

# Disability Inclusion Action Plan

## 2020-2022



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# Acknowledgement of Country

TAFE NSW respects the Aboriginal lands on which our campuses are located, where we learn and work together.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Land, Rivers and Sea. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Elders, past, present and emerging of all Nations.

We recognise that Aboriginal cultures and communities form the foundation of cultural diversity in New South Wales. Hundreds of cultures, languages and kinship structures have long been embedded in the lands of Aboriginal countries across Australia.

We acknowledge and celebrate these diverse traditions, customs and cultures that have existed for more than 60,000 years.





# Foreword from the Managing Director

With 136 locations of learning across the State and TAFE Digital, TAFE NSW has a proud history of strengthening communities by providing access and choice in ways to learn.

There's no doubt about our commitment to ensuring accessibility and inclusion for our staff and students with disability. In our TAFE NSW Strategic Plan 2016 – 2022, we promise to provide more accessible training that is designed to enable and maximise participation of people with disability.

While TAFE NSW acknowledges the various legislative obligations, we look beyond these requirements and consider there is more that we can and should be doing to consistently provide more training that is designed to enable and maximise participation of people with disability, making TAFE NSW a preferred place of learning and work for people with disability.

That is why I am delighted to introduce the ***TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020-2022.***



Steffen Faurby

This plan identifies the outcomes and actions that TAFE NSW will take over the next two years that further enhance an inclusive environment for people with disability. It has a strategic focus supported by meaningful actions that will allow the organisation to:

- Go beyond just the rights of people with disability and ensure a safe and respectful place of learning and work
- Where we find barriers, ensure we address and remedy them in a timely manner
- Ensure our learning platforms and online presence have embedded the Universal Design for Learning and accessibility

Every part of TAFE NSW is committed to implementing the actions and achieving the outcomes set out in this plan.

**Steffen Faurby**

Managing Director



**We promise to provide more accessible training that is designed to enable and maximise participation of people with disability.**

**Steffen Faurby**  
Managing Director

# Foreword from the Executive Sponsor

Since my appointment as Executive Sponsor - Disabilities, I've been privileged to support the strengthening of TAFE NSW's approach to diversity and inclusion for students and employees with disability.

This TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2020 – 2022 (DIAP) will guide the embedding of accessible practices across all services for students and employees with disability, creating opportunities for all.

It is critical that we never lose sight of the importance of diversity within our organisation. This DIAP is an integral part of facilitating that recognition and fostering the growth of a diverse workforce that reflects our communities.

**David Backley**

Chief Information Officer, Systems Group



David Backley



# About TAFE NSW

The New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFE NSW) was established as a statutory agency by the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990 (NSW). It is the NSW Government's public provider of Vocational Education and Training (VET).

TAFE NSW, as the largest public VET provider in Australasia, is highly respected, both nationally and internationally, for the quality of its teachers and graduates. TAFE NSW delivers high-quality VET and higher education across many locations including metropolitan, regional and remote areas of NSW, interstate and overseas, as well as online via TAFE Digital and in the workplace.



## **TAFE NSW's key objectives under the Act include:**



Provide educationally or vocationally disadvantaged groups with access to technical and further education and other specialised services

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Provide technical and further education services to meet the needs of individuals and the skill needs of the workforce in particular basic and pre-vocational education as well as vocational education

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Provide adults and young people with a range of technical and further education services that recognise the changing nature of the working environment and the need for new skills and re-training

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Provide students with the maximum opportunity to progress to further education and training by linking their studies to further TAFE NSW courses or those of other education and training providers

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TAFE NSW's Strategic Plan further sets out our commitment to serving our local communities through providing inclusive and accessible services for all.

# Our commitment to people with disability

The *NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014* commits the NSW Government to promoting inclusion of people with disability, which will enrich community life for everyone.

TAFE NSW is committed to creating a learning and working environment where dignity, trust, respect and the promotion of diversity and inclusion are valued. As such we have developed this TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan seeks to embed a culture of inclusion for people with disability across all Regional locations and TAFE Digital, implementing strategies and actions that will identify and address barriers to access and enable students and staff with disability to fully participate in learning, teaching and working, and to fully access physical, digital, living and communication environments across all campuses.



We aspire to be a training provider of choice for people with disability. Approximately 11% of students enrolled in 2019 formally identified as having disability<sup>1</sup>. A greater percentage of students with disability receive on-going individualised services. Through the implementation of this plan, TAFE NSW will continue to evolve its ambition to be a training provider of choice for people with disability.

For over 45 years, TAFE NSW Disability Teacher Consultants, have utilised their expertise in disability legislation, reasonable adjustments, Universal Design for Learning and teaching/delivery, assisting students with disability to achieve their educational, vocational and employment outcomes, as required by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, Disability Standards for Education 2005 and Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.



Our organisation employs around 15,000 people across NSW. Approximately 2% of our staff have identified as having a disability (2019)<sup>2</sup>. We are committed to breaking down barriers so that all employees can access all business areas. TAFE NSW aspires to be an employer of choice for people with disability by addressing barriers, bias and discrimination, and providing equal employment opportunities for people with disability.

As the largest public provider of training in Australia, we firmly believe that education and skills development create great opportunities to enable community members to fully participate in training, employment and community life to their full potential.



# What does success look like?

TAFE NSW is committed to achieving outcomes against the actions outlined in our *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 – 2022* to create an improved environment where students and staff enjoy learning and working.

Our success will be demonstrated in line with the focus areas in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines*:



**Attitudes and behaviours** – Increased confidence and awareness across the organisation of disability and its diversity to foster positive attitudes and behaviours towards disability including:

- An environment where people feel safe to make the choice to disclose disability or not
- Integrated training for staff and managers on understanding disability and its impacts
- People with disability involved in the design, development and testing of products and processes
- Growth in partnerships with external stakeholders
- Improved engagement and satisfaction scores



**Liveable communities** – Improved accessibility to physical and digital environments and reduced barriers to training and employment for people with disability to ensure equitable and dignified access across all TAFE environments including:

- Campuses compliant with accessibility requirements
- Accessibility embedded in future facility design, planning and procurement
- Improved existing infrastructure and digital space for accessible and inclusive learning, teaching and working



**Systems and processes** – Working towards enhanced accessibility for students and staff with disability to navigate TAFE NSW systems and processes including:

- All available information compliant with accessibility guidelines including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- Provision of mechanisms for feedback on accessibility and inclusion
- Continuously improved accessibility to internal systems and processes for staff and students with disability



**Employment** – Working towards the integration of workforce diversity into the employee life-cycle to increase and enhance the employment of people with disability at TAFE NSW including:

- Growth in employment of people with disability in line with one of the NSW Premier's Priorities 2025: 5.6% of government sector roles held by people with a disability<sup>3</sup>
- Diversity and inclusion as a key consideration for strategic workforce planning, recruitment, career and development opportunities for staff with disability



# What is disability?

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes disability that:

- presently exists
- previously existed but no longer exists
- may exist in the future
- is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not)

There are many different kinds of disability and they can result from accidents, illness or genetic disorders. A disability may affect mobility, ability to learn things, or ability to communicate easily, and some people may have more than one. A disability may be visible or hidden, may be permanent or temporary and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's abilities.

Although some people are born with disability, many people acquire disability. For example, a person may acquire a disability through a workplace incident or car accident, or may develop a disability as they age.



# Focus areas, outcomes and actions

The TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan is focused on aligning the TAFE NSW values of customer first, collaboration, integrity and excellence with four key focus areas:

1. Policy and Planning
2. Accessible Physical and Digital Environment
3. Training and Employment
4. Best Practices of Inclusion and Accessibility.

The outcomes and actions set in this Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) are linked to the four strategic goals of the *TAFE NSW Strategic Plan 2016 – 2022* and the focus areas in the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines*. This will ensure that the DIAP outcomes and actions are embedded in our core business.

## Policy and planning

Outcome	Action
<b>1.</b> A policy framework that embeds the rights of people with disability across all planning and activities of TAFE NSW	<b>1a.</b> Develop contemporary policies, supporting procedures and guidelines for the provisions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ inclusive and accessible services to students and prospective students with disability</li> <li>▪ an inclusive and accessible working environment for TAFE NSW employees and future employees with disability</li> </ul>
	<b>1b.</b> Establish a governance framework to guide the implementation of the outcomes and actions set in the DIAP
	<b>1c.</b> Develop a DIAP implementation guide outlining accountability and reporting mechanisms to track progress across TAFE NSW
	<b>1d.</b> Progressively review and improve TAFE NSW documents, written directions and related resources to identify and address gaps in accessibility and inclusion

## Accessible physical and digital environment

Outcome	Action
2. Accessible and inclusive services and resources to enable equitable access and active participation in TAFE NSW for students and employees with disability	2a. Ensure adequate accessible digital and assistive technology services to students and employees with disability on teaching and learning platforms, corporate systems and processes
	2b. Proactively identify and apply advances in emerging assistive technology
	2c. Continuously evaluate and improve existing assistive technologies
3. An accessible and inclusive physical environment to enable equitable access and full participation in TAFE NSW for students and employees with disability	3a. Review, evaluate and plan current facilities, teaching and learning spaces to ensure that all campuses and environments comply with accessibility requirements
	3b. Continue to and continuously improve embedding accessibility in all future facility design, planning and delivery for students and staff with disability



## Training and employment

Outcome	Action
<b>4.</b> Clear pathways to further education, training and employment for students with disability	<b>4a.</b> Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders including all NSW schools, Higher Education, industry and Disability Employment Service providers to provide support, mentoring and pathways to training and employment for people with disability
<b>5.</b> Enhanced awareness, capability and accountability within TAFE NSW for inclusive and accessible practices	<b>5a.</b> Provide training and resources to raise the awareness of all TAFE NSW staff, including Executive and Management, to identify barriers to training and employment for people with disability
	<b>5b.</b> Develop targeted initiatives to build the capability of all staff, including Executive and Management, in practising inclusion and accessibility
	<b>5c.</b> Build and embed capability in application of Universal Design for Learning across all corporate, delivery and product development areas
	<b>5d.</b> Develop guidelines to support staff in understanding and delivering reasonable adjustments
<b>6.</b> Enhanced recruitment, retention and career progression for people with disability at TAFE NSW	<b>6a.</b> Review employment practices to improve equitable access and participation in recruitment and retention processes for people with disability at TAFE NSW
	<b>6b.</b> Increase the number of staff with disability in line with the Premier's Priority 2025 that ensure 5.6% of government sector roles are held by people with disability, and foster an environment that enables their career progression within TAFE NSW
	<b>6c.</b> Coach and support TAFE NSW leaders to increase their capability and confidence in recruiting and supporting staff with disability

## Best practices of inclusion and accessibility

Outcome	Action
<b>7.</b> Best practices for inclusion and accessibility embedded in training and learning to address barriers experienced by students with disability	<b>7a.</b> Establish a disability advisory panel consisting of staff and students with industry and lived experience to provide advice on inclusion, accessibility, training and employment pathways
	<b>7b.</b> Review, evaluate and improve existing products and delivery modes for inclusive and accessible practices
	<b>7c.</b> Embed inclusion and accessibility in TAFE NSW product development to reduce barriers to learning for students with disability
	<b>7d.</b> Embed Universal Design for Learning in all physical and online environments to address specific barriers to learning, teaching and support services
<b>8.</b> TAFE NSW is recognised as the VET provider of choice for NSW people with disability	<b>8a.</b> Develop strategic targets and processes to ensure continuous improvement for TAFE NSW to be a VET provider of choice for people with disability
	<b>8b.</b> Embed review and continuous improvement of all services, equipment, and physical and digital environments to identify gaps and ensure consistent support for students with disability across all stages of the student learning-cycle at TAFE NSW
	<b>8c.</b> Support, upskill and equip TAFE NSW teaching and support staff to achieve compliance in reasonable adjustment and inclusive teaching and employment practices

# Policy Context

The development of the TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2020 – 2022 is guided by the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines* and is informed by a number of internal and external policies and legislation, including:

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and Optional Protocol (United Nations)
- Disability (Access to Premises - buildings) Standards 2010 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Commonwealth)
- TAFE NSW Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- TAFE NSW Social Inclusion and Participation Policy (intranet)
- TAFE NSW Students with Disability Policy (intranet)
- Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990 (NSW)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Commonwealth)

# Governance, Accountability and Reporting

In accordance with the *NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines*, TAFE NSW will establish and clearly communicate governance and accountability arrangements across the organisation in its implementation of the TAFE NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan by incorporating the outcomes and actions into its business operations and delivery at all levels.

An implementation guide will be developed to ensure that accountability and responsibility are identified to provide ongoing monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Plan. Progress against the actions listed in the Plan will be regularly reported and monitored to reflect achievements and respond to continuous improvement needs, and will be included in the TAFE NSW Annual Report.



# Glossary

Term	Meaning
Access	Referring to people's ability to participate in the life of TAFE NSW including its learning, teaching, physical, digital, social and communication environments. It indicates whether a student/staff with disability can participate in training and work <sup>4</sup> .
Accessibility	A measure of disability access in TAFE NSW to ensure that all students and staff can fully access the physical and digital environments, systems and processes, and other facilities and services <sup>5</sup> .
Assistive technology	Assistive devices that enable people with disability to fully participate in every aspect of life. They cover a whole range of devices from sophisticated screen readers, dictation software and closed captioning systems to tactile tape measures, head pointers and liquid level indicators <sup>6</sup> .
Barrier	Factors in a person's environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability. These include aspects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a physical environment that is not accessible</li> <li>▪ lack of relevant assistive technology (assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices)</li> <li>▪ negative attitudes of people towards disability</li> <li>▪ services, systems and policies that are either non-existent or that hinder the involvement of all people with a disability or a health condition in all areas of life<sup>7</sup>.</li> </ul>
Disclosure	Referring to a personal decision to share information about disability, and the impact it has on aspects of a person's life, in order to determine strategies for support and reasonable adjustment <sup>8</sup> .

Term	Meaning
Diversity	Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognises our individual differences including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual diversity and orientation, socio-economic status, age, ability, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual <sup>9</sup> .
Inclusion	When people of diverse backgrounds (e.g. of different abilities, ages, cultural backgrounds, genders) feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents <sup>10</sup> .
Reasonable adjustment for students	A legislative term that refers to a measure or action taken by an education provider to enable students with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as students without disability <sup>11</sup> .
Reasonable adjustment for staff	Referring to workplace adjustments to reduce/remove barriers so that an employee with disability can perform the essential requirements of their job <sup>12</sup> .
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	UDL is a research-based set of principles to guide the design of learning environments that are accessible and effective for all. Its philosophy and principles are designed to provide pedagogical strategies for instructors to maximise learning opportunities and allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skills appropriate for their learning style. UDL reduces barriers and provides support for all students, including students with disabilities and diverse backgrounds. As a result, the implementation of UDL means that all students from any background or level of learning to have an equal opportunity to learn <sup>13</sup> .

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