Resource #4

# Increasing disability awareness

This resource provides practical ideas you can utilise to promote awareness of disability in your organisation. These tips can help your staff consider the needs or interests of people with disability (and their carers) when interacting with colleagues, clients, and stakeholders.

Everyone benefits when communities are inclusive and accessible. The more awareness is raised, and information is made available, the more we can do to create truly inclusive communities.

## Improving disability awareness

Some ways to improve disability awareness in your organisation can include:

* encouraging colleagues to view the online disability awareness training available at [www.disabilityawareness.com.au](http://www.disabilityawareness.com.au)
* raising your awareness and understanding of key legislation that protects the rights of people with disability (see Resource 5).
* developing a disability action plan, sometimes known as an accessibility and inclusion plan or accessibility charter, for your organisation. A good way to do this is by consulting people with disability (and/or their representative organisations), reviewing your organisation’s policies and practices, identifying barriers for people with disability in accessing services, and implementing strategies to remove these barriers (see Resource 5).
* considering organisational membership with the Australian Network on Disability (AND). AND is a not-for-profit organisation resourced by its members to advance the inclusion of people with disability in all aspects of business. AND helps its members and clients to welcome people with disability as employees, customers, and suppliers. Visit: [www.and.org.au](http://www.and.org.au)
* including positive, empowered images of people with disability in your organisation’s internal and external-facing documents, such as workforce plans, annual reports, websites, and sales catalogues.
* increasing awareness about or seeking to improve the accessibility of your organisation, considering features such as accessible parking and toilets, ramp/lift access, and reasonable adjustments that can be made.
* engaging third-party disability awareness training providers. Many not-for-profit organisations can be engaged to present disability awareness training. Where possible, people with disability should deliver the training.

## Annual awareness events

### International Day of People with Disability

There are several annual events that organisations can recognise to raise awareness of disability and promote an inclusive and accessible Queensland. Some of the events are listed below.

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is held on 3 December each year. IDPwD is a United Nations-sanctioned day that is celebrated internationally. It aims to increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability and celebrate their achievements and contributions. The Australian Government has been supporting IDPwD since 1996 and provides funds to promote and raise awareness of the day around Australia.

Visit: [**www.idpwd.com.au**](http://www.idpwd.com.au)

### Disability Action Week

Disability Action Week is held annually and raises awareness of Queenslanders playing a role in creating an inclusive, all abilities Queensland.

Visit: [www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/awards-events/disability-action-week](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability/community/awards-events/disability-action-week)

### National Carers Week

National Carers Week is held in October each year and recognises and celebrates the contribution that carers make to our nation.

Visit: [www.carersqld.com.au/news-and-events/carers-week/](http://www.carersqld.com.au/news-and-events/carers-week/)

### Paralympics and other major sporting events

The Paralympics and other major sporting events, such as the Commonwealth Games, Special Olympics World Games, Deaflympics, Australian Open, French Open/Roland-Garros, Invictus Games and INAS Games, provide an opportunity to showcase the abilities of competitors and raise awareness of disability.

### Other awareness events

Remember to be inclusive of people with disability at other awareness events such as Multicultural Month, Seniors Week, NAIDOC Week and Child Protection Week. People from these groups are also impacted by disability and people with disability may also be LGBTIQ+, seniors, from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, and/or have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage.

## Becoming a disability champion

Everyone has a role to play to ensure people with disability have the same opportunities as others to reach their full potential. For any awareness day, such as the ones listed above, you could hold an event in your organisation using some of the activity ideas listed here.

| Activity | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Awareness in action | * Put up event posters * Email to staff a link to online disability awareness training such as [www.disabilityawareness.com.au](http://www.disabilityawareness.com.au). * Bring in an organisation to run face-to-face disability awareness sessions * Advertise vacant roles through Disability Employment Service providers |
| Staff events | * Host a breakfast, morning tea or lunch * Organise the catering through a social enterprise that trains and/or employs people with disability * Invite staff to share their experiences with disability * Start a conversation about disability, which can challenge perceptions, educate others, and normalise disability in everyday life |
| Fundraising | * Identify a not-for-profit organisation doing innovative work with people with disability. Or ask staff if there is an organisation that their family or friends have accessed. Consider raising funds or identifying a volunteering opportunity for that organisation. |
| Guest speaker | * Organise a guest speaker to talk about disability or to share their story * Invite a person with disability and/or your local member of parliament to speak |
| Social media | * Take a group photo of your event or your promotional material, such as posters, for social media * Show your support through social media posts, writing an article for your organisation’s newsletter or sending an opinion piece to your local newspaper * Include the relevant event hashtag, a link to the event website, or to [www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan](http://www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan) |

Based on the event planning kit at: [www.idpwd.com.au/resources/](http://www.idpwd.com.au/resources/)

## For further information

For more information and resources, visit: [www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan](http://www.qld.gov.au/qld-disability-plan)

**Resources in this series include:**

1. Creating inclusive and accessible events
2. Accessible and inclusive communication
3. Employing people with disability
4. Increasing disability awareness
5. Disability action plans and legislation
6. Increasing participation of people with disability on boards and committees
7. Accessible places and spaces