

International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD).

International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) is a United Nations–sanctioned day celebrated on **3 December each year.**

What is IDPWD?

It's a day to:

- Recognise the achievements and contributions of people with disability.
- Celebrate inclusion, accessibility and diversity in every part of society.
- Help to break down barriers and create long-lasting change.

In Australia, 1 in 5 people identify as having a disability, with over 80% being hidden disabilities like autism, which are not immediately apparent to other people. This includes many of your colleagues, customers, friends, and community members.

Learn more:

About IDPWD: idpwd.com.au

About Aspect: aspect.org.au

Experiences and barriers

People with disabilities, including Autistic people, often face barriers in workplaces and communities, including:

- **Attitudinal barriers** – misconceptions, stigma, or stereotyping.
- **Physical barriers** – inaccessible spaces, facilities, or systems.
- **Communication barriers** – lack of inclusive communication tools or formats.
- **Environmental and sensory barriers** – unpredictable noise, lighting, crowding

For Autistic people, challenges can also include navigating unstructured change or transitions, sensory overload, and ambiguity in expectations. Supporting inclusion means intentionally reducing or removing these barriers.

3 December
Recognise.
Celebrate
Include.

International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD)



Did you know?

- There are 5.5 million people with disability in Australia – that's 1 in 5 people
- An estimated 1 in 40 Australians are on the autism spectrum
- 1 in 10 people with disability in Australia have reported experiencing discrimination
- Because the world isn't autism-friendly, 70% of Autistic people experience mental health issues

How your organisation can celebrate IDPWD

No matter your organisation's size or sector, there are meaningful ways to celebrate:

- **Review Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** and sharing actions/successes
- **Run an accessibility check** of your workplace: physical spaces, digital platforms, communications
- Involve the **Accessibility Reference Group (ARG)** members, who are often from representative organisations, and are people with lived experience of disability
- **Encourage staff learning** through resources, webinars, or workshops on disability inclusion. Check our Aspect resources and webinars here: <https://shop.aspect.org.au>
- **Hold an event** (in person and webinar) that showcases the DIAP, ARG, and other disability initiatives (including employment/internal ones for staff)
- **Host a morning tea or staff event** where employees with lived experience can share stories (voluntarily)
- **Showcase the strengths and benefits** of having disabled people in the workplace, or as customers, as well as the current barriers
- **Invite a guest speaker or panel** (for example, someone with lived experience or an **inclusion expert**)
- **Listen to people with disabilities** about their experiences
- Ensure that the **event itself is accessible** (e.g. interpreter, captions, sensory requirements)
- **Highlight your commitment** to inclusion across your internal channels, website, and social media.





Together,
we can create
workplaces and
communities
where everyone
belongs.

Embedding inclusion beyond the day

Celebrating IDPWD is important, but inclusion should last all year. A **Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)** is a great way to commit to ongoing improvement. Your DIAP can outline:

- Actions to make your services, spaces, and culture more accessible.
- Goals for employment, training, and retention of staff with disability.
- Accountability measures to track progress.

Think about how you can meaningfully:

- Review recruitment practices.
- Provide sensory-friendly adjustments.
- Ensure communication is accessible (easy read, captions, plain language).
- Create safe spaces for employees to share their needs.

Inclusion statements are a great way to showcase support for all colleagues every day. Find out more:

aspect.org.au/uploads/documents/Inclusion/InclusionStatement_InfoSheet_Aspect_A4_May25_digital.pdf

Supporting Autistic people and others with disability

Here are some focused, practical strategies:

- Clear, predictable communication: Provide agendas, timelines, expectations in advance
- Quiet / sensory-reduced spaces: Designated calm rooms, noise-reducing measures
- Flexible working options: Flexible hours, remote work, task segmentation
- Accessible formats: Plain language, large print, captions, alternate formats
- Inclusive leadership & culture: Encourage open dialogue, inclusion champions

Aspect provides the following resources to support this:

Information Sheets

(for organisations, individuals and families):

aspect.org.au/about-autism/information-sheets

Autism Friendly resources and research:

aspect.org.au/our-services/autism-friendly/im-looking-for-resources-and-information