

Top priorities for 2026-27



South Australian Pre-Budget Submission

South Australia stands at a critical juncture for achieving its commitments to people with disability. The convergence of major reform agendas, including the implementation of Disability Royal Commission (DRC) recommendations, changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and the rollout of Thriving Kids and other Foundational Supports, is reshaping how people access services, exercise rights, and participate in community life. These reforms present both an opportunity and a risk. Without targeted investment and clear policy direction, existing gaps will widen, unmet need will increase, and the rights, safety, and inclusion of people with disability will be set back further.

This submission identifies four priority areas for the 2026–27 South Australian Budget that are essential to delivering fair, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes. First, urgent and ongoing State Government investment in independent disability advocacy services is required to support equitable access to mainstream services, uphold human rights, and prevent issues escalating into crises. Second, co-designing and implementing a comprehensive Inclusive Education Strategy will ensure all children and young people with disability can learn alongside their peers in mainstream settings without discrimination and exclusion. Third, dedicated funding should be allocated to fully realise the commitments set out in the State Disability Inclusion Plan and state authority and council Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs), so that statements of intent become real measurable outcomes. Finally, the Community Visitor Scheme should be expanded and resourced to operate as a robust independent safeguarding mechanism in line with the expectations of the DRC.

Across each of these areas a consistent theme emerges: commitments without resourcing do not deliver outcomes. While South Australia has established strong policy frameworks and legislative

intent, the absence of dedicated funding and implementation pathways continues to limit their impact. At the same time, increasing cost-of-living pressures, changes to the NDIS, and growing demand for services are placing additional strain on people with disability and the systems that support them.

Investment in these priority areas is not only a matter of equity and rights; it will deliver increased economic and system effectiveness and efficiency. Early intervention through advocacy reduces downstream costs especially in health, housing, justice, and emergency services. Inclusive education delivers better outcomes for all students. Accessible and inclusive communities strengthen participation, connection, and natural safeguards. A well-resourced safeguarding system reduces the incidence and impact of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The 2026–27 State Budget provides an opportunity for the South Australian Government to move decisively from intent to action. By investing in these priorities, the Government can ensure its commitments to implement DRC recommendations, *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*, and the State Disability Inclusion Plan are realised in practice, delivering tangible improvements in the lives of people with disability across the state.

Top priority areas for the 2026-27 South Australian Budget are:

1 Fund independent disability advocacy services

In its Final Report, the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) emphasises that independent advocacy services are essential for upholding the human rights and wellbeing of people with disability.¹ It recognises that all people with disability should have access to high-quality, well-resourced, independent advocacy services and that this is a joint Commonwealth-State responsibility. Yet, the DRC found that existing advocacy programs are not meeting demand and, therefore, additional investments are needed.²

We wholeheartedly endorse DRC Recommendation 6.21(c) that affirms ‘state and territory governments should ensure long-term and stable funding for independent disability advocacy programs in their jurisdictions to meet demand.’³ Advocates can assist with navigating mainstream service systems and support people with disability and services to work together to resolve issues early before they escalate. High quality individual advocacy, occurring in partnership with the person with disability, also evens the playing field – by offering advocacy support to those experiencing the most profound types of barriers and entrenched disadvantage it can enable fairer processes and more equitable outcomes, including for those with intersectional life experiences. Further, the South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Final Report highlighted that advocacy services had given evidence about the importance of accessible domestic and family

violence services, buildings, and systems, and acknowledged the barriers that people with disability often face without access to tailored support.⁴

The Productivity Commission also emphasised in its 2017 NDIS Cost Study Report⁵ that both tiers of government should fund independent disability advocacy services. The longer South Australia goes without this critical state investment, the greater the safeguarding risk to the lives and wellbeing of people with disability. South Australia is the only state not to invest in this key responsibility, with others, such as Queensland, increasing funding significantly after the DRC.⁶ For too long the disability community has witnessed the State Government actively avoid funding independent disability advocacy services by seeking to incorrectly defer responsibility to the Federal Government or inaccurately claiming that advocacy is wrapped up in the state's contribution to National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The NDIS cannot and does not provide budgets for independent advocacy, by design, due to the conflicts of interest that would arise.⁷

In addition, many South Australians with disability are not eligible for individual NDIS plans. With the projected cuts to NDIS eligibility and budgets, including to social and community participation supports, as announced by Federal Minister for the NDIS Mark Butler in his National Press Club Address on 22 April 2026, it is expected the numbers of South Australians receiving NDIS support will significantly reduce very soon. More broadly, there are more than 380,000 South Australians with disability that access state services, such as housing, transport, healthcare, education, domestic and family violence support, and justice services. These services are often not accessible for people with disability or present significant barriers. When this occurs, people with disability do not always know how to navigate systems in order to overcome these barriers, which often results in them being referred in frustrating, time consuming, and ineffective ways between multiple public services, agencies, local emergency departments and police stations, or approaching Members of Parliament. Sufficient ongoing individual and representative (peer) advocacy funding would give people with disability a pathway to navigate the systems and services they need and remove the barriers restricting them from living safe, fair, and equitable lives in our communities.

In 2017, a Cost Benefit Analysis commissioned by Disability Advocacy Network Australia estimated for every dollar spent on independent advocacy, there is \$3.50 return.⁸ Such funding will ease the pressures of some of our already stretched public services (such as our hospitals) and reduce the overall human and financial resources that end up invested in attempting to resolve these matters.

Base SA approach on NSW's Disability Advocacy Futures Program model

We believe the New South Wales (NSW) Government's approach known as the 'Disability Advocacy Futures Program' provides a sound model⁹ on which to base a South Australian program of advocacy funding that can be implemented without any further delay.¹⁰ Significant work was done in that state to design the approach.¹¹ We have modelled a South Australian investment, using the Productivity

Commission's approach in its 2017 Report on NDIS Costs¹² and adjusting for inflation at \$3.5 million in 2026-27 – a modest investment relative to other areas of government expenditure. This should be accompanied by comprehensive data collection and reporting about demand and unmet need to calibrate the investment over time, noting that demand will be higher during the current period of significant changes, including in the NDIS and the roll out of Foundational Supports, as explained further below.

The NSW model includes three streams. It was based on analysis undertaken by its Ageing and Disability Commissioner in 2019:

- 1) Independent individual advocacy services (starting with 50 per cent of the funding)
- 2) Independent representative and peer group advocacy
- 3) Independent systemic advocacy (2 and 3 starting with a share of the other 50 per cent of funding)

Each stream should provide funding across the whole state, not just in metropolitan areas. They should also include specialist disability advocacy, including for First Nations people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, people in closed systems, people with complex communication needs, and similar.

As noted above, the DRC endorsed the Productivity Commission's position that funding for advocacy should be shared between both tiers of government and identified significant unmet need for independent individual advocacy services among people with disability across Australia.¹³ Noting the inadequacy of data about the extent of unmet need, the DRC did not identify a specific level of new funding needed in any state or territory. Additionally, we strongly endorse the DRC's Recommendation 6.22 that all governments 'improve data collection and reporting on met and unmet demand' within their jurisdictions¹⁴ and urge the South Australian Government to implement this immediately alongside a substantial funding commitment. This will ensure future funding levels can be calibrated to the level of need across the state and allow the Government to provide funding certainty to advocacy organisations over the long term.

Demand will be higher during reform period

While we share the optimism that reforms, such as the implementation of Foundational Supports will help ensure people with disability can access the services and supports they need without difficulty, it is very likely that the transition period will see an uptick in already high unmet demand for independent individual advocacy services. Additionally, representative and systemic disability advocacy organisations will be critical to the success of implementing the recommendations of the DRC and the proposed NDIS changes. Effective reforms will require that governments and disability communities work side-by-side in partnership to co-design and implement changes. This important

work requires resources, and we strongly believe investing in organisations from the beginning will deliver enormous benefits over the short, medium, and long terms. Enabling diverse groups and voices to be heard, particularly those of people with lived experience insights, will add significant value to government policymaking.

Recommendation 1.1: The 2026-27 South Australian Budget should invest \$3.5 million per year, for three years, to fund statewide independent disability advocacy programs with three funding streams for organisations to provide individual, representative/peer group, and systemic advocacy. This funding commitment should ensure independent advocacy services are available across the whole state and that specialist services for First Nations people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people in closed systems, people with complex communication needs, and similar are funded in all three streams. At three years, funding should be adjusted based on evidence and data on demand and unmet need.

Recommendation 1.2: The 2026-27 South Australian Budget should invest in comprehensive data collection about demand and unmet need for independent disability advocacy services and publicly report this data on a regular basis. The Government should work with other jurisdictions to ensure data collection is robust, comprehensive, and nationally consistent.

2 Invest in co-designing an Inclusive Education Strategy

All South Australian children should be welcomed and supported at their local mainstream school or early childhood education centre and be provided with a high-quality inclusive education alongside their peers. Sadly, for too many children and young people with disability across our state, this is not the case. Many experience bullying, discrimination, inappropriate discipline, gatekeeping, refusal to make reasonable adjustments, and similar. Recent reforms have not done enough to address this. While a transition to a genuinely inclusive education system will not happen overnight, the South Australian Government needs to kickstart this change now.

The 2026-27 State Budget should invest in the co-design of a South Australian Inclusive Education Strategy in partnership with the disability community, education sector, and other stakeholders that establishes a clear vision for an inclusive education future. It should include the specific steps needed to phase out education models that do not reflect modern standards and embrace new nation-leading inclusive approaches based on recognised best practice. It should build on the work of ['Learn and Thrive: Our strategy for public education in South Australia'](#)¹⁵, which has resulted in some funding for specific inclusive education measures. Now, it is the time to invest in system-level reform to create a step-change that ensures the state achieves the aspirations set out in this document. Each action should be funded for implementation, have a clear timeframe for delivery, and specify who is

accountable for achieving the outcome. Initial phased actions could include, but are not limited to, upskilling principals, educators, and support staff with specific disability inclusion training, professional development, and capacity building programs; investing in inclusive education initiatives in schools to pilot, then scale up, the foundations of new approaches; and committing to not establishing any new 'special' schools or units anywhere in the state, with funding instead directed to ensuring mainstream schools and centres welcome and value all local children.

The Strategy should build on the work already undertaken through the co-design of the '[South Australian Roadmap to Inclusive Education](#)' led by Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)¹⁶ that was launched earlier this year. The Roadmap envisages a three-stage transition over 15 years, which is highly achievable through a shared commitment from governments, educators, and the community. It identifies five focus areas in each stage: culture, community and connection, communication and collaboration, capacity and confidence, and consistency and commitment. As the Roadmap articulates, the result will be a system where 'every student is welcomed, valued, and supported in their local school community ... alongside their same-aged peers in curriculum, activities, and school life with adjustments that support their success' (page 6).

Why an Inclusive Education Strategy is needed now

Decades of research and evidence tells us that inclusive education best prepares children and young people with disability for life and success. Research also demonstrates that students without disability benefit from an inclusive education. These benefits include a more positive sense of self, enhanced communication and language development, increased awareness of diversity, and a higher quality education that is better suited to individual needs.¹⁷ Indeed, decisive action is needed to end the belief that children with disability are best served through separate 'special' things because the evidence demonstrates this is false. We recognise some South Australian families have made the decision for their child to attend 'special' schools or units, often because of poor previous experiences with mainstream provision or a lack of alternative options that meet a child's needs. As the Disability Royal Commission emphasised, when a 'choice' is made in the absence of alternative options, it constitutes a 'coercive choice'.¹⁸ This is not a valid excuse to avoid progress and beneficial change.

South Australia has signed up to the national plan to establish the Thriving Kids program and to deliver a broader system of Foundational Supports. This new model is aimed at reducing costs but will only work if genuine alternatives to individual plans under the NDIS are available and achieving results. For our state to reap the benefits of these initiatives, we need a strong focus on improving mainstream settings so that they are fully inclusive and accessible for diverse needs. Schools and centres will play a crucial role in this. An integrated roll out of the Thriving Kids program alongside a transition to an Inclusive Education system will be mutually beneficial and offers the most cost-effective approach to reform over the long term.

An Inclusive Education Strategy would underpin delivery of election commitments

During the recent election campaign, the Government made numerous promises that align with the intent of developing an Inclusive Education Strategy. Indeed, numerous initiatives undertaken during the previous term of parliament provide a base for further progress, including the State Autism Strategy, Autism Inclusion Teachers program, and commitment to the roll out of three-year-old kindergarten. An overarching Inclusive Education Strategy will complement and strengthen these initiatives, helping to ensure their greatest possible reach and success. The welcome focus on improving outcomes for Autistic students should now be broadened to include all children and young people with disability, which, as highlighted above, will produce positive results for all learners.

While we welcome the \$10 million commitment under the 'More Inclusive School Facilities' promise to upgrade facilities at 20 schools, we strongly believe this would be best rolled out as part of a comprehensive strategy that will ensure all schools are on a trajectory to offer the same features. The risk of selectively allocating funding of this type to only some schools is that they encourage the congregation of children and young people with disability in a few locations, that then produces a slippery slope into de-facto segregation whereby all or most enrolments quickly become students with disability. Further, the Budget should commit to ensuring all infrastructure and program promises are funded and delivered according to Universal Design principles that enable access and inclusion for all students. This especially applies to the \$500 million 'Investment in School Infrastructure' promise, noting that retrofitting accessibility features to new or renovated buildings in the future will cost significantly more than designing and building for genuine accessibility from the start.

Additionally, we endorse the commitment to 'Making Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Work for Families' through a new \$45.5 million investment to extend the availability of programs to a further 68 primary schools. However, our organisation has received numerous anecdotal reports that some existing OSHC programs are overstretched for staff and resources, leaving them unable to support the diverse needs of children attending the school. This then impacts the capacity of parents to participate in the workforce. We recommend the Government ensures that all new and existing OSHC programs are fully accessible and inclusive of all children without discrimination or exclusion.

All South Australian children and young people are best served when they learn, play, and socialise alongside their peers without exclusion. Achieving this will require a significant shift in culture and attitudes, as well as a commitment to taking the steps required to make a successful transition to inclusive education approaches knowing that they will benefit all learners. The best time to kickstart this process is now through investing in the co-design of a comprehensive South Australian Inclusive Education Strategy in the 2026-27 State Budget.

Recommendation 2.1: The South Australian Government should commit approximately \$500,000 to co-design a South Australian Inclusive Education Strategy in its 2026-27 State

Budget. The Strategy should be genuinely co-designed in partnership with the disability community, education sector, and other stakeholders.

Recommendation 2.2: The South Australian Government should commit to funding the delivery of actions in line with a South Australian Inclusive Education Strategy in its 2026-27 State Budget and over forward years to ensure a successful implementation. While the co-design process for the Strategy occurs, the 2026-27 State Budget should proactively invest an initial \$10 million this year to begin preparing and upskilling principals, educators, and support staff with disability inclusion training, professional development, and other capacity building programs to support transitioning to genuinely inclusive education approaches in their classrooms and schools.

Recommendation 2.3: The South Australian Government should ensure all its election promises are funded and delivered to be fully inclusive and accessible to all children and young people in South Australia, including all new infrastructure and programs. The 2026-27 Budget should not fund the establishment of any new ‘special’ schools or units.

③ Allocate dedicated funding to access and inclusion

South Australia’s commitments under *Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031* and the State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025-2029 are critical to our state becoming fully inclusive and accessible. All people should be able to access and be included in the community. Access is a fundamental human right, and inclusion is essential to a fair and just society. To ensure all people with disability are able to access and be included in society, we must remove barriers — physical, attitudinal, systemic, and digital. Removing these barriers will enable people with disability to fully participate in all areas of life. In order to remove these barriers, urgent investment is required. The State Government must provide substantial, dedicated funding to achieve the outcomes in the updated State Disability Inclusion Plan and to achieving the actions under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) of State Government authorities, to ensure accountability and that statements of intent are fully realised in practice – in essence, to make the commitments *real*.

In 2018, the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA) was legislated with the aim of promoting the inclusion of South Australians with disability. It sets out a requirement for the South Australian Government to prepare a State Disability Inclusion Plan and for State Government authorities to prepare Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs). Following this, the first State Disability Inclusion Plan (*‘Inclusive SA’*) and DAIPS were developed. While this was an important step in creating better outcomes for people with disability to genuinely participate as active members of their community and increase their chances of leading a fair and good life (including education and employment opportunities), we are yet to see many real tangible outcomes, despite sincere effort from many. We were also informed

through many conversations with State Government authorities, that the lack of designated funding and resources attached to DAIP's prohibited them from being able to turn the good intentions contained in the DAIPs into real outcomes. This is not only a missed opportunity but undermines the intention of the Act.

The State Government has now launched the new State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025-2029, which was significantly delayed with the preceding plan ending in 2023. The delay in releasing the new plan hindered the ability for state authorities to engage in a genuine consultation process with people with disability and the community (if they undertook one at all); forcing them to rush the creation of their DAIP's, which will likely have detrimental consequences to the access and inclusion agenda over the next four years. This process, coupled with the lack of dedicated funding, cause significant concern to the disability community, not only instilling a strong sense that the State Government is not committed to improving access and inclusion across the state, but could potentially undo any progress State Government authorities have made in their inclusion journey.

While statements of intent are a first step, without the necessary investments in DAIP actions little change is actually achieved. In the lead up to the 2022 State Election, we asked all parties to commit to ensuring resources would be available to state authorities and councils to implement DAIP actions and we were advised by the State Labor Party that this would be seriously considered as part of the annual Budget processes. With the forthcoming roll out of Foundational Supports and Thriving Kids, which will require improved accessibility and inclusion in mainstream settings if the approach is to succeed, it has never been more important to turn the good intentions contained in DAIPs into real outcomes.

It is of utmost importance that the State Disability Inclusion Plan and State Government authorities' DAIPs are also adequately resourced to address the State Government's responsibilities in relation to the DRC in areas such as funding for independent advocacy, investments in safeguarding, accessible housing, and a funded plan for inclusive education.

Impact of planned National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) reforms

The Federal Government has recently announced significant changes to the NDIS¹⁹, which will lead to reducing access to the Scheme, as well as participants' budgets. Thousands of South Australians with disability will lose access to individual plans within the next couple of years. As a result, we need the State Government to re-engage with its responsibilities to people with disability, and to be ready for the big shift in the way many people access supports – such as by making mainstream supports and services inclusive and accessible. The State Government cannot ignore its responsibilities to people with disability who will need to rely on Foundational Supports and/or mainstream services in coming years. The State Government needs to ensure people receive the services and supports they

need, and should do this by providing additional dedicated funding to ensure mainstream supports and services are inclusive and accessible to all people.

Building inclusive communities should be part of DRC response

We believe inclusive communities are where neighbourhoods are welcoming and inclusive of all their members, where social infrastructure is available and accessible to meet residents' needs, where kindness is extended to everyone, where social connections are made and continued, and where natural safeguards emerge in people's lives. An inclusive community benefits from the participation and contribution of all its members, bringing a diversity of voices, ideas, and perspectives into decision-making, activities and events, businesses, and general community life. It is this diversity that makes community life rich, interesting, and dynamic for the benefit of all. It also increases the likelihood that someone will notice when someone is absent, or if it appears something has gone wrong for them.

But too often people are excluded from their neighbourhoods. Some people may not be easily visible to others, perhaps because they rarely venture out. Or because they are receiving assistance from a support provider and leave the house escorted. Or because others notice support workers visiting a house so are less inclined to reach out or even chat over the fence. Where support professionals are obviously present, where houses resemble facilities, or where the physical environment creates a sense of seclusion, the neighbourhood rhythms created can result in people being disconnected and isolated. They are in the neighbourhood but are not *of* the neighbourhood. Hence, when something is not right, it is much less likely anyone else will notice.

The emergence of inclusive neighbourhoods and communities cannot be taken for granted. It takes deliberate intentional actions and investments. It is essential the South Australian Government's response to the DRC includes funding for grassroots initiatives that will foster natural safeguards across our communities and mean the state is less reliant on essential yet inevitably imperfect formal safeguards (imperfect because it is impossible for regulators to be in all places, all of the time, all at once). We recommend that approaches to how this funding is distributed and used be co-designed with communities at the grassroots level, noting that every community is unique and what works in one place cannot always be replicated elsewhere.

Recommendation 3.1: The South Australian Government should provide substantial, dedicated funding in the State Budget 2026-27 to achieve the outcomes in the updated State Disability Inclusion Plan and provide funding for actions under the Disability Access and Inclusion Plans (DAIPs) of state authorities to ensure statements of intent are fully realised in practice. Examples of investments include, but are not limited to:

- **Provide resources to build the skills and capacity of all State Government authorities to undertake robust genuine co-design processes in partnership with the disability community, intersectional communities, and others.**
- **Establish a new Grants SA funding stream open to local councils to provide financial assistance for implementing specific DAIP actions, such as modifications to buildings or websites, training for staff, and support to set-up and run local advisory or co-design groups to draw on the lived experiences and insights of the disability community.**

4 Increase investment in the Community Visitors Scheme

The Community Visitor Scheme (CVS) is a crucial safeguard to prevent and identify violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of South Australians with disability. The DRC's recommendations 11.12 and 11.13 directed states to *urgently* implement nationally consistent Community Visitor Schemes (CVS), to resource frequent visits for people at elevated risk, and to ensure information-sharing with the NDIA and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission.²⁰ South Australia accepted both recommendations but only *in principle*.²¹ An in-principle acceptance without funded implementation is not an adequate response; it is a deferral. The 2026–27 Budget is an opportunity to convert that acceptance into operational reality.

The current CVS model is funded to visit state-run disability accommodation, mental health settings, and some NDIS participants under Public Advocate guardianship. However, new regulations have expanded the scope to include adults receiving non-government disability supports as an opt-in scheme (excluding children). No additional funding was provided to support this expanded remit, and, under the new regulations, the strongest inquiry functions do not apply uniformly across all NDIS cohorts.²² Minister Butler's recent NDIS reform announcement creates further potential safeguarding risks including thousands of people with disability falling through the cracks as responsibility for services and supports transitions to new models or disappears altogether. Volunteer visitors, working in pairs without dedicated regional support or risk-stratified visit benchmarks, cannot alone deliver the frequency or reach the DRC envisaged.²³

In South Australia, unlike in many other jurisdictions, aside from the Principal Community Visitor (the Public Advocate), and a small number of operational staff, Community Visitors are voluntary roles. While the most recent CVS annual report stated that there were 41 volunteer Community Visitors, demand for visits is high, and availability of Community Visitors is limited. To be appointed as a Community Visitor, prospective volunteers are required to not be working fulltime or studying fulltime and must commit to three-year terms. We acknowledge the need for experienced Community Visitors who have time to undertake the role. However, at the same time, we note that these

requirements are significant asks of volunteers, which both limit the potential pool of volunteers and the diversity of prospective applicants.

It is also imperative to ensure that there is good quality training, and access to ongoing professional development of Visitors, which is easier to achieve in situations where staff are paid for attendance. There are other states and territories where Community Visitors are already paid.²⁴ We consider that the CVS should be employing and paying staff to undertake CVS roles.

Aligns with State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029

The State Disability Inclusion Plan 2025–2029 includes ‘Domain 5: Safety, Rights, and Justice’ as a core outcome area, with a specific safeguarding commitment. The DHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2026–2030 (DAIP) goes further, nominating actions 49–52 to coordinate the DRC response, pursue nationally consistent CVS, expand CVS scope, and establish proactive information-sharing protocols with state and federal safeguarding bodies. These are government commitments already on the public record. A budget that does not fund them renders those plans aspirational rather than operational and invites scrutiny from the disability community, disability advocacy organisations, and oversight bodies. People who are isolated from others are at far greater risk of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation than those with diverse networks of freely given relationships that form strong natural safeguards. This must be rectified immediately to ensure people with disability in South Australia are adequately safeguarded and reduce the prevalence of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Expand the capacity of CVS

In the view of JFA Purple Orange, the CVS should be resourced at levels such that they have the capacity to visit:

- Mental health facilities in line with the *Mental Health Act (2009) (SA)*, including changes implemented via the *Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill (2025) (SA)*
- Disability accommodation locations at a minimum twice per year and that there be scope for more frequent visits when risks are assessed to be high, or on receipt of any concerns being raised; and
- Clients of the Public Guardian, at a frequency established in negotiations with the co-design group, including both people with disability, supporters/advocacy, and representative organisations and other experts, with sufficient resourcing such that they can undertake more frequent visits if risks are assessed to be high, or on receipt of any concerns being raised.

An additional budget allocation over three years to the existing CVS base will transform the Scheme from a narrowly scoped volunteer program into a preventative, professional and independent disability safeguard, completing the step that legislation and policy have already signalled but that only new funding can deliver.²⁵ It could be useful to undertake economic modelling within a genuine

co-design process in partnership with the disability community to establish the foundations for achieving the intended outcomes.

Recommendation 4.1: The South Australian Government, in the 2026–27 State Budget, should allocate appropriate funding over the next three years, additional to the current Community Visitor Scheme allocated funding, to expand and reform it into an independent, risk-based safeguarding framework with a skilled and paid workforce. Funding should be sufficient to ensure Community Visitors can visit mental health facilities, state-run settings, disability accommodation settings twice per year, and people under Public Advocate guardianship at a rate to be determined by a co-design group.

About us

JFA Purple Orange is a purpose-led organisation working towards a more inclusive world where people with disability have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. Our work is characterised by co-design and co-production. Based in South Australia, we undertake systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people with disability and their families. We also host a range of peer networks for people with disability including people with intellectual disability, physical and sensory disability, younger people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people in regional South Australia.

Contact us

To discuss our top priorities for the 2026-27 South Australian Budget in more detail, please contact Selena Maddeford, Manager – Policy and Projects, JFA Purple Orange, on (08) 8373 8394 or selenam@purpleorange.org.au.

Notes

¹ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability, ‘Final Report’, Vol.6, ‘Enabling autonomy and access’, September 2023, for example p.255, available at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.

² Ibid, pp.285-289.

³ Ibid, pp.289.

⁴ South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence, ‘Final Report’, 2025, available at <https://www.royalcommissiondfsv.sa.gov.au/publications/With-Courage>.

- ⁵ Productivity Commission, 'National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs Study Report', 2017, available at <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/report/ndis-costs.pdf>.
- ⁶ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Disability Royal Commission Progress Report 2025, Response to Recommendation 6.21, available at <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/disability-royal-commission-progress-report-2025/volume-6-enabling-autonomy-and-access/recommendation-621-additional-funding-for-advocacy-programs>.
- ⁷ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability, 'Final Report', Vol.6, 'Enabling autonomy and access', September 2023, p.273, available at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.
- ⁸ Daley A, Bennett G, Williams R, 'Cost Benefit Analysis of Australian independent disability advocacy agencies', 2017, p.46, available at https://assets.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/222136/subpp0371-ndis-costs-attachment1.pdf.
- ⁹ As outlined in the Ageing and Disability Commission Report 2019, and as implemented in NSW in 2022.
- ¹⁰ NSW Government, Disability Advocacy Futures Program website, available at <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/community-inclusion/disability-and-inclusion/disability-advocacy-futures-program.html>.
- ¹¹ Ageing and Disability Commission, 'Report into Disability Advocacy Funding in NSW', 2019, available at [Review into Disability Advocacy in NSW | Ageing & Disability Commission](#).
- ¹² Productivity Commission, 'National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Costs Study Report', 2017, p.30, available at <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/report/ndis-costs.pdf>.
- ¹³ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability, 'Final Report', Vol.6, 'Enabling autonomy and access', September 2023, pp.255-301, available at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.
- ¹⁴ Ibid, page 293.
- ¹⁵ Available at <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/purpose-media/Public-Education-Strategic-Plan.pdf>.
- ¹⁶ Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), South Australian Roadmap to Inclusive Education, 2026, available at <https://cyda.org.au/saroadmap/south-australian-roadmap-to-inclusive-education/>.
- ¹⁷ There is an abundance of research evidence that demonstrates inclusive education produces better academic, social, and life outcomes for children with and without disability. For more information, visit the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education website at <https://acie.org.au/>; the Australian Alliance for Inclusive Education website at <https://allmeansall.org.au/research/>; and Alana's summary document at http://alana.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A_Summary_of_the_evidence_on_inclusive_education.pdf. Examples of recent academic research include, although are not limited to, Cole, et al., 'The relationship of special education placement and student academic

outcomes', *The Journal of Special Education*, 2021, 54(4), pages 217-227; De Bruin, K, 'Inclusive education: A review of the evidence' in Linda Graham (ed), *Inclusive Education in the 21st Century: Theory, Policy and Practice*, 2nd edition, 2023, Routledge, chapter 6; Krämer et al., 'Inclusive education of students with general learning difficulties: A meta-analysis', *Review of Educational Research*, 2021, 91(3), pages 432–478; and Mansouri et al., 'Comparison of academic and social outcomes of students with extensive support needs across placements', *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 2022.

¹⁸ Per Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability, 'Final report - Volume 7: Inclusive education, employment and housing – Summary and recommendations', September 2023, p.65, available at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report>.

¹⁹ See, for example, Australian Government, 22 April 2026, *Securing the future of the NDIS for future generations*, <https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/securing-the-future-of-the-ndis-for-future-generations?language=en>; and ABC News, 24 April 2026, *NDIS fraud crackdown will flip rules on their head for 'let it rip' provider market*, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-24/ndis-provider-fraud-crackdown-rules/106595902>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ South Australian Government, South Australian Response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 31 July 2024, pp.145–49.

²² Disability Inclusion (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Regulations 2025 (SA) reg 11B(2); South Australian Government, South Australian Response (n 2), pp.148–49.

²³ South Australian Government, South Australian Response (n 2), pp.145–46; Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, Final Report (n 1) Recommendation 11.13.

²⁴ See further Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 'Final Report: Independent oversight and complaint mechanisms', Volume 11, 29 September 2023, Chapter 4, available at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report-volume-11-independent-oversight-and-complaint-mechanisms>; and Department of Social Services, Community Visitor Schemes Review, December 2018, available at <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-07/community-visitors-schemes-review.pdf>.

²⁵ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, 'Final Report', 29 September 2023, Recommendations 11.12 to 11.13.