



Toolbox Talk

International Day of People with Disability – 3 December

What is IDPwD?

International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is celebrated annually on December 3. **The 2025 theme is: “Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible world for all.”** This theme focuses on breaking down physical, social, and systemic barriers that prevent full participation for people with disability. It calls on individuals, organisations, and communities to take action to ensure inclusion and accessibility in every aspect of life – from workplaces to public spaces.

IDPwD is an opportunity to celebrate the lives, contributions and achievements of the 5.5 million Australians and 1.1 million New Zealanders with disability. The day aims to raise awareness and take steps towards a more inclusive and accessible community.

Did you know?

- ▶ There are 5.5 million people in Australia and 1.1 million people in New Zealand with disabilities, which equates to 1 in 5 Australians and 1 in 4 New Zealanders.
- ▶ In Australia, 15% of people aged 0-64 years have a disability, while in New Zealand, around 11% of the population aged 0-64 have a disability.
- ▶ 7.9% of all Australians have a profound or severe disability, while 6.5% of New Zealanders have a profound or severe disability.
- ▶ In Australia, 9.9% or 1 in 10 people with disabilities have experienced discrimination, while in New Zealand, about 13% of people with disabilities have experienced discrimination.

Fostering an Inclusive Culture

Workplaces play a key role in ensuring people with disability can participate in all aspects of community life. Inclusion at work creates employee satisfaction, success and security. Employees in inclusive organisations are:

- ▶ 5 times more likely than their colleagues in non-inclusive organisations to report being very satisfied with their job.
- ▶ 3 times less likely to leave their current employer.
- ▶ 2 times more likely to receive career development opportunities.

We all have a role to play in ensuring our workplace and communities are accessible and inclusive of people with disability and there are some measures we can all take to help achieve this goal:

- ▶ Increase your awareness and knowledge on disability related issues.
- ▶ Call out disability stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes/comments.
- ▶ Treat all people as your equal, including those with disability.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to talk about disability.
- ▶ Assess the words you use and strive to communicate using inclusive language.



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Inclusive language

The language we use to describe disability plays a critical role in shaping our values, assumptions and beliefs about people with disability. It affects the way we treat people with disability, and the way in which they view themselves and their place in society. The language we use when discussing disability has changed greatly over time and it's important that we educate ourselves to ensure we are using language that is respectful and inclusive in our everyday interactions.

Focus on the person not the impairment

In Australia and New Zealand, best-practice language is to use person-first language, for example: 'person with disability', 'person who uses a wheelchair', 'person who is deaf'.

For people who prefer person-first language (person with disability), the choice recognises that a human is first and foremost a person, they have a disability, but that disability does not define them. For people who prefer identity-first language (disabled person), the choice is about empowerment. It says that their disability isn't something to be ashamed of. Identity and the language we use about ourselves is a very personal thing and we should never contradict or try to correct the language a person decides to use about their identity.

People with disability often have strong preferences for one term or the other, so it is best to follow the lead of the person or group you are talking about. It's okay to ask. If that isn't possible, use person-first language or refer to a person by their name.



Want to Learn More?

- ▶ Visit the [IDPwD Inclusion Resources Page](#) to learn more about inclusive language in recruitment and ways to host accessible events and meetings.
- ▶ Check out the [IDPwD Ambassador videos](#) to learn about this year's Ambassadors and their stories.
- ▶ Visit the [Focus on Ability Short Film Festival website](#) to explore a diverse selection of short films. If you'd like to showcase their films at your event, you can send a request to admin@focusonability.com
- ▶ Host a morning or afternoon tea with your team to recognise IDPwD or check out the [IDPwD community event calendar](#) for events happening near you.
- ▶ Consider volunteering with a local organisation that provides services and supports for people with disability.