting coordination of government strategies, which is not our role.

This continues to be an issue where there is not the clarity between the two departments; additionally, it plays out in broader reporting across the Commonwealth where agencies or departments are not required to report on a template that includes the intersection of this or other cross cutting outcomes

Without stronger accountability for its implementation across all government organisations, the outcomes for mob with disability will be diminished, and we risk yet another failed scheme.