



# ‘Strengthening voice and visibility of women and girls with disability’

By Carolyn Frohmader  
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# About Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is the award winning, national Disabled People's Organisation (**DPO**) for women and girls with all types of disability in Australia. WWDA operates as a transnational human rights organisation and is run **by** women with disability, **for** women with disability.

WWDA's work is grounded in a **human rights framework** which links gender and disability issues to a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

WWDA's work at all levels illustrates that women and girls with disability are best positioned to identify and **determine their own rights**, needs, will and preferences and to make decisions concerning their circumstances and conditions.



WOMEN  
WITH  
DISABILITIES  
AUSTRALIA  
(WWDA)

# Key Principles that underpin WWDA's work

## 1. Participation, decision-making & capacity building

Women and girls with disability are best positioned to determine their own rights, needs, will and preferences & to make decisions about their circumstances and conditions.



## 2. Intersectionality

Intersectional discrimination has compounding effects on women and girls with disability and requires particular consideration and remedying.

## 3. Stakeholder Engagement & Cross-Sector Collaboration

Requires and involves a “twin-track approach”, that is, focusing on 'stand-alone' work on the rights and freedoms of women and girls with disability, whilst working with mainstream policy, programs, organisations and services to ensure the integration of a human rights approach and a gendered-disability analysis and perspective.

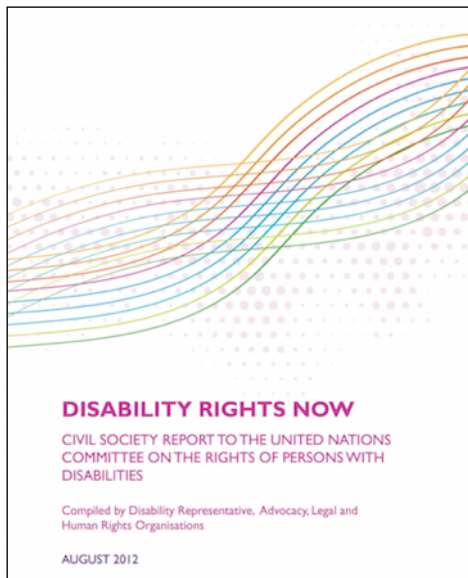




# WWDA's key strategies to strengthen voice and visibility of women and girls with disability

## 1. Applying a holistic human rights framework

- Using the full range of **International Human Rights Treaties** to which Australia is a party [not just the CRPD] - WWDA's work utilises and is framed by, these seven international human rights treaties. Makes extensive use of the **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)** process.
- UN **Shadow Reporting** - WWDA contributes formal stand alone Shadow Reports in our own right, and also works as a member of national **NGO/CSO Coalitions** established to develop Shadow Reports to supplement the Australian Government periodic reports to the relevant treaty-monitoring bodies.



# 1. Applying a holistic human rights framework...cont'd

- Using UN Treaty Body **General Comments** - to articulate in detail, Australia's obligations under the international human rights treaties to which Australia is a party.
- **NGO Delegations** to UN Treaty Body Compliance Reviews and the UPR reviews - presence, visibility and active engagement of women with disability at formal UN treaty body compliance reviews of States Parties is critical.
- WWDA has had particular influence when we have been an **active member** of NGO/CSO delegations – lobbying, meeting with treaty body Committee members, giving formal presentations to Committees, assisting in drafting Concluding Observations/ Recommendations etc.





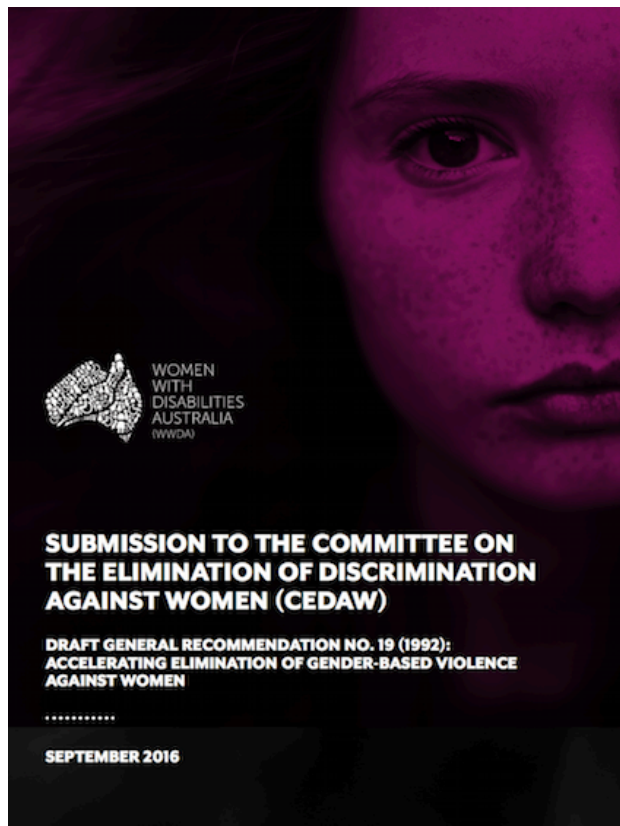
# 1. Applying a holistic human rights framework...cont'd

- Working with the UN **Special Procedures** - WWDA routinely and regularly engages with the UN Special Rapporteurs by providing them with our reports, research, articles, case studies, as well as participating in and contributing to, the work of the Special Rapporteurs.
- For eg: in 2012 the **Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women** visited Australia. WWDA organised a Roundtable of Women with Disability where the SR met with women with disability to discuss violence against women with disability.
- Using the UN **Charter Based Bodies** - Visibility of WWDA and our sister colleagues at CSW has seen more emphasis given to women with disability in the Agreed Conclusions stemming from sessions of CSW. Have run and co-sponsored Side Events at CSW.



# 1. Applying a holistic human rights framework...cont'd

- WWDA routinely and **regularly engages** with the UN treaty body monitoring Committees and UN agencies by providing them with our reports, research, articles, case studies, and so on.
- This has proven to be an important and worthwhile strategy - WWDA has received **feedback** from UN Committees and agencies acknowledging the importance and influence of WWDA's work.





## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity

- WWDA offers full **Membership** for women and girls with disability and associate membership for supporters. All memberships are free of charge.
- WWDA provides a range of mechanisms for women and girls with disability to be actively involved in the organisation. **Social media** and other **digital platforms** are critical communication and engagement tools for WWDA due to limited resourcing and capacity.

WWDA @WWDA\_AU · 16h  
#VAW w #disability - epidemic in #Australia & allowed 2 flourish with impunity. [goo.gl/GWid3z](http://goo.gl/GWid3z) @SR\_Disability @antitorture\_SRT @hrw

21-year-old with cerebral palsy "unable" to feel pain, carers claimed [theage.com.au](http://theage.com.au)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

INFORMATION PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS COMMUNITY LATEST NEWS CONTACT WWDA

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO FOUND AND MAINTAIN A FAMILY  
wwda.org.au

Search for information, Reports, Policies.

WWDA represents more than 2 million disabled women and girls in Australia. We are run by and for women with disabilities. We operate as a transnational human rights and systemic advocacy organisation.

**ABOUT WWDA**  
Find out about WWDA's history, our aims and key priorities, our staff, Board of Management, strategic plans and more.

**GENDER & DISABILITY ISSUES**  
An extensive range of information and resource materials on a wide range of issues and topics such as violence, sexuality and reproductive rights; education, employment, access to justice, parenting, and more.

**PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS**  
Information and resource materials including WWDA policy submissions, articles, papers, presentations, and reports written by WWDA, women with disabilities and their allies. Annotated and categorised by year.

**CONNECT & ENGAGE**  
Ways to engage, connect and become actively involved with WWDA. Includes links to groups, networks and organisations of women with disabilities both within and outside Australia.

**GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**  
Describes and provides links to key Australian Government disability policy, programs, services and legislation.

**DONATE TO WWDA**  
WWDA is a registered charity with gift deductibility status, meaning that donations over two dollars are tax deductible in Australia.

**LATEST NEWS**  
WWDA PRESENTING PAPER AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMORATING 10 YEARS OF THE CPSIS  
OCTOBER 18, 2016  
WWDA NEWS OCTOBER 2016  
OCTOBER 13, 2016  
MEDIA RELEASE: WWDA FUNDING BOOST TO MARK INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD  
OCTOBER 11, 2016

**WWDA TWITTER**  
RT @lessPWDA: The @CARoyalComm has contributed markedly to our knowledge about children with disability and child sexual abuse. This report...  
[Read More...](#)

**WWDA FACEBOOK**  
Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) shared People with Disab...  
[Read More...](#)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)  
October 27 at 10:01am · [Public](#)

On Friday 28th October WWDA Executive Director Carolyn Frohmader will be representing WWDA at the 2016 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Summit on Reducing Violence Against Women, in Brisbane. The purpose of the Summit is for governments to review progress and profile best practice in efforts to make Australia safer for women and their children. WWDA is attending the summit at the invitation of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet... See More

END GENDERED DISABILITY VIOLENCE  
#COAGVAWSUMMIT

Like Comment Share

Lottie Frohmader, Rose Quartz and 2K others

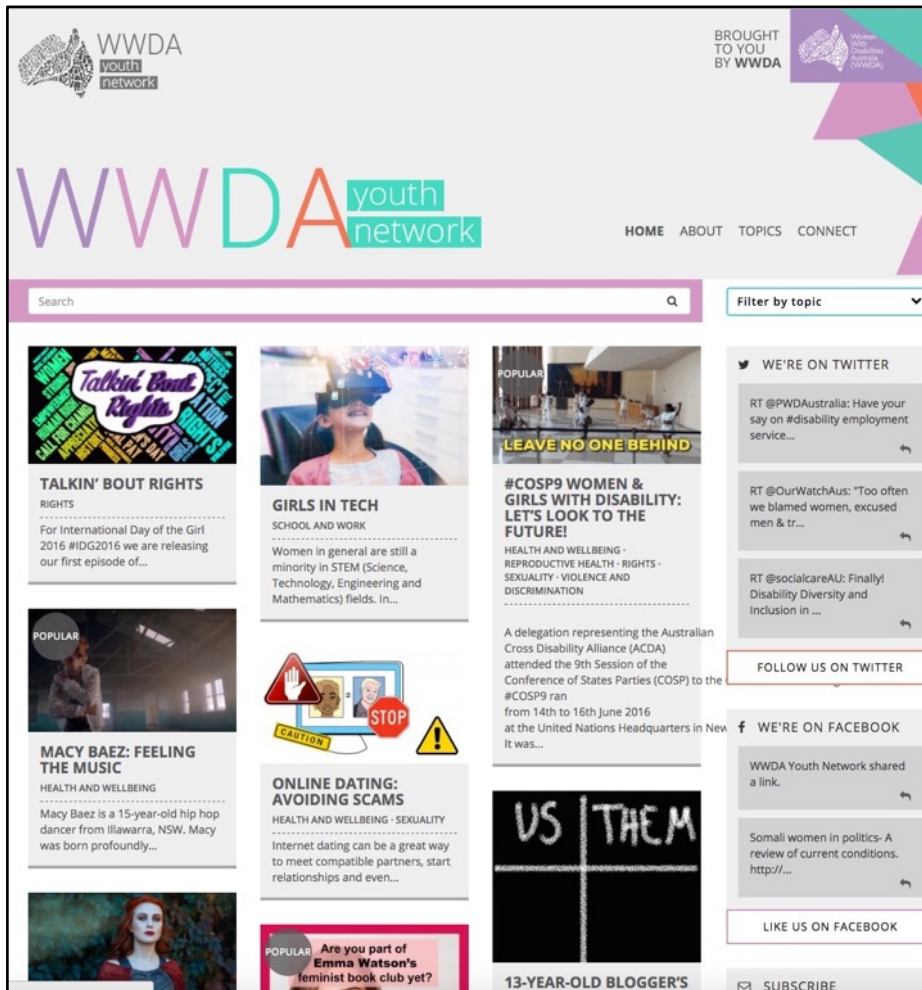
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41 shares



## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity....cont'd

- Established the **WWDA Youth Network** in 2014. Created by and for girls and young women with disability aged 13-20yrs. Is organic, interactive and distributed across a range of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and its own website ([www.youth.wwda.org.au](http://www.youth.wwda.org.au)).



The screenshot shows the WWDA Youth Network website homepage. The header features the WWDA Youth Network logo and navigation links: HOME, ABOUT, TOPICS, CONNECT. Below the header is a search bar and a 'Filter by topic' dropdown menu. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- TALKIN' BOUT RIGHTS**: A section with a colorful graphic and text about the first episode of a series for International Day of the Girl 2016.
- GIRLS IN TECH**: A section with a photo of a girl wearing a VR headset and text about women's minority in STEM fields.
- #COSP9 WOMEN & GIRLS WITH DISABILITY: LET'S LOOK TO THE FUTURE!**: A section with a photo of a group of people and text about a delegation representing the Australian Cross Disability Alliance (ACDA) at the Conference of States Parties (COSP9).
- MACY BAEZ: FEELING THE MUSIC**: A section with a photo of a girl and text about a 15-year-old hip hop dancer.
- ONLINE DATING: AVOIDING SCAMS**: A section with a graphic of a hand holding a stop sign and text about internet dating.
- US | THEM**: A section with a graphic of a cross and text about a 13-year-old blogger.

On the right side, there are social media widgets for Twitter and Facebook, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button at the bottom.



The graphic is titled "15 THINGS ALL GIRLS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THEIR VAGINA" and is dated May 10, 2015. It features a young woman with long dark hair covering her face with her hands. Above her head are two thought bubbles: one on the left contains a female symbol and a question mark, and one on the right contains a diagram of the female reproductive system with question marks. The background is a solid red color.

WWDA Youth Network was **launched** by the Minister for Women in July 2015. See: <http://wwda.org.au/wwda-youth-network-launch-a-resounding-success/>

## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity....cont'd

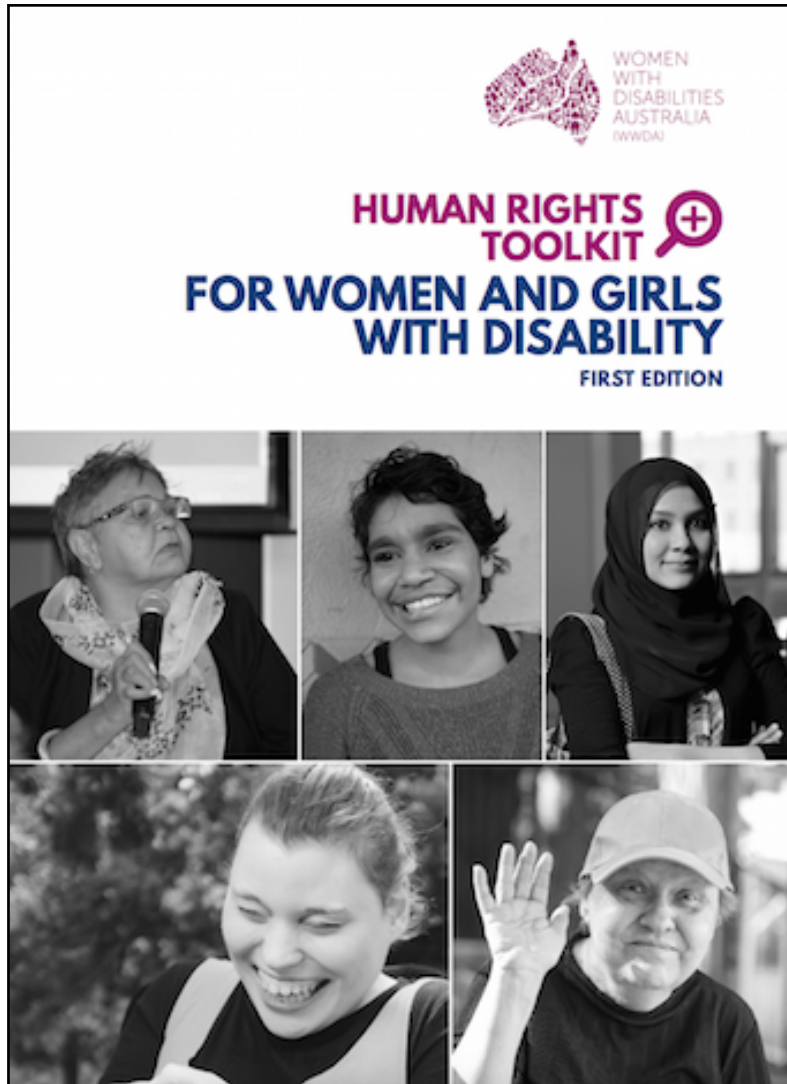
- Conducted the **National Forum of Women & Girls with Disability** in 2016. Attended by 60 women and girls with disability from around Australia. Also attended by Minister for Women and representatives from key Government agencies, enabling women with disability to actively engage with Govt on key issues.
- National Forum **prioritised key issues** affecting women and girls with disability in Australia which require urgent action from duty bearers:
  - All forms of violence against women and girls with disability
  - Economic empowerment
  - Sexual and reproductive rights
  - Participation and Representation
  - Decision-Making





## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity....cont'd

- In late 2016, as one of the outcomes of the WWDA National Forum, WWDA developed a **Human Rights Toolkit** for women and girls with disability.



The image is a screenshot of a webpage. The title is 'WHERE DID HUMAN RIGHTS COME FROM AND HOW ARE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTED? (CONT.)'. The main text discusses UN Conventions and other international UN documents called 'Declarations'. It mentions the 'Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' and its importance for women and girls with disability. Below the text are two sections: 'VIDEO: THE STORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS' and 'FIND OUT MORE'. The video section includes a play button icon and a link to a YouTube video. The 'FIND OUT MORE' section includes a paperclip icon and a list of links to UN Web TV and the UN website. At the bottom of the page, there is a large image of a rolled-up scroll with the text 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' and the UN logo.

**WHERE DID HUMAN RIGHTS COME FROM AND HOW ARE HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTED? (CONT.)**

UN Conventions are legally binding on the countries that agree to them. However, there are also other important international UN documents called "Declarations" that are not "legal" documents, but are very important because they provide guidance to countries on a specific area. One UN Declaration that is very important for women and girls with disability is the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#). This Declaration explains the human rights of indigenous peoples, giving special importance to self-determination and non-discrimination.

**VIDEO: THE STORY OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

A short captioned video entitled "The Story of Human Rights" gives an overview of the history of the human rights movement, and the development of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The video "The Story of Human Rights" can be viewed at available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ch3BbLk5UIQ>

**FIND OUT MORE**

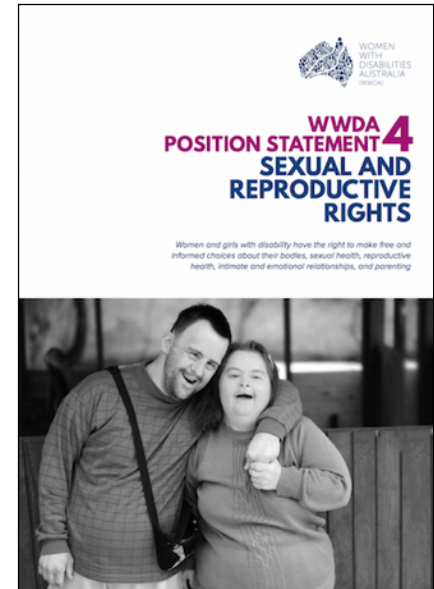
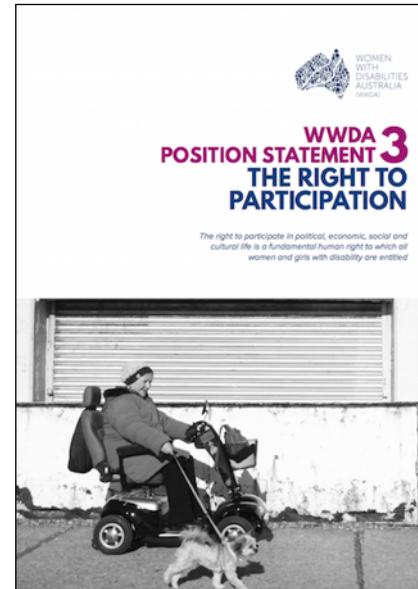
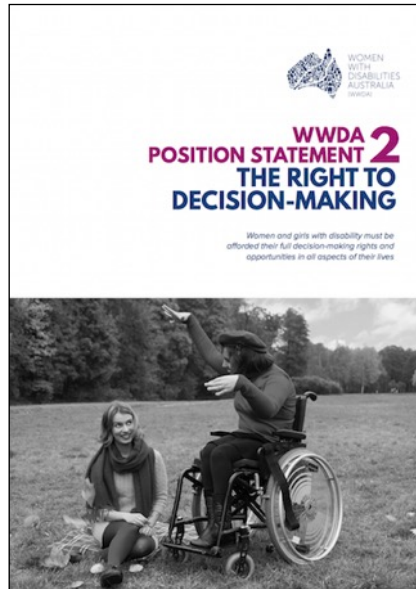
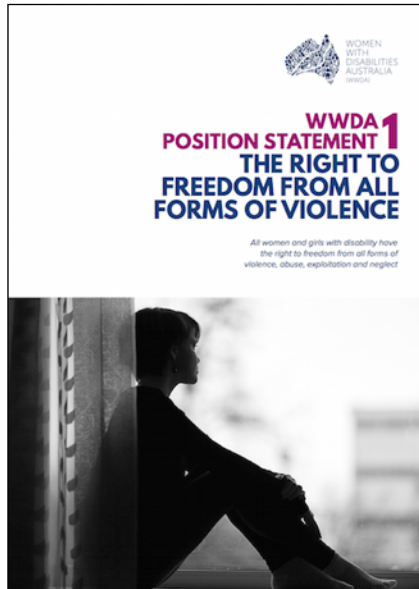
- The United Nations have an extensive online presence. You can access a range of videos, including live events, on many different topics related to human rights from UN Web TV: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unitednations/> <http://webtv.un.org/>

Universal Declaration of Human Rights



## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity....cont'd

- The WWDA Human Rights Toolkit is supplemented by comprehensive **WWDA Position Statements** on the priority human rights issues identified by women and girls with disability.



- Each of the **Position Statements** include: WWDA's position on the issue; the evidence base; Australia's international human rights obligations relating to the issue; Australia's compliance with its human rights obligations relating to the issue; as well as a set of recommendations as to how Australia can advance the rights of women and girls with disability in relation to the issue.

## 2. Establishing engagement opportunities & building capacity....cont'd

- The WWDA Human Rights Toolkit is also supplemented by **five videos** made by women and girls with disability from around Australia.

**Video 1: Women with disability talk about why human rights are important**

<https://youtu.be/f0zH1cnDosM>

**Video 2: Women with disability talk about the right to decision-making**

<https://youtu.be/NaEYW-spW2g>

**Video 3: Women with disability talk about the right to freedom from violence**

[https://youtu.be/Tmp5\\_3Ho6iA](https://youtu.be/Tmp5_3Ho6iA)

**Video 4: Women with disability talk about the right to the right to parent**

<https://youtu.be/6s8bDQptAlw>

**Video 5: Women with disability talk about the right to employment**

<https://youtu.be/jGAyWWDDnI>

### 3. Forming strategic alliances, coalitions & working collaboratively

- WWDA recognises that **mutually beneficial relationships** achieve outcomes that extend beyond what WWDA can achieve in isolation.
- WWDA works in **partnership** with UN agencies (eg: UNFPA, WHO, UN Women) on programs, also works in partnership with the private sector on specific projects.
- WWDA is a founding member of **Disabled People's Organisations Australia (DPOA)** – a new and innovative alliance of four national DPO's in Australia.
- The **four national DPO's** that make up DPO Australia are:
  - [Women With Disabilities Australia \(WWDA\)](#)
  - [First Peoples Disability Network \(FPDN\)](#)
  - [National Ethnic Disability Alliance \(NEDA\)](#)
  - [People With Disability Australia \(PWDA\)](#)
- The **key purpose** of [DPOA](#) is to promote, protect and advance the human rights and freedoms of people with disability in Australia by working collaboratively on areas of shared interests, purpose and strategic opportunity.
- With its strong focus on intersectionality, DPO Australia is a **critical mechanism** to strengthen voice and visibility of women and girls with disability.





### 3. Forming strategic alliances, coalitions & working collaboratively...cont'd

- DPOA works on **joint initiatives** and projects:
  - DPOA delegation to the CRPD COSP in June 2016;
  - DPOA national campaign which led to the [Senate Inquiry into Violence against people with disability in institutional and residential settings](#);
  - DPOA Federal Election Platform Campaign;
  - DPOA Summit with all Australian Human Rights Commissioners – to promote and focus on the AHRC working in a more intersectional way to advance the rights of people with disability;




Disabled  
People's  
Organisations  
Australia

**ELECTION POLICY PLATFORM**

*"Building a Disability Inclusive Australia"*

### 3. Forming strategic alliances, coalitions & working collaboratively...cont'd

- DPOA campaign on the **Third Action Plan** under the Australian Government's 12 year [National Action Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children](#) - to ensure that the Third Action Plan responds to, and addresses, all forms of violence against all women, regardless of the setting or place in which it occurs, and regardless of who perpetrates it.



**Third Action Plan – Women with disability**

A recent survey found that twenty-two per cent of women and girls with disability had been affected by violence and women with disability were at particularly high risk of sexual violence.<sup>1</sup> Women with disability are also more likely to experience multiple incidents of violence by a male perpetrator.<sup>2</sup>

Many women with disability find it difficult to access appropriate support services and payments. This can discourage them from leaving a violent relationship.

In addition, many service providers do not recognise the forms of violence experienced by women with disability or respond appropriately to their needs.

Through the First and Second Actions Plans, a range of research, training and primary prevention initiatives were developed. Under the Third Action Plan, governments will build on these initiatives to improve the services provided to women with disability experiencing domestic and family violence.

**Key national actions**

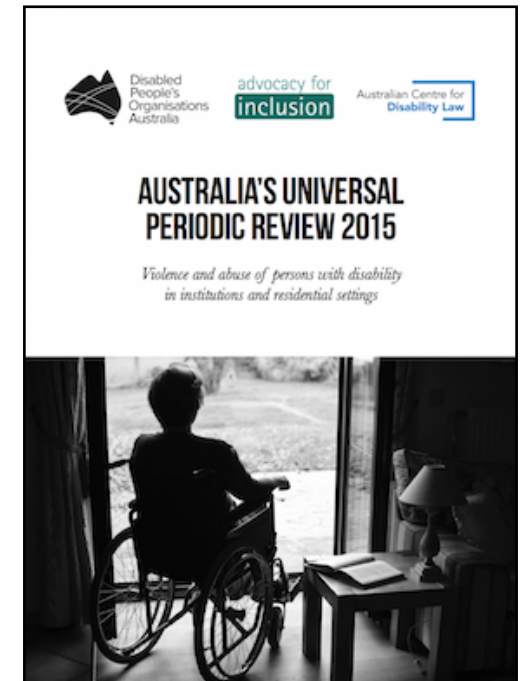
- Supporting the development of integrated, responsive and more accessible services for women with disability.
- 1800RESPECT exploring how technology can be harnessed to provide safe and relevant services for women with disability.
- Enhancing free, accredited nationally available domestic violence training with the development and roll out of accredited training specifically for the disability sector.
- Building a strong evidence base on the types of violence experienced by women with disability to inform future responses. This includes improving understanding of the settings where violence takes place and who the perpetrators are.
- Working with women with disability and disability sector stakeholders to explore opportunities for collaboration and identify policy priorities.

**More information**

For more information on the priority areas or the Third Action Plan, visit the [National Plan website](#).

<sup>1</sup> University of New South Wales, 2013, Stop the Violence: Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls with Disabilities in Australia, Sydney.  
<sup>2</sup> Cox, Peta. ANROWS. Violence against women in Australia: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey, 2012: Key findings and future directions, 2015.

- DPOA **UPR NGO Project** - coordinated the UPR Disability Coordination Group on behalf of the Australian UPR NGO Human Rights Coalition (over 200 NGOs), participating in the UPR pre-sessional meetings and participating in the delegation to the UPR at the UN in Geneva.





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Contact: Carolyn Frohmader (Executive Director)

*Winner, National Human Rights Award 2001*

*Winner, National Violence Prevention Award 1999*

*Winner, Tasmanian Women's Safety Award 2008*

*Certificate of Merit, Australian Crime & Violence  
Prevention Awards 2008*

*Nominee, French Republic's Human Rights Prize 2003*

*Nominee, UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000*

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