



Access and Inclusion Plan 2025 to 2027

**Developed in consultation with Emma Olivier, CEO
Twenty Percent Disability Inclusion Advisory**

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The USU acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, upon whose stolen land we operate, gather and live. We recognise that this land was never terra nullius—the land belonging to these peoples was never ceded, given up, bought, or sold.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past, present, and emerging and extend this acknowledgement to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We pay our respects to all First Nations people with disability and recognise the distinct contributions they make to university life. We recognise that the Royal Commission has found that First Nations people are proportionally more likely to have a disability.

We also acknowledge, recognise, and thank the USU members and staff with disabilities who have shared their expertise, time and lived experiences in supporting the development of this inaugural plan.



A message from the President

It is with great pride that I present the University of Sydney Union's first Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) 2025–2027. As the heart of student life on campus, USU is committed to ensuring that our clubs, societies, programs, services, and spaces are welcoming and accessible to everyone — for our members, our staff, and our visitors.

Inclusion at USU goes beyond physical accessibility. It means fostering a culture where people with disability feel respected, supported, and able to participate fully whether that's through joining a society, attending one of our festivals, volunteering, accessing our services, working as part of our staff team, or engaging with us as a visitor. We want everyone who connects with USU to feel they belong here.

The AIP is our blueprint for change and growth. It sets out how we will identify and remove barriers, embed inclusive practices, and place accessibility at the centre of student life, our workplace, and our community spaces. Importantly, this plan reflects our commitment to go beyond

compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth). True inclusion challenges us to examine our systems and attitudes, to listen, and to continually improve the way we serve and support our community. We also recognise that this is only the beginning of our journey. This AIP lays the foundations for future generations of students, staff, visitors, and the wider University community to build on. By working together, we can create a Union that truly reflects the diversity, creativity, and strength of all its members.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to the development of this plan, especially those with lived experience of disability who generously shared their perspectives and ideas. We also extend our thanks to Twenty Percent for their expert guidance and support in developing this plan, which has been invaluable in helping us shape meaningful and practical actions.

Phan Vu
USU President



A message from the CEO

At USU, we believe campus life should be for everyone. Our Access and Inclusion Plan (AIP) sets out how we will remove barriers and create spaces, programs, and opportunities where all students – including those with disability – can fully participate and thrive.

We know that accessibility is about more than buildings and facilities. It's about the way we design events, run our clubs, communicate, and foster a culture where everyone feels welcome and valued. This plan draws on the voices of students with lived experience, our staff, and the broader campus community to make sure our actions are meaningful and grounded in real needs.

Delivering on this plan will take all of us – from small, everyday actions to bigger changes in how we think and work. We'll be listening, learning, and checking in along the way to make sure we stay on track.

By embedding inclusion into everything we do, we're building a stronger, fairer, and more vibrant USU for all. I invite you to read this plan, share your ideas, and be part of making it happen.

Janina Jancu
USU CEO



Inclusion and access for all is at the heart of what we do at USU.

Starting in 1874 as a humble society for student debaters, USU (University of Sydney Union) is now Australia's largest independent student-led organisation.

Our Mission is to ensure every student's experience at Sydney University is the best it can be by being 100% student-centric, focusing on organisational sustainability and building a culture of collaboration and respect.

As a union that supports over 48,000 student members, we recognise that we have a critical role in creating more inclusive and accessible services, events, programs, facilities, and opportunities to help every student get the most out of their time at university. We want every student to be included in and able to access and participate fully in university life.

We also recognise that we walk hand in hand with Sydney University and acknowledge the work that has already been completed in creating a foundation of access and inclusion across the university and its campuses.

We know we are starting our access and inclusion journey and recognise that our inaugural Access and Inclusion Plan is essential in creating measurable and actionable goals and targets.



About Twenty Percent

Twenty Percent is a dynamic, growing advisory that specialises in providing high-quality services to help organisations unleash the power of the 21.4% of Australians with a disability. Collaborating with our clients, we co-create and develop action plans, strategies, policies, and processes that promote access and inclusion.

Our ethos is grounded in lived experience from the perspectives of people with disability. We understand the challenges faced by people with disability because we are those people. What's more, strategic partnerships with specialists in physical accessibility audits, professionals dealing with chronic illness, and trainers with lived experience of disability and caring enable us to provide a comprehensive range of services.

We are committed to the social model of disability. We recognise the importance of access and inclusion across employee and customer lifecycles and broader community engagement.

Find out how Twenty Percent can help you achieve more by engaging the full power of your workforce, customers, and community.

Reach out to us today.

TWENTY PERCENT

**Twenty Percent
Disability Inclusion Advisory**



Access and inclusion framework

In developing our plan, we have used the following frameworks and definitions:

USU acknowledges the definition of Disability as per the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

USU recognises that disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or non-visible. USU acknowledges the Social Model of Disability that sees "disability" as a result of the person with impairments interacting with an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. These barriers often limit full and effective participation in society equally with others.

Access requirements can differ between individuals with the same disability and for the same individual over time. We also acknowledge that the barriers we are striving to eliminate and minimise will benefit all, not just those who identify as having a disability. We also recognise that we all have a role in proactively removing barriers for people with disabilities.

Human Rights model of disability

The disability model based on Human Rights recognises disability as an inherent aspect of human diversity, affirming that individuals with disabilities possess the same rights as everyone else.

This guarantees that people with disabilities are entitled to equal treatment and must not be subjected to any form of discrimination or limitation in exercising their rights based on their impairment or any aspect of their disability.

Intersectionality

Inclusion and diversity mean stopping discrimination and ensuring everyone feels safe in every environment. A crucial aspect of inclusion and diversity is recognising intersectionality, which involves understanding how different parts of a person's identity, like their age, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, can overlap and cause multiple forms of disadvantage. We believe that these characteristics, when combined with disability, make up a person's whole identity.



Language

People with disabilities often have a personal preference for language, which may be person-first or identity-first.

Person-first language puts themselves as a person before their individual disability, such as being a person with disability.

Identity-first language connects with the concept of the social model of disability, where people are 'disabled' by society and prefer the term disabled person.

For this plan, USU will use person-first language. However, we acknowledge and understand this is a personal preference.

Relevant legislation

Multiple legislative frameworks and policies guide and inform disability employment when developing and implementing a disability action plan.

These include:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- The Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- The Fair Work Act 2009
- Australia's Disability Strategy 2022
- Carers Recognition Act 2010 Guidelines
- United Nations – Sustainable / Development Goals

What disability looks like in Australia

5.5 million

**Australians (21.4%)
have a disability.**



**Disability prevalence was
similar for males and females.**

1 in 10

**have experienced discrimination
in the previous 12 months
because of their disability.**

About

1 in 7

**(15.0%) people aged
0-64 years had disability.**

The labour force participation
rate for people aged 15-64
years with disability (living in
households was

60.5%

Students with a
disability in higher
education make up

11.6%

of all enrolments.

What disability looks like in Australia

Over 1/3

(34.7%) of people with disability aged 15 years and over (living in households),

avoided situations because of their disability

in the previous 12 months.

There were

3.0 million carers

representing 11.9% of all Australians living in households (up from 10.8% in 2018).

2.7 million

people with disability living in households were of working age.



Of these, over half (56.1%) were employed, compared with 82.3% of people without disability.

Consultation and plan development

This plan was initiated in 2024 following extensive consultation with USU members and staff, including both allies and individuals who identify with disability. We actively listened to and engaged with current members who have lived experience of disability, as well as those who are carers or deeply committed to fostering a Student Union that is welcoming, empowering, and respectful of Disability Inclusion.

To ensure a truly consultative approach in developing this plan, the USU established a dedicated working party comprising representatives from the University, SUPRA, and the SRC. This collaborative effort reflects our commitment to inclusivity and co-design, ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience are central to shaping a more inclusive future.

This included:

- A review of results from the Diversity and Inclusion Survey conducted in September 2024.
- Online and in-person workshops conducted in September and October 2024.
- One-on-one consultations.

The consultation involved various members and allies across age, gender, faculty, USU role, employee, culture, and lived experience of disability. The facilitated discussion focused on barriers and opportunities related to disability inclusion across USU's activities, places, and spaces.

In particular, we acknowledge the contributions of the late Nguyen Khanh Tran (1996-2025), who worked tirelessly as a disabilities advocate on and off campus. Their efforts led to the creation of an autonomous Disabilities Community Space and provided vital feedback for this Inclusion and Access Plan.



Focus areas and actions

Our goals for access and inclusion for people with disabilities are focused on five streams:

- Physical and digital environments — we will work to ensure that our physical and virtual spaces, including our communications, are accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities.
- Student experiences — we will strive to make all USU-funded and supported experiences accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.
- Representation and consultation — we will ensure that people with disabilities are included in all aspects of our work, consulted with, and meaningfully represented at all key decision-making forums for the Union.
- Awareness raising - we will raise awareness of Disability Inclusion across our membership and staff.
- Employment — we will become an employer of choice for people with disabilities by providing the proper workplace support throughout the employment lifecycle.

These goals for access and inclusion span the themes of our strategic plan: student-centred mindset, engaged stakeholders, sustainable development, and the right culture and values.



Student experiences

We aim to provide inclusive and accessible experiences so all members can participate equitably.

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Increase participation of students with disability in student experiences				
Create an accessible event and meeting guide checklist before/ during/after each student experience	Ongoing from Year 1	Members with a disability have fair and equitable access to all activities	Develop and implement accessible meeting and event guides for all activities	Director of Student Experience
Work with external stakeholders to uplift disability confidence	Ongoing from Year 2	Members with a disability have fair and equitable access to all activities run by external stakeholders	Key stakeholders, including suppliers, sponsors, and food truck vendors, have demonstrated commitment to Disability Inclusion	Director of Student Experience
Train clubs and societies executives in inclusive and accessible events	Ongoing from Year 1	Members with a disability have fair and equitable access to all activities	All clubs and societies have access to and complete training in accessible and inclusive events	Clubs and Societies Manager
Establish equity and access policy for events	Year 2	Members with a disability have financial barriers removed and can participate fully in University Life	USU manages equity and access program. We will make the process streamlined and accessible	Director of Student Experience

Physical and digital environments

We aim to create accessible and inclusive virtual and physical spaces.

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Our USU Physical Spaces are accessible and inclusive				
Audit meeting places offered to clubs and societies and employee offices for accessibility and advocate for the University to rectify items outside USU's control	Year 1	USU Members and employees with a disability have fair and equitable access to all spaces	Ensure all on-campus USU spaces offered to clubs, societies, and work spaces are accessible	Facilities Team
Advocate access to the Disabilities Community Space is barrier-free	Year 1	USU Members with disability have barrier-free access to the Disability Community Space	Enable barrier-free access to the Disability Community Space	USU Board and CEO
Audit community spaces (Women, Queer, Ethnocultural, International Students) to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for people with Disability	Year 1	USU Members with disability have fair and equitable access to all community places	All community places are accessible and inclusive for all	Facilities team USU Board and CEO

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Advocate for the university to provide quiet spaces across the university and USU locations, not just in single locations	Year 2	USU Members with disability have fair and equitable access to all quiet places in multiple locations across the university	Quiet spaces are available in multiple locations on campus	USU Board and CEO

Objective: Our USU digital spaces are accessible and inclusive

Develop and train staff and use digital accessibility guides in all communications (email and social media)	Ongoing	People with disability can access information about and from USU in an accessible and inclusive way via all digital formats	Our communication is accessible and inclusive to all who have a disability	Director of Marketing
Perform an accessibility audit on USU Uni life starts here to ensure it complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Double A (AA)	Year 1	People with disability can access information about the party in an accessible and inclusive way	Our website meets Double A (AA) compliance with WCAG	Director of Marketing
Perform an accessibility audit of the USU app to ensure that it is accessible (USU on the App Store)	Year 1	People with disability can access information about the party in an accessible and inclusive way	Our app is accessible to people with disability	Director of Marketing
Create and communicate an inclusive communication language guide that incorporates all diversity and inclusion pillars	Year 1	The Union, including affiliated clubs and societies, are consistent, inclusive, and respectful of how disability is acknowledged in all communications	An inclusive language guide is developed and implemented	Director of Marketing

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Our food and drink outlets are inclusive and accessible				
Ensure all USU food and drink outlets offer a quiet space or a quiet time in a 24-hour period	Year 2	Members with disability have fair and equitable access to food outlets on campus	USU food and drink outlets are accessible to people with a disability	Operations Department
Explore food menu options to ensure the food offered can cater to most needs	Year 3	Members with disability have fair and equitable access to food outlets on campus	USU food outlets are accessible to people with a disability	Operations Department
Perform an accessibility audit in each food venue and rectify as necessary	Year 1	Members with disability have fair and equitable access to food outlets on campus	USU food outlets are accessible to people with a disability	Operations Department
Updated website with accessibility information for each location so customers can plan visits	Year 1	People with a disability can attend physical locations with confidence, knowing what the accessibility requirements are in advance	Accessibility information by location is available	Director of Marketing
Proactively work with food trucks invited to campus and other small food retail outlets to enable accessibility and inclusion	Year 3	People with Disability can enjoy food trucks that come to campus and other retail outlets on campus	All retail outlets are accessible and inclusive for people with disability	Director of Operations and Director of Student Experience

Employment

We aim to become an employer of choice for people with disability by enabling inclusive recruitment and supporting employees with disability through their employment life cycle.

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Establish and communicate a workplace adjustment policy				
Develop and implement a Workplace Adjustment Policy and Process, including training for managers, people lead, and HR and communication with the broader workforce	Year 1	Increased satisfaction of employees with disability	A Workplace Adjustment Policy is developed and implemented	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services
Objective: Our recruitment processes are accessible to all				
Review and update recruitment processes to ensure they are accessible	Year 2	Increased employment opportunities for people with disability	Our Recruitment processes and policies are accessible and inclusive for people with disability	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services
Objective: Our onboarding processes are accessible to all				
Review and update the employee onboarding process with a disability lens	Year 2	Increased employment satisfaction of new employees with disability	Onboarding requirements for people with disability are embedded into the onboarding process	Senior People and Culture Manager

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success Measures	Owner
Objective: Create a disability network group				
Establish an Employee Disability Network for employees with disabilities and their Allies to connect, share stories, and be consulted on all employee-related matters	Year 2	Increased satisfaction of employees with disability	A network was established, and positive feedback was received about support for our people with a disability	Senior People and Culture Manager
Objective: Our employees are Disability Confident				
Increase Disability Confidence for all employees by providing annual training	2025	Increased employment opportunities for people with disability	Our recruitment processes and policies are accessible and inclusive for people with disability	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services
Create a reverse mentoring program for senior leaders and people with disability	Year 3	Increased opportunities for career progression for employees with disability	A mentoring program is developed and delivered	CEO
Objective: We support the employment of people with disability				
Scope and implement disability employment pathways, such as internships, graduates, supported work schemes, and work experience for people with disabilities	Year 2	Increased employment opportunities for people with disability	Dedicated employment pathways are developed and implemented	Senior People and Culture Manager
Objective: We support the progression of talent with disability				
Create a Disability Leadership Program to increase the capacity of Disability Leadership capability	Year 2	Increased retention of employees with a disability by building the capacity of leadership skills	Dedicated leadership pathways are developed and implemented	Chief Financial Officer and Director of Corporate Services

Awareness raising

We will raise awareness of Disability Inclusion across our membership and staff.

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success Measures	Owner
Objective: Our clubs and societies are Disability Confident				
Uplift Clubs and Societies Disability Confidence Training for clubs and societies executive via club conference	Ongoing from Year 1	Disability Confidence training is delivered as part of a club conference and followed up by an online offering	Clubs and Societies are inclusive and accessible. Mechanism to measure this included in annual survey	Clubs and Societies Manager
Uplift Hidden Sunflower Program	Year 1	Staff and members are aware of and understand the Sunflower program	Sunflower Program is widely seen and understood in all USU spaces	Director of Student Experience and Director of Marketing
Objective: We celebrate disability				
Celebrate International Day of Disability and other key days	2025	Increased knowledge and understanding of disability in the Union	Annual events are held for People with Disabilities	Director of Student Experience and Director of Marketing

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: We are disability aware				
Use Social Media channels to create short and sharp "disability awareness" bites	Ongoing from Year 1	Increased knowledge and understanding of disability in the Union	Social media is used to deliver an awareness campaign	Director of Marketing
Develop and execute a communication plan for members regarding the Access and Inclusion Plan and the resources available to support members with disabilities Develop multiple communication medians to ensure all accessibility considerations are met	Year 1	Members are aware of the AIP and available resources to support members with a disability	A communication plan is developed and executed	Director of Marketing
Work with the University to create accessibility centres where accessible tech can be showcased, tried, and potentially borrowed or purchased via a "Library of Things"	Year 3	Members can easily access tools that can assist with accessibility needs	Accessible Technology is available to all	Director of Marketing
Establish a Peer Mentoring capability to support students with a disability	Year 3	Union Members with disability are supported in their university union membership	Engagement of union members with a disability is increased as they feel more supported	Director of Student Experience

Representation and consultation

Our commitment is to increase and support the representation of and consultation with members with disability.

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Create a disability network group				
Create meaningful representation of people with disability in media and communications	Ongoing from Year 1	Visibility of people with disability in media and communications	5% of media and communication includes visible representation of people with disability	Director of Marketing
Objective: The voices of disability in the membership are consulted continually				
Create a Disability Advisory Body with Union members with a disability	Year 2	People with disability are actively consultant with and engaged on an ongoing basis	A Disability Advisory Group is established	Director of Student Experience
Develop a data collection and reporting framework within existing membership systems that complies with privacy requirements and member preferences to measure the membership experience of people with disability	Year 3	Increased visibility of membership experiences of people with a disability	An annual reporting framework is developed and implemented, and a baseline for improvement is established	Director of Student Experience

Action	Timeline	Outcomes	Success measures	Owner
Objective: Support is enabled for the Disability Portfolio Officer				
Enhance support to the Disability Portfolio officer	Ongoing from Year 1	The effectiveness of the Disability Portfolio Officer role has increased	Professional support is provided to the Disability Portfolio Officer	CEO
Objective: Support is increased Disability Leadership in Union Board				
Create a Disability Leadership Program to increase the capacity of Disability Student Leadership capability	Year 3	Leadership capacity building for students with a disability	People with disability actively seek and hold Board positions	Director of Student Experience

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation



The implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes of this Access and Inclusion Plan have been established to ensure transparency in progress and consideration of accountability arrangements.

The Plan is the responsibility of the USU as an organisation and is led by the USU Access and Inclusion Plan Working Group in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team.

The governance and accountability arrangements for strategy are as follows:

- A Working Group will be developed to meet every quarter to monitor the plan's progress.
- The Working Group will comprise 50% of members with lived experience of disability.
- Annual reporting of action outcomes and progress will be presented to the Board
- Annual reporting of action outcomes and progress will be made public annually.
- Ongoing communications of the outcomes and progress of the Disability Action Plan will be shared quarterly with members and staff.