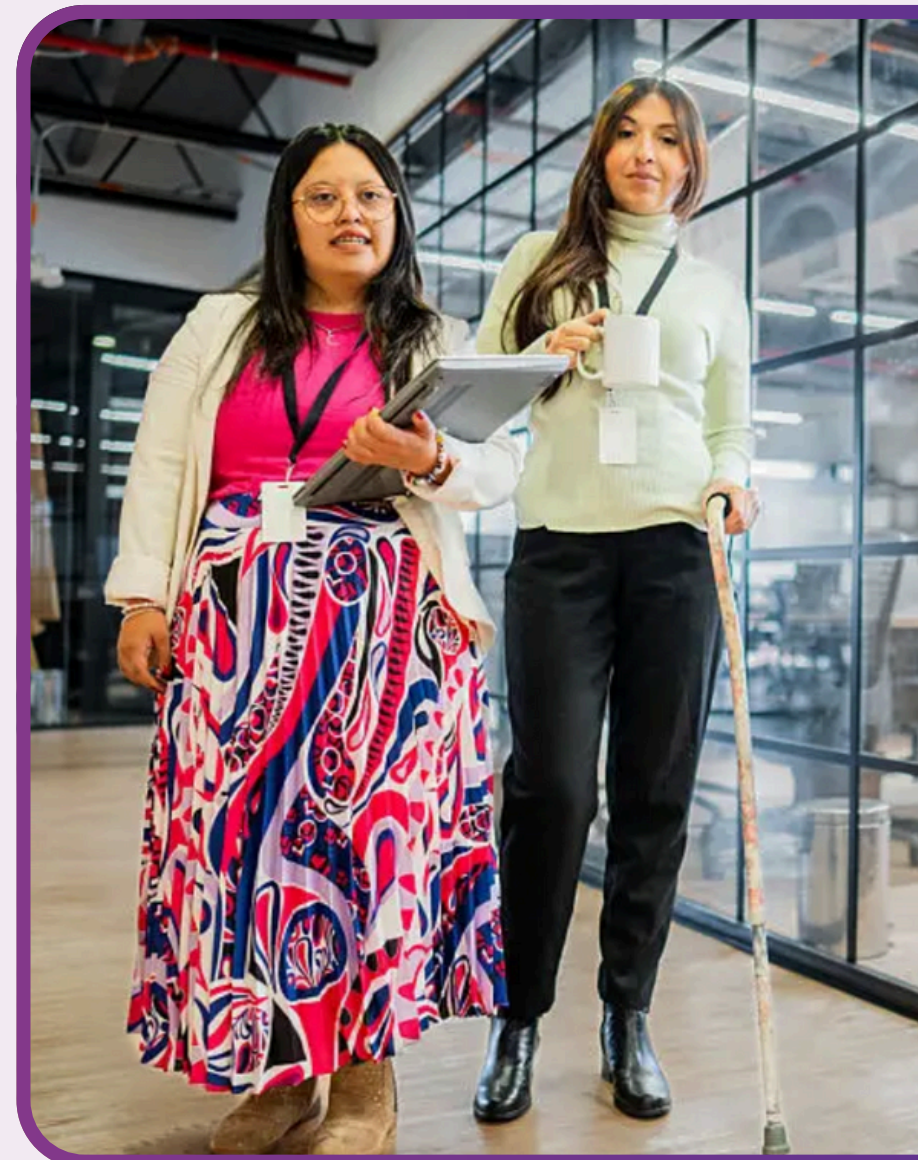




Women
With
Disabilities
Australia
(WWDA)



Our Right to Participate

Fact sheet on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Committee's General Comment 7.



**Women
With
Disabilities
Australia**
(WWDA)

Winner National Violence Prevention Award 1999
Winner National Human Rights Award 2001
Winner Tasmanian Women's Safety Award 2008
Certificate of Merit Australian Crime & Violence Prevention Awards 2008
Nominee UN Millennium Peace Prize for Women 2000
Nominee French Republic's Human Rights Prize 2003
Nominee National Disability Awards 2017
Nominee UNESCO Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities 2021

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Our right to participate

People with disabilities have the right to be included in all parts of our lives and communities. This includes having a say on the laws and decisions that affect us. The Australian Government has agreed to make sure we are included. This document explains what that means and how it should work.

Human rights for everyone

Our rights tell us what we can be, do or have. Human rights are the rights and freedoms that belong to everyone. They help us live safely and freely. Our human rights prevent unfair treatment because of our disability, or who we are. This includes our race, gender, sexuality, or culture.

Disability and our rights

The United Nations (UN) is a group that works to protect human rights worldwide. It wrote an important legal document called the 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities', or CRPD.

The aim of the CRPD is to make sure that all people with disabilities enjoy human rights in all areas of our lives. The CRPD tells Governments what they need to do to make this a reality. The CRPD explains how human rights apply to people with disabilities. For example, the right to health or education. It also considers the needs of specific groups, like women and children.

The CRPD is an agreement between the UN and countries that have signed it. This includes the Australian Government, which is the government that looks after the whole country. This means that the Australian Government must follow what's in the CRPD.





Our right to participate

The CRPD says that people with disabilities should be involved in everything that affects our lives. It means 'Nothing about us without us'. Participation includes having a say on how the Government takes the actions in the CRPD. Two sections of the CRPD talk about what the Government should do to help us be included in planning and decisions. These are section 4, part 3 (Article 4.3) and section 33, part 3 (Article 33.3).

What Article 4.3 says

- Governments should work together with organisations that represent people with disabilities ('representative organisations').
- Governments should work with representative organisations when they make laws, policies or decisions that affect our rights.

Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) is a representative organisation. We represent our members. We are a voice for women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities in Australia. We give advice to the Government to improve our rights. WWDA is also a Disabled People's Organisation. This means that the people in charge and making decisions are women, girls and gender-diverse people with disabilities.

What Article 33.3 says

- Governments should regularly check that the actions in the CRPD are being followed.
- Organisations that are not part of government or business must be involved in this checking process. They can share what the community thinks.
- Representative organisations are the most important groups to include.

Why participation is important

We are the experts in our own lives. When the Government involves us in the decisions that affect us, there are lots of benefits.

For example:

- It makes it easier to share our views and speak up for what we need.
- The Government hears directly from us about what needs to change.
- The Government makes better decisions that meet people's needs.
- Laws, policies and decisions will be better for us.
- We will be more involved in our communities.
- More people in Australia will feel included, safe and equal.

How participation can be better

The 'Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' checks that countries are following the CRPD. They say that Governments need to do more to include people with disabilities in planning and decision-making.



The Committee wants Governments to do things better and they have written a document to help. It explains how to interpret Articles 4.3 and 33.3 of the CRPD. It also includes advice to Governments on how to support our right to participate.

What the Australian Government should do

Everyone has the right to take part in decisions that affect them. This includes people with disabilities. The Government should take actions to make sure we are included. These actions are listed below.

1: Include all voices

- Make sure that all people with disabilities can have a say. This includes women and gender-diverse people, children, people with intellectual disabilities, and neurodiverse people.
- Talk to people from lots of different backgrounds. For example, people who live in different places, are different ages, or do different jobs.
- Do not exclude us because of who we are. For example, the type of disability we have, or our gender or sexuality.

2: Remove barriers

- Help people with disabilities to be included in organisations or groups that make decisions affecting our community.
- Before meetings, check that we can access the physical space, transport, information, and communication in our own language.
- Provide support to help us fully take part. This includes meeting assistants, information in accessible formats, sign language interpreters, and captioning.
- Encourage representative organisations to share their views openly.
- Make sure we are safe from harassment, discrimination and harm during discussions.



3: Treat us with respect

- Listen to our views and experiences and take them seriously.
- Be upfront and honest about the process.
- Set fair and realistic deadlines for participation.
- Involve representative organisations at all stages of decision-making – from beginning to end.

4: Invest in participation

- Allocate money for meetings with representative organisations. This should include covering our costs, like transport.
- Fund and support representative organisations so that we can continue to advocate for our communities.
- Make laws and policies that protect our right to participate. Remove laws and policies that do not support this right.
- Put systems in place to make sure Australia meets its CRPD responsibilities. Decide on the penalties or actions that will happen if these are not met.

Learn more

- [The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#). This includes an accessible PDF, sign language videos, Easy read formats and translation into languages other than English.
- [Human Rights Toolkit for Women and Girls with Disability](#)
- [What are Human Rights?](#) Written in Plain English and Easy Read formats.

Contact WWDA to find out how your views and lived experience can inform laws, policies and programs. Email members@wwda.org.au or visit our website wwda.org.au.