

# International Day of People with Disability

*The Health Column*

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Disability covers many areas and often the term is misunderstood. 'Disability' is an umbrella term covering impairments and activity limitations. A person may also be seen to be 'with disability' if he or she has had impairment in the past, or based on a personal or group standard or norm.

One in five, or more than 4 million, Australians have a physical or mental disability. One in three people either have a disability or are close to someone who has a disability.



Disabilities range from relatively minor to severe. Approximately 3.4 million Australians have a physical disability, while more than 700,000 Australians have an intellectual impairment. One in six Australians is affected by hearing loss while Vision Australia estimates there are currently 330,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision.

Despite impairments and activity limitations, people with disability make a significant contribution to Australia in many ways. Their workforce participation is critical to productivity.

Recently the Federal Government announced a new Disability Access and Inclusion Award to acknowledge the important role local councils play in facilitating inclusion of people with disabilities. The Disability Access and Inclusion Award is a new category in the National Awards for Local Government, which recognise delivery of targeted services in urban and regional communities. The Assistant Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Mitch Fifield said the new award category will promote a best practice approach to the design of infrastructure, policies and programs.

'The successful implementation of programs that apply the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Disability Strategy is the responsibility of all levels of government,' Minister Fifield said.

The United Nations (UN) is a major driver of the recognition of equality for people with disability. The International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) is a UN initiative that aims to promote an understanding of people with disability and encourage support for their dignity, rights and wellbeing. This day is observed annually, this year on 3 December 2014, and has been promoted by the UN since 1992. The day focuses on a different issue each year, with key themes including

promoting an understanding of disability issues and mobilising support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of people with disability.

The International Day of People with Disability is unique among community awareness days. It unites disability organisations, businesses, federal, state and local governments and the community. The day is a collaborative effort to celebrate and acknowledge the experience and expertise of people with disability.

Your local pharmacy is your health destination. There are many products and services your pharmacy can offer to people with disabilities. These include mobility aids, compression garments, medication management services and home delivery. If you live with disability, or if you care for someone who does, visit your local pharmacy and find out what they can offer.

Carers play a huge role in supporting people with disability to lead fulfilling lives. These carers also need support. To meet the need for more information about how we can better take care of carers, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), with assistance from Centrelink and the Carers Association, has developed a Fact Card titled *Carer Support*. This Fact Card is available from all pharmacies that provide the PSA's Self Care health information.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone PSA on 1300 369 772, or go to [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au) 'Supporting practice' then 'Self Care', and then 'Find a Self Care pharmacy'.