

# 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, activity limitations and participation restrictions. 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 some form of disability. One in three Australians either have a disability or are close to someone who has a disability.



Disabilities range from relatively minor to severe. The likelihood of living with disability increases with age – 31% of 55-64 year olds are living with disability, while 88% of people aged 90 and over have a disability. One in six Australians are affected by hearing loss, while Vision Australia (a leading national provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia) estimates there are currently 357,000 people in Australia who are blind or have low vision.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports people with a permanent and significant disability that affects their ability to take part in everyday activities. The NDIS is gradually being rolled out nationally over three years from 2016 to 2019. The NDIS works with people to identify the supports needed to achieve goals in many aspects of life, such as independence, involvement in the community, education, employment, and health and wellbeing. It also focuses on early intervention where getting early support can reduce the impact of disability. Further information on the scheme is available at: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/>

Families and carers are recognised as important partners in the support of people with disability. One of the aims of the NDIS is to better support carers in their caring role. While the focus of an NDIS participant plan is the person with disability, the support from the participant plan may also have direct or indirect benefits for families and carers.

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 increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability, as well as celebrate the achievements and contributions of people with disability. This day is observed annually, on 3 December, and has been supported by the Australian Government since 1996. Each year the UN announces a theme – the theme for 2016 is 'Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want'. This draws attention to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and how these goals can create a more inclusive and equitable world for people with disabilities.

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 assist people with disabilities. These include mobility aids, compression garments, medicine 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) has developed a Self Care Fact Card titled *Carer support*. This Fact Card is available from all pharmacies providing the PSA's Self Care health information. Other Self Care Fact Cards may also be useful depending on your individual situation – ask your pharmacist.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to [www.psa.org.au/selfcare](http://www.psa.org.au/selfcare), then click 'Find a *Self Care pharmacy* near you'.