

News from Disability Commissioner Tasmania, February 2026

Happy new year! Welcome to the first edition of the Disability Commissioner Tasmania newsletter for 2026.

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Message from the Commissioner



Caption: Photo of our Disability Commissioner Catherine Whittington.

Hello everyone,

We are well and truly moving into 2026 as I pen this message to you. I hope you will have noticed that expressions of interest have opened for the Disability Advisory Inclusion Council, which we sometimes refer to as 'the Council'. Although it is not the first Tasmanian advisory council for disability, it is the first council to be established through the *Disability Rights, Safeguarding and Inclusion Act 2024 (Tas)* (the Act).

Many people have asked me what sort of person should apply to be on the council. My answer is, if you are a Tasmanian with disability or a Tasmanian connected to the disability community, have a vision for a more accessible and inclusive Tasmania, want to work with others to achieve this, then you should absolutely apply. My hope is for our Council to represent the Tasmanian community and disability community. We welcome applications from people with diverse experiences and backgrounds no matter where in Tasmania you might live, whether or not you have served on a council before. If you need help applying, you will find more information in this newsletter about how to link in with our council recruitment partner, Disability Voices Tasmania.

If you are curious about what the Disability Commissioner Tasmania team and I were working on last year, you will find a 7-month progress report on our website. This will give you specific information about our policy submissions, reports and enquiries received under the Act, and other projects.

In the first half of this year, our strategic focus is on the development of the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan. My team is working on our submission as part of the consultation. If you would like us to include your thoughts in our submission, please contact us to chat about the best way to do that.

Lastly, I'm delighted to let you know about the new Deputy Disability Commissioner, Ross Casey, who will start work in the office in mid-February. Ross joins us from the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission where he was an Assistant Director in Practice Quality Compliance.

As always, there is lots of work ahead of us and I am grateful to do it alongside each of you.

Catherine

Join the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Advisory Council



Caption: Applications open - Be part of the inaugural Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Advisory Council.

Expressions of interest are now open for Tasmanians to serve as council members or Chairperson of the first Disability Inclusion Advisory Council under the *Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act 2024*.

The Council will advise the Minister for Disability Services and the Disability Commissioner on improving inclusion and access for Tasmanians with disability.

Council members will receive sitting and preparation fees. Travel, accommodation and adjustments will be covered.

What will the Council do?

- Provide consultation on the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan – a roadmap for government action
- Assist government agencies to improve access, uphold disability rights, and remove barriers once the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan is implemented.
- Provide policy advice to identify barriers and practical solutions.
- Collaborate with other councils locally and nationally to share ideas and strengthen access and inclusion.

Who can apply?

If you are a Tasmanian with Disability or a Tasmanian connected to the Disability community, we encourage you to apply. We welcome applicants with different types of disability, living in all areas of our state, First Nations people, and LGBTIQ+ community members.

Support with applications is available through our office and Disability Voices Tasmania. You can phone them on 6215 6800 or email office@disabilityvoicestas.org.au.

Information sessions

Together with Disability Voices Tasmania, we will hold information sessions around the state to learn more about the council, to ask questions, and help with applications. Sessions have been confirmed for:

- Burnie - 18 February, 1:15pm-2:15pm, Burnie Library
- Queenstown - 19 February, 12:30pm-1:30pm, West Coast Community Services Hub
- Launceston - 4 March, 11:15am-12:15pm, Launceston Library

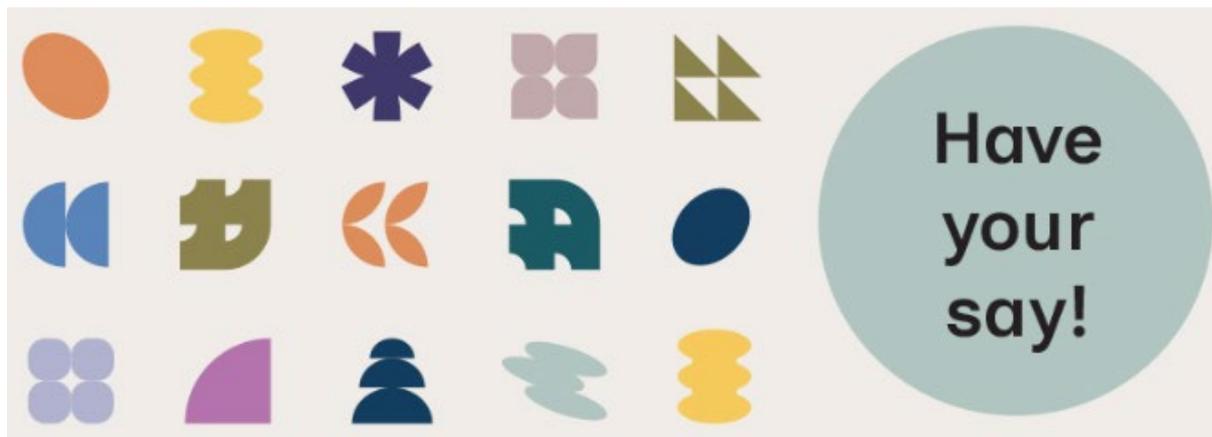
Information sessions will also be held in Kingston, Huonville, Bicheno, and St Helens. Stay tuned to our socials and website for dates and times.

More information

Visit the [Join Our Council web page](#) to register your interest for an information session, and to read more about the council and terms of reference.

Applications close 24 March 2026.

Add your voice to Tasmania's first Inclusion Plan



Source: Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan consultation

Tasmania is developing its first Disability Inclusion Plan, and your voice is needed.

The plan is a key measure of the Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act. It outlines clear expectations for government to ensure Tasmanians with disability can participate fully, safely, and with dignity in everyday life.

Disability Commissioner Tasmania will make a submission to the consultation. If you would like to contribute but don't feel comfortable making your own submission, please contact us to have your views included.

More information

More information on the Discussion Paper, ways to have your say, and details of online and in-person forums, is available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website - [Department of Premier and Cabinet - Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan - Consultation](#)

Consultation closes 10 March 2026.

Other News

Local Engagement Officers needed for the Census

Do you have experience working with local communities?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is preparing for the next Census on Tuesday 11 August 2026 and is recruiting Local Engagement Officers to help support community participation.

Local Engagement Officers lead a team of field staff and coordinate Census activities to support people to complete the Census. They build relationships, answer questions at information sessions, and help make sure everyone is represented.

[More information and how to apply visit ABS Census Careers.](#)

About Arts and Disability Network Australia (ADNA for short)

Arts and Disability Network Australia (ADNA), is a new organisation that connects, champions and amplifies the voices of d/Deaf artists, and artists, arts workers and screen practitioners with disability nationwide. You can learn more about ADNA and stay up to date on initiatives and opportunities by:

- [visiting their website](#) and follow them on LinkedIn and Instagram for regular updates.
- [signing up to ADNA's mailing list for updates and future opportunities](#)

You can also [book a 20-minute one-to-one consultation with Sarah-Mace Dennis, the National Director of ADNA](#). These take place on Mondays between 2:00pm-5:00pm AEDT (Melbourne). You can use this time to meet Sarah, discuss your practice or organisation and talk about any ideas you have for the future of ADNA.

Creative Workplaces Survey

The Creative Workplaces Survey is the first national survey by the Australian Government to understand the working experiences of people in creative industries. It will focus on pay and working conditions, safety at work, bullying, discrimination and harassment. Feedback from this survey will help inform future policies, programs, advocacy, and training opportunities to improve standards and safety in creative workplaces.

ADNA is providing one on one access support to d/Deaf artists, and artists, arts workers and screen practitioners with disability to help complete the Creative Workplaces Survey. If you would like to participate, call ADNA on 08 8463 1689 or email hello@artsdisabilitynetwork.com.au. The survey closes on 23 February 2026.

[More information about the survey](#)

Submissions

We recently made submissions to the following consultations.

Disability Safeguards Consultation

A submission was made to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing as part of the development of a Disability Support Quality and Safeguarding Framework.

Our submission focused on systemic issues rather than individual questions. We highlighted the need for reforms that are practical, enforceable and accessible, noting Tasmania's high digital disadvantage and the importance of cultural change alongside legal reform.

[Read our submission to the Disability Safeguards consultation](#)

Disability Discrimination Act (Commonwealth) Review

The Commissioner has also made a submission to the review of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act.

In our submission, we supported modernising the way disability and discrimination are defined, introducing a positive duty to prevent discrimination, clearer obligations to provide adjustments across employment, education and services, and reforms to make the Act easier to use and more effective in practice, including protections against harassment, offensive behaviour and vilification.

[Read our submission to the review of the Disability Discrimination Act.](#)

Out and about

TasPride Pride Parade - Hobart

Saturday 14 February 2026

We will be joining the TasPride Pride Parade in Hobart this Saturday. If you would like to walk with us, you can meet us at car park spot 35 at the marshalling area on the corner of Patrick and Elizabeth Streets from 12noon-12:45pm. The parade begins at 1:00pm. [Read more about the Pride Parade on their website.](#)

Office update

Strategic plan and values development

In March our team will begin defining the values that will underpin our culture and the way we work. These values will guide the creation of our first strategic plan in line with our functions under the Disability Rights, Inclusion and Safeguarding Act. The strategic plan will set clear, measurable goals and priorities that our office will work towards in the years ahead. We look forward to sharing our Values and Strategic Plan once it is finalised.

Events

Disability Commissioner Tasmania will share information about events we know are happening within the Tasmanian Disability community. These events are not run by the Commissioner and are not part of her work. Contact us if you would like to have your event considered for inclusion in this newsletter.

Australia's Disability Strategy National Forum

24-25 February 2026, Adelaide, in-person and online

The forum will focus on two key topics: health and safeguarding, with presentations, discussions and sharing learnings and ideas. The forum is for people with disability, community leaders, allies, family members, carers, supporters, and governments.

In-person registrations have now closed; however, you can still register to join online. [Learn more and register via the forum web page.](#)

Looking ahead

Living My Best Life Art Exhibition regional tour

We are working with Libraries Tasmania to tour the Living My Best Life Art Exhibition at regional libraries in the state. More details will be available soon.

In the meantime, you can learn more about the exhibition, artists and artworks on our website - [Online Gallery - Living My Best Life Art Exhibition | Disability Commissioner Tasmania](#)

We welcome feedback on our newsletter

Thank you for reading our newsletter. If you have any suggestions or would like to provide us with feedback on the newsletter, please contact us.

How to contact us

- By phone: 1800 179 249 (free call) or 03 6270 5500
- Email us at: contact@disabilitycommissioner.tas.gov.au
- Visit our website: www.disabilitycommissioner.tas.gov.au
- Write us a letter: Disability Commissioner Tasmania, GPO Box 123, Hobart 7001
- Visit us: Level 5, 188 Collins Street, Hobart, 7000. Our office hours are 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Make a Report

If you are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of someone with disability, [make a report to us](#).

Connect with us on social media

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About this newsletter

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