

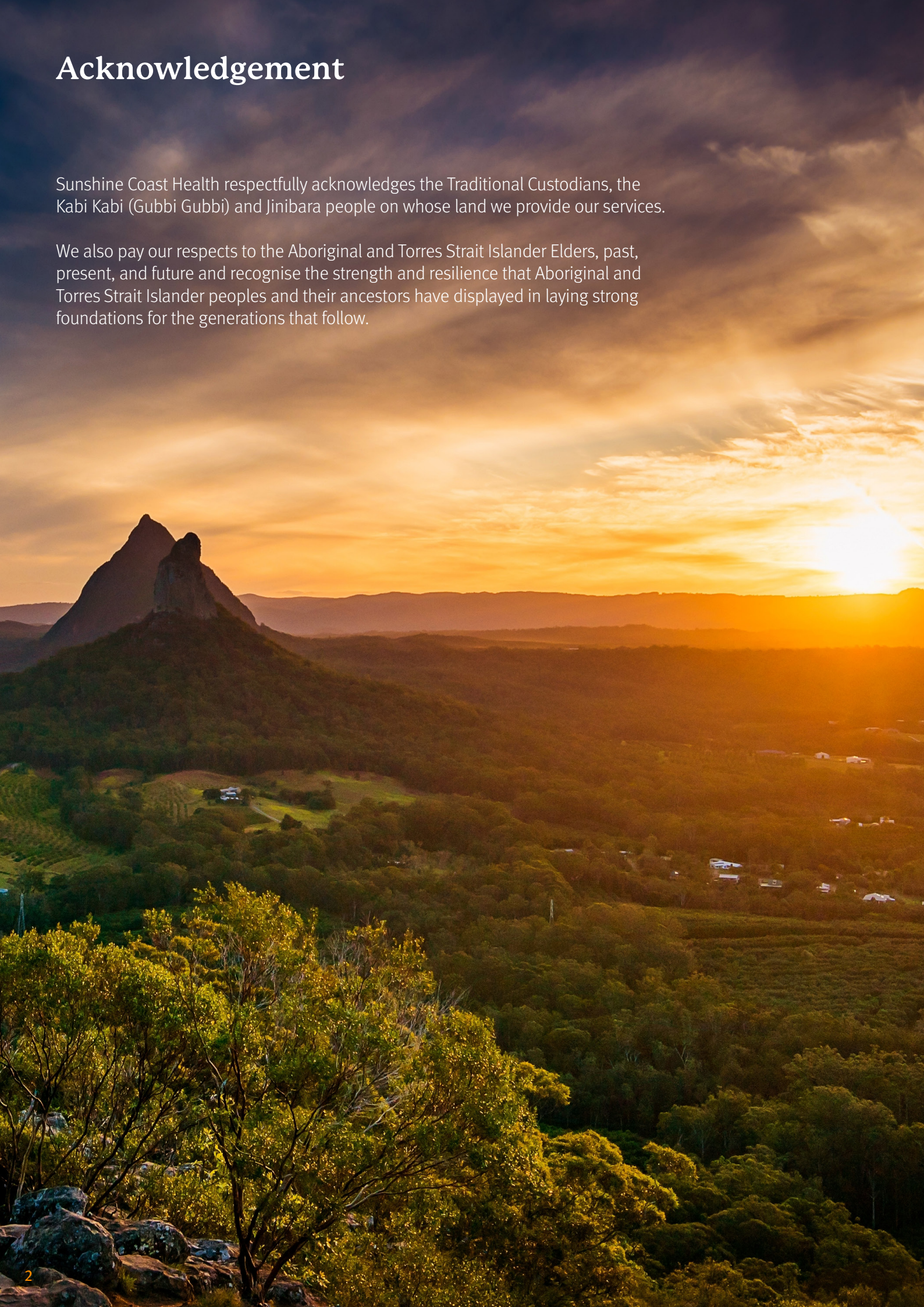
# Disability Service Plan 2025-2030



# Acknowledgement

Sunshine Coast Health respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians, the Kabi Kabi (Gubbi Gubbi) and Jinibara people on whose land we provide our services.

We also pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present, and future and recognise the strength and resilience that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ancestors have displayed in laying strong foundations for the generations that follow.



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# Message from the Executive Director of Allied Health and sponsor, Dr Gemma Turato

The Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan 2025-2030 outlines our local health service commitment to providing safe, equitable, accessible healthcare to all individuals.

To serve our disability community effectively, our health service aspires to instill disability awareness and confidence in our service planning and delivery. We aim to actively reduce barriers and promote health equity by fostering our culture of continuous improvement and strengthening collaborative partnerships with our communities, to deliver accessible, high-quality healthcare for all.

As a health service, we acknowledge that achieving improved health outcomes for people with disabilities is fundamentally connected to having effective relationships with our consumers, as well as active engagement and feedback from our local population. Our Disability Service Plan was subsequently developed through a co-design method which embraces partnership and collaboration between healthcare staff, individuals with disability, and their support networks. Partnership with our consumers is integral to upholding core values of dignity, respect, and person-centred care.

Many people contributed to the development of the Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan including:

- Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan Consumer Working group.
- Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan Steering Committee.
- Sunshine Coast Health staff.

*We would like to sincerely thank you all for graciously providing your time, collaboration, insights and valuable feedback. Your contributions to the Sunshine Coast Health DSP will ensure cultural, systems, and knowledge developments are embedded into the plan. These developments reflect our commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and accessible health service.*



# A Personal Reflection of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP Working Group



Being part of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP working group has been an extraordinary privilege. As the group prepares to conclude its work, I want to recognise the engagement, motivation, and thoughtfulness that have characterised our discussions and efforts. The dedication of the working party in listening to and respecting every voice is truly remarkable; it's a genuine practice of valuing the lived experiences and insights of people with disabilities in our region.

Through the working party, we have laid a strong foundation for developing a new and effective disability plan tailored to the needs of our local community; one that is responsive, grounded in human rights, and committed to driving cultural change. Our collective efforts aim to create a healthcare system where services and environments address the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities, including those of my children. The emphasis on co-design is a core element of delivering better outcomes and fostering an inclusive healthcare landscape for all Sunshine Coast residents.

I sincerely hope that the progress we've made leads to continued advancements in healthcare for people with disabilities in our community. It would be an honour to remain involved in the ongoing development and implementation of the DSP, witnessing a future where our healthcare services meet the needs of all individuals within our community.

As we move forward, it is essential to maintain this spirit of co-design and collaboration. My vision for change includes specialised care that acknowledges the complexities of autism and other disabilities, cultivating compassion in healthcare, enhancing emergency support protocols to be more inclusive, integrating holistic approaches that consider co-occurring conditions, and fostering better coordination across services.

Together, with the insights gained from the Sunshine Coast Health DSP Working Group, we can create a healthcare system that empowers individuals with disabilities in our Sunshine Coast community to thrive, navigating the healthcare journey with dignity and respect.

**Lisa Russell**

Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan Working Group Member

Sunshine Coast Health DSP aligns with Sunshine Coast Health's vision, purpose, and values of:

*“Health and wellbeing through person-centred care”*

*“High-quality, cost-effective, innovative healthcare in collaboration with our communities and partners”*



### **Integrity**

We are respectful, trustworthy, equitable and honest in everything we do.



### **Compassion**

We respect others, act with kindness, encourage and take time to listen to others.



### **Accountability**

We take responsibility for our performance and behaviours and celebrate our achievements.



### **Innovation**

We embrace change and strive to know more, learn more and do better.

### **Sunshine Coast Health DSP Purpose**

To provide safe, equitable, accessible healthcare, and improved health outcomes for people with disability and reside on the Sunshine Coast.

### **Inclusion Commitment**

Sunshine Coast Health is committed to improving healthcare for Queenslanders with disability and establishing health equity in being able to access health services and achieve quality health outcomes.

### **Human Rights Commitment**

Sunshine Coast Health is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting the human rights of people with disability and their interaction with the health system.

### **Disability**

Disability is wide-ranging and comes in many forms. We acknowledge the language around disability is evolving and there is active debate in the community about the different preferences to describe disability<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government. (2022). Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27: Together, a better Queensland. Page 5. Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–27 Together a better Queensland (dcssds.qld.gov.au)

The following definition has been proposed and endorsed by the Sunshine Coast Health DSP Working Group for Sunshine Coast Health to utilise and draws on references from many sources:

*“Disability is very diverse. It can encompass intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory, physical, or psychosocial impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others<sup>2</sup>. It can be visible or hidden and be recurring. People with disability are also diverse, with unique and individual needs and experiences<sup>3</sup>. Many people’s experiences with disability are shaped by more than their disability, by factors including their age, sex, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, intersex status, and where they live<sup>4</sup>.*

<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission. (2024) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Human rights at your fingertips. Article One. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Human rights at your fingertips - Human rights at your fingertips | Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>3</sup> NSW Public Service Commission. (2024). What is Disability. What is disability | NSW Public Service Commission

<sup>4</sup> Queensland Government. (2022). Queensland’s Disability Plan 2022–27: Together, a better Queensland. Page 5. Queensland’s Disability Plan 2022-27 Together a better Queensland (dcssds.qld.gov.au)

## Carmel's story

I have worked in the Sunshine Coast Health for the last twenty years in many roles, primarily in Emergency Departments. In 2021, I was working as an Emergency Nurse Practitioner when I suffered a significant medical event. I was home at the time and came into SCUH as an emergency patient, where I spent the next six months in the ICU, stroke ward, and rehabilitation ward. After 2 ½ years of intensive rehabilitation, I returned to work with a permanent physical disability. Returning to work, if a person chooses to do so, is a significant rehabilitation outcome. I returned to work because I felt I could continue contributing to healthcare.

*I have always loved work, patients, and my colleagues. Returning to work is associated with value and self-esteem, and I wanted to be a role model for my three daughters.*

As a disabled person, you understand your abilities and strive to work to your maximal ability. You are also acutely aware of your limitations. The best outcome is that the limitations are approached under a reasonable adjustment policy, maximising the chance of success in the workplace. I had to learn the art of self-advocacy, which often presents as an uncomfortable conversation. Most advocacy conversations aim to raise awareness of the immediate situation and hopefully pave a better way for those with disabilities in the future. I am now working with the Sunshine Coast Health Virtual Acute Care Service (VACS) in an inclusive and dynamic team, fully maximising my abilities.

After my experience, I wondered and hoped I had shown compassion and gentleness to previous colleagues undergoing the same process. I also reflected on my past interactions as a healthcare worker with patients with disabilities and their carers. I am part of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP Steering Committee. I welcomed the opportunity to provide input into the DSP through a lived experience lens. I hope that one of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP's outcomes will be greater awareness and consideration of staff entering the workplace or returning to work with a disability. I am driven to be part of the DSP team and contribute to creating an inclusive workplace whilst being mindful of the challenges faced by those with disabilities. I would also love to see a disability-diverse workplace with employment opportunities matched to abilities.

**Carmel Larkin**



# Introduction

Health equity is fundamental in improving health outcomes for people with disability. Every person has the right to access health services without discrimination (Qld Human Rights Act, 2019). Accessing healthcare may be challenging for people with disability because they may face attitudinal, physical, communication and financial barriers from other people in society<sup>5</sup>. The following quote highlights the importance of health equity;

*“Better outcomes are achieved for people with disability when health providers understand their individual situation and circumstance, communicate well, do not allow disability to overshadow\* health issues, and provide services, premises and facilities that are accessible and appropriate.”<sup>6</sup>*

\*(obscure, diminish)

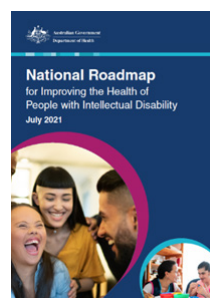
Sunshine Coast Health acknowledges that people with disability experience many challenges when attempting to access appropriate health care. To reduce barriers and improve health equity, the Sunshine Coast Health DSP 2025-2030 has been developed to outline our vision and commitment to improving healthcare for people with disability accessing our health services.

This commitment is in accordance with:

- Anti-discrimination Act 1997 (QLD)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Human Rights Act 2019 (QLD)
- Disability Services Act 2006 (QLD)

It also reflects national and state policies and strategies such as:

- Australia’s Disability Strategy (2021-2031)
- Queensland’s Disability Plan 2022-2027: Together, a better Queensland (QLD)
- Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2022-2024 (QLD)
- The National Roadmap for Improving the Health of People with Intellectual Disability.
- The Disability Royal Commission – Final Report 2024
- The Independent Review into the NDIS (Bonyhady and Paul, Commonwealth of Australia 2023)



5 Queensland Government. (2024). “See me. Hear me. Respect me”. Campaign resources. <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/groups/people-with-disability/see-me-hear-me-respect-me-campaign>

6 Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services). (2021). Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031. Page 27. 1781-australias-disability.docx (live.com)

# Disability and Health Context

## Nationally

As per the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019, nationally<sup>7</sup>:

- 1 in 9 people under the age of 65 experience disability
- 1 in 2 people over the age of 65 years' experience disability
- 1 in 3 people with disability have severe or profound disability
- 36% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a disability and are twice as likely as other Australians to have severe or profound disability<sup>8</sup>.

People with disability report poorer general health and higher levels of psychological distress than people without disability<sup>9</sup>. In 2020-21, 31% of adults (aged 18 and over) with disability said their health was excellent or very good, compared with 68% of those without disability<sup>9</sup>.

Types of disability include – psychosocial, sensory, intellectual/cognitive, neurological, physical, and chronic health conditions. People with disability may experience combinations and overlaps of different 'types' of disability. Additionally, long-term health conditions may cause disability and having a disability may cause further health problems<sup>8</sup>.



In 2020-21, 31% of adults (aged 18 or over) with disability said their health was excellent or very good, compared to 68% of those without disability.



In 2020-21, 33% of adults with disability experienced high or very high psychological distress, compared with 12% of those without disability.

Source: People with disability in Australia 2024 - Summary Fact sheet 2: Health of people with disability? (aihw.gov.au)

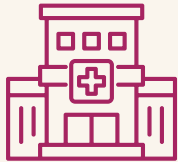
7 Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/disability/disability-ageing-and-carers-australia-summary-findings/latest-release>

8 Queensland Health. (2023). Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2022-2024. Disability-Service-Plan-report.pdf (health.qld.gov.au)

9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). 2024. Health of people with Disability. Health of people with disability - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)



People with disability access mainstream health services at a higher rate than people without a disability. In 2018, 26% of people with disability visited a hospital emergency department compared with 10% of people without disability.<sup>10</sup>



According to an Australian study in 2021 the rates of hospitalisation for people with intellectual disability ranged between three to 54 times higher than other people, and many of these were preventable admissions.<sup>11</sup>

## Queensland

Around 1 in 5 Queenslanders live with disability.<sup>12</sup>

An estimated 306,400 Queenslanders of all ages have a profound or severe disability. People with a profound or severe disability require assistance in everyday activities, including core activities such as self-care, mobility, and communication<sup>11</sup>.

10 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2022). Chronic conditions and disability. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/dis/73-1/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents1/health/chronic-conditions-and-disability>

11 Queensland Government. (2022). Disability Statistics. <https://www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/disability-statistics>

12 Queensland Health. (2023). Department of Health Disability Service Plan 2022-2024. Page 9. Disability-Service-Plan-report.pdf (health.qld.gov.au)

# Sunshine Coast Health Service District

## Our place in the system

Sunshine Coast Health is one of 16 Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) within Queensland Health, funded by State and Federal Governments to operate health facilities and provide healthcare services.

## About Sunshine Coast Health District

Sunshine Coast Health covers a large geographical area of 10,061 square kilometers and delivers services through the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH), Nambour General Hospital, Gympie Hospital, Caloundra Health Service, and Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital. In addition, Sunshine Coast Health operates a residential aged care facility in Nambour and provides both community health and community mental health services through a range of stand-alone facilities located across the Sunshine Coast region.



# Our population

457,270 people in 2021

# 594,268

people by 2036

# 2%

growth per year  
(compared to QLD 1.6%)

Median population age

# 44.7yrs

(compared to QLD 38.4 yrs)

This population forecast will increase pressure on our current health system.

# 2.8%

of Sunshine Coast region population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (approximately 12,000 people)

Our population is dispersed across a large geographical area, often with a greater vulnerability profile residing in more regional and rural areas. Two distinct cohorts that experience unique challenges requiring targeted support are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and those living with disability, and their carers.<sup>13</sup>

# Our region

Our region has

# 6.4%

of people with a disability in comparison to the QLD state percentage of 5.8%

Our health district has

# 12,123

NDIS participants

The region is not only experiencing a growing population but also has a higher percentage of people living with disability

# Our Workforce

# 1.8%

of our workforce identify as living with disability

<sup>13</sup> Sunshine Coast Health. (2024). Sunshine Coast Health Service Plan 2024-2034. Page 14. [https://www.sunshinecoast.health.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0016/103750/schhs-health-service-plan.pdf](https://www.sunshinecoast.health.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/103750/schhs-health-service-plan.pdf)

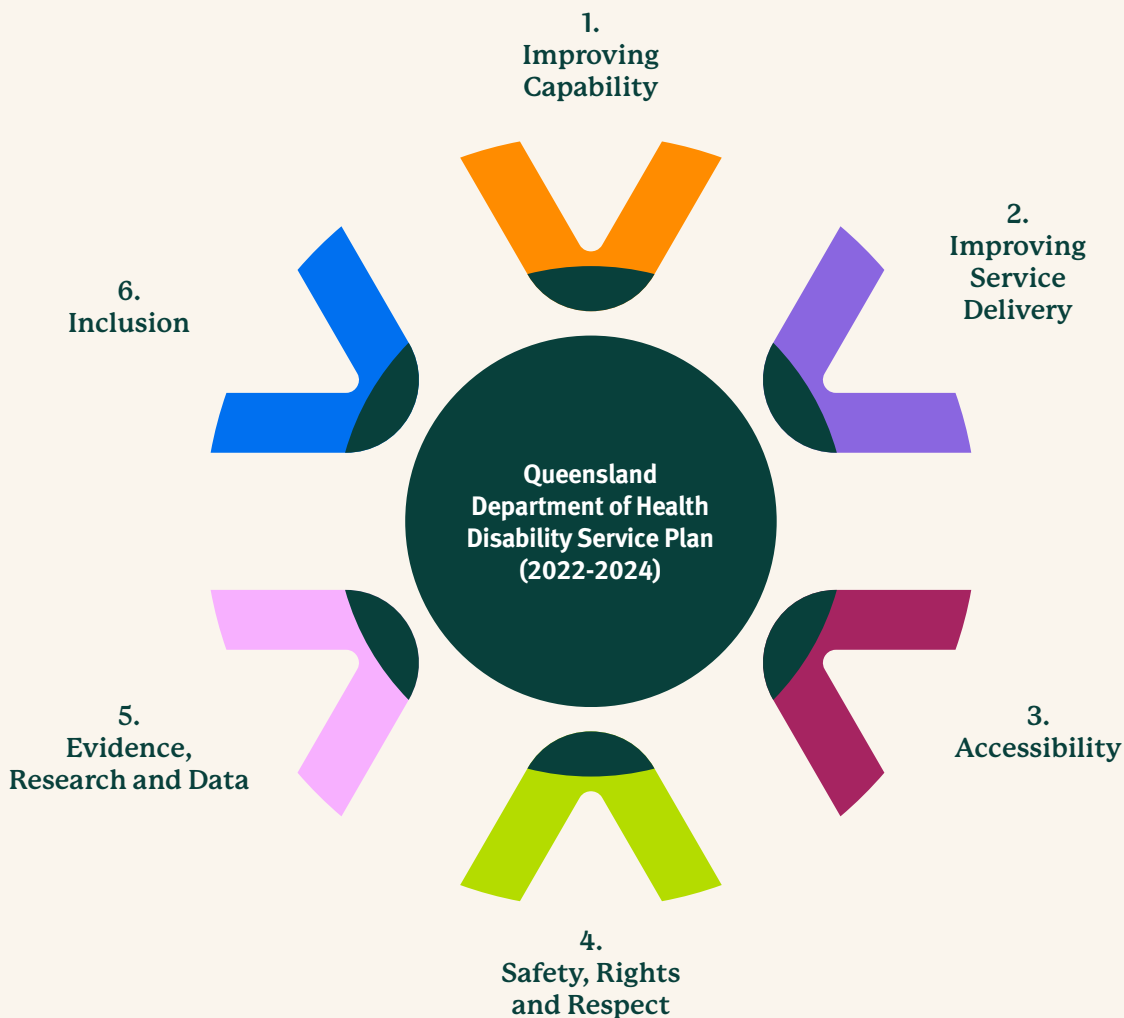
# Purpose of the Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan

*“Safe, equitable, accessible healthcare, and improved health outcomes for people with disability.”*

The Sunshine Coast Health DSP 2025-2030 highlights our unique local needs and opportunities aimed at improving accessibility, inclusion, and equity in health care for individuals with disability. Through the development of a local DSP, our health service district is dedicated to ensuring human rights are based on the principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect and that these rights are upheld so that safe and high-quality healthcare is delivered to all.

Sunshine Coast Health recognises that health and the way people access healthcare services is evolving. The way in which people, families and communities live now requires healthcare services to be more flexible, more accessible, and more collaborative to achieve and maintain health outcomes<sup>13</sup>. Through the development of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP, we draw upon the lived experiences of people with disability, their families, carers and disability advocates to identify and drive service improvements for people with disability. The Sunshine Coast Health DSP highlights measurable changes that enhance and strengthen our service as a healthcare provider and employer for people with disability.

The Sunshine Coast Health DSP reflects some of the priority areas as demonstrated in the Queensland Department of Health Disability Service Plan (2022-2024) including a number of key priority areas:



The Sunshine Coast Health DSP will be implemented over a 5-year period with the action plan reviewed and refined annually. The Sunshine Coast Health DSP aligns with our Sunshine Coast Health Strategic Plan 22-26 priorities below:



**Sunshine Coast Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026**  
This Strategic Plan was reviewed March 2025 and remains current for the reporting period 2025-2026.

**Our vision**  
Health and wellbeing through resilient services, care and people.

**Our purpose**  
High quality care through innovative healthcare and resilient services for our communities and people.

**We will respect, protect and promote human rights in our decision-making and actions.**

**Our values**  
Integrity, respect, trust, transparency, equity, inclusion, innovation, resilience, safety, and excellence.

**Our opportunities**  
Use our critical resources and infrastructure to our fullest potential and integrate our network of services.  
Develop and embed new and innovative models of care to better meet the needs of our communities.  
Enhance our organisational and governance structures to clarify responsibilities, reduce red tape and meet the requirements of the health service.  
Leverage current and emerging digital technologies to improve our processes and models of care.  
In partnership with our people, embed our consumer voice in the continuous improvement and innovation of our care and service delivery.

**About this plan**  
The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCCHS) provides healthcare to a rapidly growing population. There has been significant investment in services over the last few years, in particular the establishment of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the Nambour General Hospital redevelopment.  
The SCCHS also delivers services through hospitals in Gympie, Caloundra and Maleny. In addition, the SCCHS operates a residential aged care facility in Nambour and provides community health services and community mental health services through a range of specialist allied facilities located across the Sunshine Coast region.  
This Plan sets out our strategic priorities over four years and is underpinned by detailed strategies and plans including the Health Service Plan. This Strategic Plan, along with the annual Service Agreement, is delivered through our annual Operational Plan which includes detailed actions, resources and targets.  
Like all health services, we face many challenges and to achieve our purpose we must continually improve how we provide health care. The key message from our consumers is that services need to be better coordinated across settings and providers and we need to help people to navigate the health system.  
People are at the heart of everything we do and to be successful we need:  
• robust consumer input and feedback at every level to make sure our services provide not only good health outcomes but good experiences  
• strong and productive partnerships across the wider healthcare network including General Practitioners and other primary health care providers, private specialists, private hospitals, community services and our fellow hospital and Health Services so that care is coordinated, and  
• our staff to be proud to work for us and feel supported to live our values every day.  
It is only through harnessing the energy and ideas of our staff, our partners and our consumers, that we will successfully deliver this Plan.

**Our challenges**  
**Cultural capability**  
To build inclusive cultural capability that provides equitable and inclusive health outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and other culturally diverse groups.  
**Workforce**  
To attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet service demand in an environment of industry-wide workforce shortages.  
**Demand**  
To meet the diverse needs of our communities and improve health outcomes amidst rising demand that potentially exceeds capacity and funding.  
**Infrastructure**  
Infrastructure requirements that meet the service demand and needs of the community.  
**Financial sustainability**  
To provide safe and effective healthcare within the available funding.

**Sunshine Coast Health** | **Queensland Government**



**Sunshine Coast Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026**

**Our care**  
We provide high-quality, equitable, accessible, person-centred care.

**Our people**  
We value and support our people.

**Our sustainability**  
We manage our financial, physical, and environmental resources responsibly.

**Our future**  
We improve and prepare for the future through research, education and innovation.

**Intent**  
We provide high-quality, equitable, accessible, person-centred care.

**Strategies**

- Continue to enhance the safety of our services.
- Regularly partner with our consumers to better understand their needs and experiences of their care.
- Improve health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Embed inclusive and equitable care for people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
- Improve access to services and grow into our existing practice spaces to live with our Health Service Plan.
- Strengthen partnerships with primary and community health care providers to better connect care.
- Engage our community with our practices and disaster preparedness and response.
- Protect disaster and enhance the health and wellbeing of the community.

**Measures**

- Hospital acquired complications rates below 50% (annual) of prior baseline.
- Implement our SCCHS Health Equity strategy (meeting at least 80% of the implementation milestones on time).
- At least 20% of patients rate overall care as SCCHS as very good or the State-wide highest PERBS.
- All new managers will complete the L&P program within 12 months of their appointment.
- 80% Analysis employee survey results demonstrate employee engagement improved by 2% by the next survey.
- Between 1-2% to 2-4% of the workforce identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by 2026.
- SCCHS continues advocacy with Department of Health to engage in a health workforce development program.
- A further increase of 2% of non-subsidised consultations are conducted virtually by June 2026.
- Operating position aligned to activity delivered.

**Government sub-objectives for the community**

- Optimise our network of services, facilities and models of care.
- Enhance the safety, health and wellbeing of our employees.
- Build the capability and accountability of our leaders.
- Attract, retain, empower and develop a capable, diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Support our people to work to their full range of practice.
- Optimise our network of services, facilities and models of care.
- Integrate non-subsidised care to improve patient outcomes.
- Engage our people to identify and drive cost-effective solutions.
- Optimise our organisational structure, processes and practice.
- Maximise revenue and invest wisely.
- Minimise our impact on the environment.
- Build a strong, sustainable research culture.
- Integrate research, education and clinical care in collaboration with Sunshine Coast Health Institute and other partners.
- Strengthen our virtual care and digital health capability.
- Secure innovation.
- Annual number of SCCHS research projects and clinical trials increased to four (2025 target).
- Increase the number of publications in Q4-Q4 journals by 20% by 2026.
- 70% of clinical departments have an identified research team and active research projects by June 2026.

**Sunshine Coast Health** | **Queensland Government**

## Our Care

We provide high-quality, equitable, accessible, person-centred care. We ensure inclusive and equitable access to safe and appropriate care for people with disabilities and special needs, and their carers.

## Our People

We value our people. We attract, retain, empower and develop a capable, diverse and inclusive workforce.

## Our Sustainability

We optimise our network of services, facilities and models of care to better meet the unique needs of our community.

## Our Future

We improve and prepare for the future through research, education, and innovation. We integrate research, education and clinical care, foster innovation and strengthen our virtual care and digital health capability.



# Engagement and Design

Our health service recognises, respects, and values the lived experience and lives of people with disability. The Sunshine Coast Health DSP was developed using a co-design methodology in which people with disability, their families, carers, supporters, and representatives from the disability sector were actively involved in developing the DSP through both working groups and steering committee roles. In addition, disability advocates and healthcare professionals, including staff with lived experience, were also engaged throughout the DSP development process. Through the co-design method, principles of inclusion, collaboration, and empowerment were promoted to ensure partnership occurred during the process of identifying and developing the key target areas and actions of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP 2025-2030.

## Elements of co-design



Co-design focuses on understanding and improving patients' experiences of services as well as the services themselves.

### Our DSP Steering committee consisted of:

- 15 members - 10 Sunshine Coast Health staff members and 5 consumer representatives.
- > 50% of members had lived experience of disability, or were family members and/or carers for people with disability.

### Our DSP consumer working group consisted of:

- 10 consumers with an average attendance rate of 6 consumers per meeting.
- Consumers had both lived experience and/or were carers for people with disability.

## Breanna's story

I'm Breanna, a 22-year-old living in Ilkley on the Sunshine Coast. Currently, I am pursuing a degree in Law at UniSC and my passions include horse riding, art, reading, and attending music events with friends, just to name a few! I have a C1/C2 incomplete spinal cord lesion from birth which affects my movement from my neck down to my toes. I rely on assistance every day from my parents and support workers.

*Additionally, I am a health consumer representative and disability advocate, roles which allow me to actively contribute to the community. I roll through life in my electric wheelchair, which has shaped my perspective and commitment to advocacy and being a voice for our disability community.*

I see a number of specialists and therapists across different hospitals and clinics, including neuro rehab, respiratory, renal, spinal, orthopaedic, physio, and occupational therapy. I have been a user of the health system my whole life and have experienced all the ups and downs, but the best thing that has come from this journey has been the opportunity to share these experiences as a consumer and advocate. Some of the things I have faced and advocate for are:

- **Improved transition from paediatric to adult services with the help of Nurse Navigators where needed.** My parents and I faced many challenges transitioning through this period of my health journey, particularly with learning to navigate the adult system after having a paediatrician who liaised between my specialist teams. Towards the end of the transition, we had a Nurse Navigator come on board who was invaluable in helping us organise what I needed. Experiences such as this exemplify the importance of ensuring people living with complex health conditions or disability have adequate support from the hospital during this time in their health journey. We all have so much going on in our lives and often several different specialist teams. Having to manage appointments and communication adds another layer of complexity.
- **Improved communication between health care and specialist teams, where a patient has intersecting health conditions and disability.** As someone with a disability who has multiple health care and allied health teams, and a complex medical history, one of my biggest challenges is knowing how much of my history I need to share with each medical professional at appointments, as I often see a different doctor. Improved communication between the health care teams would reduce the “siloes” affect which we as patients often feel when seeing so many different teams, and would give us confidence to know we are all working towards the same outcomes.



**- Understand the complexities of our life outside the health care system and support us in accessing health services.** Living with a disability and associated medical conditions means a lot of planning, in every aspect of my life. Fitting in hospital appointments around my rostered support workers, university classes, scheduled exercise, study and multiple regular allied health appointments can be difficult. For some people living with a disability and/or a complex health condition, it can be a challenge to understand and have the capability to contact the appointment team to make arrangements, particularly those who don't have support around them. Health care and admin teams understanding these complexities and creating a more accessible method for appointment requests is crucial. Coupled with facilitating easier communication with our health care teams, improving accessibility would ensure our community remains in touch with the hospital system.

Being part of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP working group and steering committee is something I am really proud of as it has been amazing to work alongside a team of fellow consumers and health professionals to develop a document which I believe truly caters and shapes the future of care for people living with a disability within Sunshine Coast Health.

*I have had the opportunity to highlight the importance of embedding lived experience of disability into future capability training, give feedback on the implementation and use of the Julian's Key Health Passport, and emphasise the importance of liaising and supporting people with a disability throughout their health journey.*



# Developing the Plan

The Sunshine Coast Health Consumer Disability Working Group met:

- 8 times between February – September 2024

The Sunshine Coast Health DSP Steering Committee met:

- 10 times between March and December 2024

## Sunshine Coast Health 2024-2029 Co-Design Process



The co-design approach to developing the DSP actively sought out a diverse community of stakeholders to best encompass lived experience, knowledge, and insights to create a targeted and shared vision.

In the development of this plan, we actively engaged with our local community to assist in identifying how we may make our services more accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of individuals living with disability.

**Presentations and key topic areas covered during the development of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP included:**



# Lisa's Story

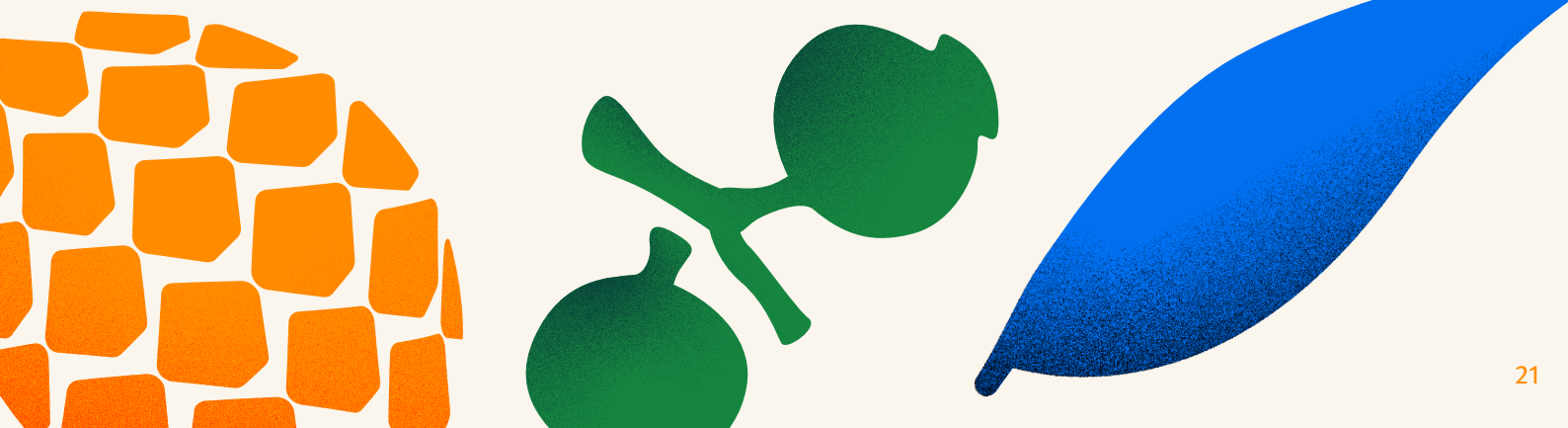
## *Improving Healthcare for People with Disabilities: A Personal Perspective*

As a mother of two autistic children aged 22 and 16, I have witnessed the complexities and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and their families when navigating the healthcare system. My experiences have highlighted the urgent need for improved inpatient, outpatient and community services that address the unique needs of individuals with complex disabilities, including autism and co-occurring mental health conditions.

Having faced significant and persistent challenges when navigating healthcare for my children, I recognise that improving healthcare for people with disabilities means creating a system that not only understands but actively supports their diverse needs. It involves fostering an environment where all individuals are treated with compassion, dignity, and respect, ensuring that care is tailored to their specific circumstances. This is particularly crucial for autistic individuals with multiple diagnoses, as current systems often overlook these complexities.

The Sunshine Coast Health DSP represents a crucial step towards enhancing care for individuals with disabilities. It is vital that this plan includes targeted staff training, equipping them with the expertise and sensitivity to provide effective, individualised care. Such an approach can help mitigate the distress often experienced in chaotic healthcare environments and improve overall patient outcomes.

My involvement with the Sunshine Coast Health DSP has demonstrated how an official pathway can be shaped to create a more supportive healthcare system for individuals with complex disabilities. While I have faced significant challenges in the current healthcare landscape, my commitment to advocating for my children and others with disabilities drives me to engage with initiatives like the DSP, recognising its potential for meaningful change. The ongoing adversities encountered by individuals with complex needs in healthcare underscore the urgency for reform, making the DSP's tailored approach for the Sunshine Coast community all the more critical.



For years, navigating the healthcare system has tested my family's resolve and exposed systemic gaps. Each engagement, presentation, and admission has revealed the challenges of accessing appropriate, holistic care for our eldest child. In critical situations, the emergency department has often felt like the most unsafe place to turn. Our trust in healthcare professionals has been eroded by a persistent lack of understanding and compassion for those with complex disabilities requiring medical and mental health treatment. Our journey has been a battle against relentless barriers, where the stakes extend beyond mere discomfort to the very survival and quality of life of our child. Despite these challenges, my commitment to advocating for my children's healthcare needs remains steadfast.

Implementing the actions within the Sunshine Coast Health DSP can help create a healthcare system that truly values and supports individuals with disabilities. Fostering better communication and collaboration among Sunshine Coast Health service teams and external healthcare providers will create a cohesive support system that addresses the needs of individuals with multiple diagnoses, ensuring they receive appropriate care for their well-being. This will enhance their quality of care and empower families to advocate for the support they deserve.

The Sunshine Coast Health DSP is an opportunity for change, a chance to do and be better. By implementing targeted training and fostering compassion and understanding within health services, we can create a system that truly supports the well-being of individuals with disabilities.

*Together, we can work towards a future where healthcare is not just a service but a supportive partnership, one that values every individual and helps us thrive.*



# The Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan

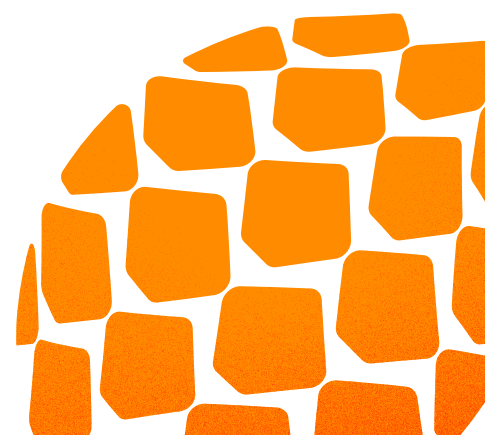
The Sunshine Coast Health DSP 2025-2030 was developed directly from the consultative insights, collaborative ideas and actions raised by both the steering committee and the consumer working group and aligns with the health priority areas identified in the Queensland DSP.

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Improving Capability</b>	1. Improved access for Sunshine Coast Health staff regarding education and training methods, including resources, and disability events to promote positive change that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable staff to receive insights from people with disability who can share their experiences.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to consider the world from the perspective of someone living with disability.</li> </ul>	1 a) Disability awareness training and resources are embedded into role requisite training for all HHS staff that is interactive with both health staff and consumers with disability.	1 a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability awareness training package is developed and incorporated within current role requisite training.</li> <li>• 100% of existing staff have completed the disability awareness training as per the Sunshine Coast Health role requisite requirements.</li> <li>• Pre and post disability awareness assessment is conducted as part of the role requisite training package to determine staff capability / confidence in managing patients with disability.</li> </ul>	Allied Health	2025
				Workforce	2026 – 2028
				Workforce	2025 - 2030
		1 b) Through interactive training build disability confidence / capability in our health service staff in working with people with a disability.	1 b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre and post disability awareness assessment is conducted as part of the training package to determine staff capability / confidence in managing patients with disability.</li> </ul>	Workforce	2025 - 2030
		1c) Promote disability awareness through statewide initiatives and local events.	1 c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of Sunshine Coast Health disability awareness campaigns and initiatives through channels such as SCOOP, Sunshine Coast Health newsletters, screensavers, media releases and e-alerts are reviewed as part of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP reporting requirements.</li> <li>• Sunshine Coast Health holds Annual Disability Awareness Week aligned with statewide events. Local events to include seminars, clinical review studies, and presentations by staff and consumers with disability.</li> <li>• Sunshine Coast Health to attend community networking disability events to promote Julian's Key Health Passport and health service initiatives.</li> <li>• To seek funding for the hidden sunflower initiative and resources to establish and promote this initiative within Sunshine Coast Health e.g., Wishlist application.</li> </ul>	Communication	2025 - 2030
				Allied Health / Communication / Workforce in conjunction with Directorates	2025 - 2030
		Allied Health	2025 – 2030		
		Allied Health	2025		

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
	2. Cultural and attitudinal change towards people with disability is essential to promote better health outcomes for people with disability.	2 a) Promote cultural and attitudinal change towards people with disability in terms of health access and equity through the development of a disability awareness training program and associated resources as per 1 a) above.	2 a) • See measures 1 (a) and 1 (c) above • Implement a consumer survey to review cultural and attitudinal awareness demonstrated by staff.	Allied Health	2025-2026
	3. Julian's Key Health Passport is a statewide communication tool for people with disability that needs increased awareness and promotion amongst our Sunshine Coast Health staff.	3 a) Sunshine Coast Health actively promotes the use and awareness of Julian's Key Health Passport through a targeted internal media campaign.	3 a) Julian's Key Health Passport is promoted through an internal all staff communication campaign, role requisite training package, GP liaison, waiting room screens, screensavers, quality boards and staff lifts.	Allied Health / Communication	2025 – 2030
		3 b) Key staff are identified and trained in the use of Julian's Key Health Passport (including the chart summary and associated health pathway process) and how to collaborate with families to achieve effective use of this resource e.g., emergency department	3 b) • Key staff identified to receive training in Julian's Key Health Passport. Completion rates are recorded in the learning on line (LoL) program. • Implementation of Julian's Key chart summary and associated health pathway has a place to be uploaded and retrieved.	Allied Health / Workforce  Allied Health / Information Technology	2025 – 2030  2025 – 2030
	4. The management of co-occurring and complex disabilities within Sunshine Coast Health would benefit from a targeted review in the management of consumers across the continuum of care.	4 a) Explore the implementation of specialist dual diagnosis (Intellectual disability / Neurodivergence / mental health) roles with mental health services to increase expertise in managing complex conditions, with a focus on co-occurring disabilities to promote more individualised care.	4 a) • Specialist consultation and liaison service is in place which highlights the importance of integrated care for mental health, complex disability, and multiple diagnoses. • A consumer working group providing lived experience feedback is formed within one year of the Mental Health specialist consultation service commencement.	Mental Health & Specialised Services	2025 – 2030
		4 b) Provide education and development opportunities to all mental health clinicians in this specialist model of care as part of clinical requisite training.	4 b) • 50% of mental health clinicians have completed the specialist training by 2029.	Mental Health & Specialised Services	2028 – 2029  2026 – 2029

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Improving Service Delivery</b>	5. Increased awareness and education for staff is needed to assist in improving health equity and health outcomes for people with disability.	5 a) To review current role requisite and staff induction training to ensure it appropriately educates and increases staff awareness in managing people with disability in regards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• informed consent,</li> <li>• reasonable adjustments,</li> <li>• restrictive practices</li> <li>• clinical care standards regarding providing care to patients with intellectual or cognitive impairment.</li> </ul>	5 a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our health service informed consent process is reviewed annually.</li> <li>• Clinical staff are trained in reasonable adjustments by 2026.</li> <li>• Medical staff receive training in clinical care standards for cognitive impairment / delirium clinical standard, psychotropic medicines in cognitive disability or impairment.</li> <li>• Training in Easy Read medication advice provided to all Pharmacists.</li> </ul>	Standard 4 Lead	2025 - 2030
		5 b) Each clinical directorate to nominate a disability champion who facilitates disability awareness education and resource promotion including application of the reasonable adjustment's guidelines for patients.	5 b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A disability champion is identified in each directorate.</li> <li>• Disability champion attends training in reasonable adjustments tool and understands their roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	Workforce	2025 - 2030
		5 c) Reasonable adjustments for patient's guideline is included in training for HHS staff and practiced across our health service facilities.	5 c) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reasonable adjustments guideline tool audit is conducted quarterly.</li> </ul>	Medical Workforce Education	2025 - 2030
				Allied Health	2025 - 2030
				Allied Health in conjunction with directorates	2025
				Allied Health	2025 - 2030
	6. An improved coordinated communication approach is needed between the health service, individuals with disability, and their support networks.	6 a) The development of a working group to design and produce a comprehensive discharge resource for people with disability and their supports. The working group includes staff and consumer membership.	6 a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A working group is formed within the first quarter of year one of Sunshine Coast Health-DSP.</li> <li>• Hospital discharge roles are identified to improve communication between the hospital and people with disability.</li> </ul>	Allied Health	2025
				Executive in conjunction with directorates	2026

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
	7. There is a need for improved coordination of care for individuals with complex disability.	<p>7 a) Explore the possibility of identifying roles that could be part of a disability team that continuously works towards improved models of care for people with disability across Sunshine Coast Health and improves their experience e.g., facilitates booking appointments, arranging reasonable adjustment plans, providing advice and expertise in mobility/physical/communication and/or psychosocial needs.</p> <p>7b) Review of telehealth and virtual care services for people with disability in our HHS.</p>	<p>7 a) • A Sunshine Coast Health disability coordination and/or contact service is implemented with subject matter experts to support Sunshine Coast Health staff in managing individuals with complex disability.</p> <p>7b) • A coordination service for virtual and/or telehealth services for people with complex disability is in place.</p>	<p>Allied Health in conjunction with directorates and information technology.</p> <p>As above</p>	<p>2025–2029</p> <p>2025–2029</p>
	8. Individuals with complex needs require accessible environments where sensory input can be altered to meet the individual needs of the patient.	8 a) Explore the opportunities to have multi-sensory rooms / environments to support sensory processing and complex disability needs of consumers accessing Sunshine Coast Health facilities.	8a) • To have an appropriate solution in place regarding access to multi-sensory rooms in Sunshine Coast Health facilities for consumers with complex disability needs.	Allied Health in conjunction with directorates and Assets & Infrastructure	2025-2027



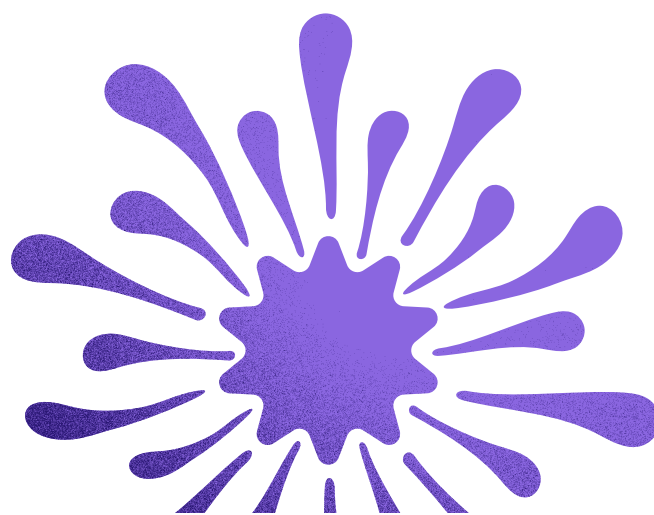
Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Accessibility</b>	9. The ability to provide and receive information to/from our health service should be available in differing and accessible formats.	9 a) Patient reported experience measures to include disability related questions regarding accessibility of health service communication.	9 a) • Data collection from patient reported experience measures to be included in formal reporting processes at Sunshine Coast Health.	Patient engagement Services	2025-2030
		9 b) Provide information to suit the diversity and geographic challenges of our communities and provide consumers with information that is relevant, understandable and aligns with their patient journey.	9 b) • Auditing processes established to ensure all consumer publications go through the publication consumer group.	Standard 2 lead / Health Information Management	2025-2030
	10. People with disability would like to see greater flexibility and accessibility in health service models of care.	10 a) Review access to local Telehealth / virtual technology services for people with disability to improve in home models of care.	10 a) • Review of current services completed.	Allied Health / Information Technology	2025
		10 b) A working group to be established to explore virtual and telehealth services for people with disability.	10 b) • Working group established to explore options / solutions for people with disability.	Allied Health / Information Technology	2026–2027
	11. People with disability to have the ability to discuss communication, accessibility, and support needs with a health service representative prior to and during health service engagement.	11 a) To establish a pathway and or resources for people with disability who require special assistance when accessing Sunshine Coast Health facilities e.g., Cerge Program	11 a) • Outpatient letters/emails/ texts to consumers to include a contact to discuss additional needs should they be required to access Sunshine Coast Health facilities.	Allied Health / Health Information Management	2025-2027
	12. The access needs of staff and consumers with disability should be considered when new builds or modifications occur to Sunshine Coast Health buildings.	12 a) Formal consultation with an appropriate consumer group to occur regarding any planning for new builds and/or refurbishments.	12 a) • Documented evidence that people with disability are actively engaged and consulted regarding any new proposed built assets and/or modification to existing assets.	Assets and Infrastructure	2025-2030

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
	13. Accessible 'Adult Change Facilities' are available across the health service facilities.	13 a) A review of current adult change facilities across health service sites, in emergency department and outpatient areas are undertaken to gauge if these facilities are in accordance with BCA 2019, F2.9 Accessible Adult Change Facilities standards.	13 a) • Review completed • Each Sunshine Coast Health facility has publicly available accessible adult change facilities.	Assets and Infrastructure	2025 By 2030
	14. Consumer records should include the ability to identify whether a consumer has a disability requiring support whilst accessing Sunshine Coast Health facilities.	14 a) Explore the viability of capturing at patient registration / update of information if patient identifies as having a disability.	14 a) Disability is included within the patient registration administration system where possible.	Health Information Management	2025-2026
	15. The opportunities for key word sign resources need to be explored so this technology is available as a communication method in Sunshine Coast Health facilities.	15 a) To explore and develop the implementation of key word signing resources for Sunshine Coast Health facilities in conjunction with Sunshine Coast Health disability consumer representatives.	15 a) • Key word signage resources are developed and implemented across our Sunshine Coast Health facilities	Allied Health / Assets and Infrastructure	2025-2030



Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Safety, Rights and Respect</b>	16. People with disability should feel valued, safe and supported when engaging with our healthcare services.	16 a) To minimise the use of restrictive practices and promote positive behavioural support strategies through training of health service staff as Positive Behavioural Support Practitioners.	16 a) • Two health service staff trained as Positive Behavioural Support Practitioners.	Allied Health in conjunction with directorates	2025–2030
	17. People with disability should feel that their human rights are respected, and their privacy and dignity upheld throughout their engagement with our health services.	17 a) Medical staff are aware of and implement the Supportive Decision-Making Framework. The framework is embedded in clinical practice across Sunshine Coast Health through targeted education.	17 a) • Principles of informed consent and Supportive Decision-Making Framework are included in requisite medical staff training. • See other measures in improving service delivery.	Medical Services Education	2025-2030
		17 b) Information about our health services should be accessible to people with intellectual disabilities and cognitive impairment.	17 b) • Accessible information including Easy Read is provided on the Sunshine Coast Health website and promoted to consumers with disability, their families, and carers e.g., details about disability contacts, feedback processes and healthcare rights.	Allied Health, Health Information Management, Communication	2025-2030
	17 c) A review of the accessibility of information resources which explain patient rights to Sunshine Coast Health consumers.	17 c) • Any gaps identified in the accessibility of patient rights resources are escalated via the appropriate governance committees for action.		2025-2027	
18. Sunshine Coast Health staff need to work compassionately and collaboratively with people with disability and their carer's / family.		18 a) Trauma Informed Care is embedded into the appropriate role requisite training for Sunshine Coast Health staff	18 a) • All frontline clinical staff have completed the Basic Trauma Informed Care training by 2028. • All frontline mental health staff have completed the trauma informed care training by 2028.	Workforce	2025-2028
				Mental health Services	2025-2026

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
	19. Sunshine Coast Health staff need to demonstrate empathy and understanding when consumers with disability enter their facilities, particularly in relation to complex disability and mental health.	19 a) Staff to employ the information provided in Julian's Key Health Passports to understand the needs of the person with disability and promote safe and tailored care.	19 a) • An increase in the utilisation and understanding of Julian's Key Health Passport. Yearly audits are performed to measure: - the use of Julian's Key including corresponding number of health charts with a summary of the plan. - patient experience in relation to their needs and preferences met as identified in Julian's Key.	Allied Health	2025-2030
		19 b) The use of the Sunflower form and resources promoted through a communication strategy e.g., all staff communications, screen savers.	19 b) • Wishlist application completed for the attainment of Sunflower resources. • A promotional communication strategy about Sunflower resources completed.	Allied Health	2025-2026



Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Evidence, Research and Data</b>	20. Sunshine Coast Health needs to ensure the data of consumers with disability and their experiences in our health service is collected accurately to ensure their needs are known each time they enter Sunshine Coast Health facilities.	20 a) To complete a review of the collection methods of health service data related to patient and carer disability status for ensuring accuracy.	20 a) • Review of collection methods (including updating of records) completed and tabled at appropriate governance committee for discussion and appropriate action.	Allied Health / Patient Liaison Services in conjunction with directorates.	2025-2027
		20 b) Develop a range of disability specific tools to collect patient experience information (patient reported experience measures - patient feedback forms etc) for continuous improvement.	20 b) • An appropriate range of disability specific patient reported experience tools developed and implemented.	As above	2025-2027
		20 c) Analyse consumer feedback to systematically monitor and respond to issues which affect consumers with disability	20 c) • Collected data is analysed and reported upon at the appropriate governance committee to inform service delivery.	As above	2025-2030
	21. The experiences of people with disability should be captured throughout their health service journey.	21 a) Opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers to provide feedback for research purposes should be available in various accessible formats.	21 a) • Examples of engaging consumers when research is being proposed at Sunshine Coast Health is evident in reporting research processes / documents.	Sunshine Coast Health	2025-2030
	22. Our health service should encourage greater engagement in research relating to disability.	22 a) Our district supports and engages in research projects that are disability focused.	22 a) • Our health service is engaged with a minimum of at least 1 research project annually related to disability over the course of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP plan.	Sunshine Coast Health in conjunction with directorates	2025-2030
		22 b) Our health service fosters partnerships with tertiary facilities to promote engagement in research participation that is disability related.	22 b) • At least one of the research projects is conducted in collaboration with our Sunshine Coast Health partners. • Sunshine Coast Health Research relating to disability is showcased at annual events e.g., disability awareness week, Sunshine Coast Health innovation showcase forum, Sunshine Coast Health research events / forums.	Sunshine Coast Health in conjunction with directorates	2025-2030

Health Priority Area	Consultative insight	Actions	Measures of success	Responsible Directorate / Service Area	Timeframe
<b>Inclusion</b>	23. Consultative groups relating to inclusion and employment processes should include stakeholders from the disability community.	23 a) Sunshine Coast Health employment inclusion and equity advisory groups must include members from the disability community.	23 a) • The disability inclusion group to include a minimum of two stakeholders from the local disability community.	Workforce	2025-2030
	24. There needs to be increased and meaningful consultation and representation on appropriate Sunshine Coast Health committees regarding the needs of staff with disability.	24 a) To review the Sunshine Coast Health employment entry pathways for people living with a disability so they are inclusive of targeted employment strategies, including transition programs for people with disability.	24 a) • To meet the Sunshine Coast Health disability targets set by the DoH.	Workforce	2025
		24 b) Develop targeted training (or update current training) for Sunshine Coast Health recruitment panels to promote diversity and inclusion.	24 b) • Unconscious bias training is developed and included as part of recruitment panel training.	Workforce	2025
		24 c) Sunshine Coast Health will ensure an inclusive environment for staff with disability	24 c) • To clarify the accessibility and inclusiveness of current recruitment processes. • Monitor BPA survey results. • Diversity and inclusion training is included in orientation and onboarding of all new health district employees.	Workforce	2025 2025-2030 2025
		24 d) Promote knowledge and training of reasonable adjustments, and inclusive and supportive environments in employment practices for people with disability.	24 d) • Training in reasonable adjustments and accessibility considerations for employees is included in the appropriate management training for all line managers.	Workforce	2025-2030



# Michael's Story

In my time as a disability advocate the need for stronger understanding of the disability community, and what accessibility means for services and healthcare delivery come to the forefront of initiatives to improve healthcare for the community I work with, those with rare congenital brain malformations. This can look like streamlining services, breaking down silos, maintaining consistency of care, particularly in transition to adulthood, and access and use of relevant clinical resources made for clinicians treating those with rare and complex conditions.

Bringing my clinical experiences to the disability advocacy space I thought would mean I could work on not only disability research and translation of this into practice but also help disabled people navigate the healthcare system. What I didn't realise was that it was me who needed help navigating disability itself; traumatic experiences accessing healthcare, ableist attitudes from healthcare professionals, disjointed and unusable models of care, and in my community that I support a lack of access to professionals with knowledge of their condition, but more pertinently, diagnostic overshadowing, where the clinical focus is on a more known diagnosis the patient has regardless of how impactful it might be on their bigger clinical picture. Creating a community and connecting previously isolated people with others that understand them has been crucial to achieving some of those advocacy goals in health and beyond. The community's ability to share information on how they manage their lives, and their health is invaluable and is perhaps an indictment on the healthcare system that they don't have access to better health advice from professionals themselves.

*Reasonable adjustments in healthcare are things that many Australians have been asking for to make their lives more livable and make accessing healthcare easier for disabled people.*

This also means better clinical outcomes, and more efficient healthcare delivery. Accessible design in healthcare sets a precedent of care available for all people, for non-disabled people when they age into disability and for other marginalised groups who might benefit from reasonable adjustments.

Around 8% of Australians live with a rare condition and while their particular diagnosis might be rare, their collective experience of accessing healthcare is common, the challenges finding specialists that can address their particular needs, the lengthy process of receiving an appropriate diagnosis and the long diagnosis journey delaying appropriate supports for the person. Connecting patients with rare conditions to existing infrastructure in the rare condition space and disability community more broadly can impact patient outcomes and improve psychosocial experience of accessing healthcare with a rare condition.

In my advocacy experience I have had many opportunities to contribute and, assist others in contributing to state and commonwealth health and disability policy, including reviews of the NDIS and the disability royal commission and organisational policy in the disability sector internationally. The disability royal commission and other avenues there are for disabled people to speak on the issues they face in healthcare, represents their time and expertise, and the Disability Service Plan first and foremost represents our health service listening to these voices of disabled people and actioning their feedback. I am very fortunate to be able to make my own contribution to this project.

Accessible employment opportunities reflect our ability to care for a diverse range of patients, as it reflects our ability to foster inclusivity in our own staff. Accessible job offers, social inclusion, financial freedom, and a sense of purpose is so important to many goals disabled people have for themselves. Disabled employees offer diverse perspectives, valuable lived experience that can improve healthcare delivery, in addition to offering their lived experience to help make workplaces more accessible which not only helps our community but other marginalised communities, and non-disabled people as they age into disability. I am lucky to be a part of the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service diversity and inclusion committee and make contributions in this space but also bring that experience into the Disability Service Plan.

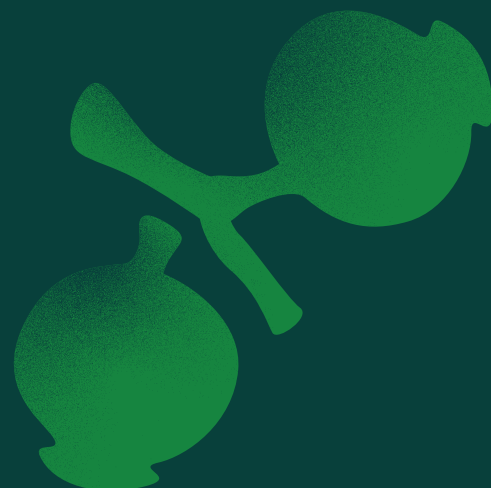
I was diagnosed incidentally with congenital brain malformation when I was 19, on the background of neurodivergences and mental health issues I was trying to resolve at the time. My time since then has been one involved with clinicians and researchers across the world, looking at why myself and others with my condition may not respond to conventional treatments (we are not conventional cases) and trying to get them the help they may need.

*This is the heart of my PhD I am completing at the moment, which is about giving voice to the voiceless and exploring that lived experience of those with disability offer, this area remains unexplored even as we have taken great leaps in neuroscience, genetics and psychology over the last decade.*



## Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Sunshine Coast Health Disability Service Plan

- *The Sunshine Coast Health DSP will be actioned over a five-year period between 2025-2030.*
- *The Allied Health Services directorate will be leading the implementation and reporting of the Sunshine Coast Health DSP under the direction of the Executive Sponsor (Executive Director Allied Health).*
- *There will be accountable officers and areas assigned actions from the plan to complete by the due date. Each of the Service areas and Clinical Directorates will need to provide a key contact for their actions who will be responsible for leading, progressing and reporting on the assigned action.*
- *Reporting of the measures of success indicators will occur at quarterly intervals as per the Sunshine Coast Health reporting requirements. The first reporting timeline will be due on 30 June 2025.*
- *Annual progress of the plan will be reported by the Executive Sponsor at the appropriate Executive governance committee.*



# Glossary

<b>Auslan</b>	Auslan is not based on English, as it has a distinct set of rules for grammar and syntax. Its vocabulary is also different to English. Auslan is a natural language which was developed organically over time. It is also a visual-spatial language where hands, eye gaze, facial expressions and arm, head and body postures are used to convey messages. Precise handshapes, facial expressions and body movements are needed to convey both concrete and abstract information.
<b>Co-design</b>	Co-design is a collaborative approach where our health staff works together with consumers to create solutions. The health staff act as facilitators and guide the participants through the design process. Co-design aims to harness the collective wisdom and insights of everyone involved to innovate and solve problems effectively <sup>14</sup> .
<b>Communication</b>	Includes languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible information and communication technology <sup>15</sup> .
<b>Discrimination on the basis of disability</b>	Means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation <sup>16</sup> .
<b>Easy Read</b>	Easy read materials adapt standard information into a briefer copy using easier-to-understand language and pictures to support comprehension of the text.
<b>Hidden Disability Sunflower</b>	The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple tool for you to voluntarily share that you have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport, or in public spaces.
<b>Human Rights Based Approach</b>	Human-Rights-Based Approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human-rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyse inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress <sup>17</sup> .
<b>Inclusion</b>	Inclusion is where there is recognition of a need to change the cultures, policies, and practices to accommodate the differing needs of individual consumers, and an obligation to remove any barriers that may impede that possibility <sup>18</sup> .
<b>Informed Consent</b>	Informed consent is a person's decision, given voluntarily, to agree to a healthcare treatment, procedure or other intervention that is made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the provision of accurate and relevant information about the healthcare intervention and alternative options available; and</li> <li>• With adequate knowledge and understanding of the benefits and material risks of the proposed intervention relevant to the person who would be having the treatment, procedure or other intervention<sup>17</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>Julian's Key Health Passport</b>	Julian's Key Health Passport (Julian's Key) is a patient/carer-controlled communication tool co-designed with consumers. It aims to improve communication between people with disability and their health care providers by capturing important information about the person. This information supports healthcare professionals to provide personalised treatment and care that is specific to the person's needs.
<b>Language</b>	Includes spoken and signed languages and other forms of non-spoken languages <sup>18</sup> .

<b>Multi-sensory environment</b>	Multi-Sensory Environments (MSEs; also known as a sensory or Snoezelen® rooms) are specialised spaces that contain equipment to modify the sensory environment across the modalities <sup>19</sup> .
<b>Person-centred care</b>	Person-centred care is widely recognised as a foundation to safe, high-quality health care. It is care that respects and responds to the preferences, needs and values of patients and consumers <sup>20</sup> .
<b>PWD</b>	People/person with disability
<b>Reasonable adjustments</b>	Means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms <sup>15</sup>
<b>Universal design</b>	Means the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed <sup>15</sup> .



# References

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