



AUSTRALIAN NETWORK
ON DISABILITY

ACCESS AND INCLUSION INDEX BENCHMARK REPORT 2016

MAY 2017



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development and implementation of the Access and Inclusion Index was made possible by the funding and in-kind support of the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (NSW FACS), the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), Department of Defence, IBM and Westpac Group. We sincerely thank the Development Partner Working Group for their time and valuable feedback in contributing to the design and implementation of the 2016 inaugural Access and Inclusion Index.

Cover image - Stepping Into intern Georga, 24 (centre) meets with her work colleagues.

Inside cover - Job, 31, wanted to gain experience in a large organisation during his Stepping Into internship.

The Australian Network on Disability's Stepping Into program is a six week paid internship for student's with disability.

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MESSAGE FROM CEO

Thank you to our 22 member organisations for participating in the inaugural Access and Inclusion Index for Australia.

Your contribution to setting a national benchmark for access and inclusion demonstrates a strong commitment to achieving disability confidence for both your employees and customers. It also signals the powerful message that welcoming people with disability in all areas of business is the responsibility of us all.

One of the aims of the Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index is to foster conversations within organisations about disability confidence.

We know from participating members' feedback that many discussions were held with key people from across their organisation to complete the Index submission. In the process of doing so, many of the Index participants started to explore what more can be done to improve their access and inclusion practice.

This whole-of-organisation approach to the Access and Inclusion Index is vital if we are to make progress.

My appreciation for the Index participants and members of the Australian Network on Disability is immense. Your support and collaboration in establishing a ground-breaking national benchmark for access and inclusion in business is a big step towards the equitable participation of people with disability in society.

Regards



Suzanne Colbert AM
CEO Australian Network on Disability

INTRODUCTION

The 2016 inaugural Access and Inclusion Index benchmark report assists organisations in understanding the current level of maturity for access and inclusion practices across businesses in Australia. As such, the Australian Network on Disability (AND) has established a national benchmark for access and inclusion in business.

This year's Index had 22 AND members submit their assessment for evaluation and benchmarking.

Participating organisations operate within the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and come from wide ranging industry backgrounds - such as finance, technology, healthcare, education and provision of government services.

ABOUT THE ACCESS & INCLUSION INDEX

The Access and Inclusion Index is a suite of tools for Australian organisations to use to understand, assess, benchmark and improve their disability confidence to meet the needs of their customers and employees with disability.

These tools will help organisations review their policies, procedures and practices to establish their progress in being accessible and inclusive for people with disability. It will increase understanding of access and inclusion, and provide opportunities to receive guidance on how to be welcoming to people with disability across their business.

It is to the credit of both our Index Development Partners and participating AND members that the Access and Inclusion Index has come to fruition: a bold step towards a systematic way to measure and monitor the access and inclusion of people with disability in business. It is anticipated and hoped that annual publication of Index results will influence tangible change to progress the equitable participation of people with disability in all aspects of business.

The ten key areas determined to drive the greatest benefits for access and inclusion of people with disability within an organisation have been determined as follows:

1. Commitment
2. Premises
3. Workplace Adjustments
4. Communication and Marketing
5. Products and Services
6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
7. Recruitment and Selection
8. Career Development
9. Suppliers and Partners
10. Innovation

SCORING METHODOLOGY

Questions within each of the key areas of the Index are grouped into three sections:

- **Framework:** relates to organisational commitment, policies, procedures and guidelines.
- **Implementation:** relates to actions, programs and initiatives that the organisation has taken to deliver on commitments.
- **Review and Outcomes:** relates to monitoring and reviewing progress and using data to improve processes and outcomes for people with disability.

Responses to all questions are provided at four levels of capability or maturity to allow for reflection of an organisation's journey towards inclusive practice of employing and welcoming people with disability within their organisation.

- **Level 1: Not participating** - this is the base level where an organisation may not have yet considered its position and is still planning their path.
- **Level 2: Basic** - the organisation is operating in a way which reflects a compliance focus or is reactive to issues.

- **Level 3: Programmatic** - the organisation has developed tactics, programs, policies or procedures to address some issues, or focuses only on some parts of its business or operations.
- **Level 4: Strategic** - business process and practices are designed to deliver a consistently accessible and inclusive experience for employees, customers and stakeholders. Access and inclusion activities are aligned to the business across the organisation and are sustainable.

The Access and Inclusion Index weights both the key areas and the questions to produce a total index score out of 100. The questions and sections have been weighted and scored based on the relative importance and impact of progressing access and inclusion for people with disability.

This scoring methodology is applied consistently across all organisations that have submitted for evaluation. The assessment, maturity model, scoring and weighting have been validated by the Centre for Workplace Leadership at the University of Melbourne.

INNOVATION LEADS TO ACCESSIBLE FOOD

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Whether trying to eat a snack or prepare a meal for one, many people have trouble opening food packaging. For people with a mobility disability, such as arthritis or MS, it can be even more frustrating.

HealthShare New South Wales' (NSW) Food Packing Project aims to make the single serve food portions given to patients as easy as possible for everyone to open. In 2014, HealthShare NSW's Food Packing Project received the Peak Award Innovation at the NSW Health Awards and a high commendation in the 2016 Save Food Packaging Awards.

Bronwyn Scott, Disability Employment Leader, and Zdenka Fuller, Business Support Manager, shared information about the project as part of their submission to the Australian Network on Disability's 2016 Access and Inclusion Index.

"NSW Health uses pre-packaged foods, for patient's meals. If people can't open the food, they may not eat, because a relative might not be with them or staff may be unavailable," said Zdenka.

"We want to make it as easy and dignified as possible for people, and worked with Arthritis Australia, Nestle and The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to develop an accessibility rating. It works on a scale of +8 to -8, and estimates the percentage of consumers who can safely open the packaging," Zdenka added.

To ensure the initiative is as far reaching as possible, the rating is included in supplier contracts. It is leading towards creating a national standard for accessible packaging and is mandatory in over half of public hospitals in Australia.

"When a manufacturer wants to supply to us they must meet our accessibility rating and to do that, they may need to update their packaging," said Bronwyn. "It has been a positive experience for manufacturers with many reporting increased customer satisfaction with their products. In addition, industries - such as airlines and hotels - are now also benefiting from the initiative."

After completing the Access and Inclusion Index, the findings showed that HealthShare scored well in the Innovation key area, and HealthShare intends to use the Index as a tool to set a benchmark for improvement in the future.

"We want to know where we stand in terms of access and inclusion. The Index is a useful way of identifying where the gaps are, so we can improve our performance in the future. It really guides your focus and gives you leverage to drive change," said Bronwyn.

The organisation also found the Index useful to document achievements and highlight areas that had been considered but not yet actioned.

"The Index gave me a framework in which to document achievements and highlight things that we said we'd do but hadn't managed to action. For example, we committed to including information about adjustments to the recruitment process in all our job advertisements. Since actioning this, we have had an increase in calls from people with disability interested to apply," said Bronwyn.

When asked if they would participate in the Index again, Bronwyn said, "Completing the Index was hard work, but I thought it was well worth it. You can't tell if you are successful if you don't measure it."

HealthShare NSW is a statewide organisation established to provide high-quality shared services to support the delivery of patient care within the NSW Health system.

KEY FINDINGS

LEADING ORGANISATIONS

Australian Network on Disability is pleased to announce that the 2016 Access and Inclusion Index identified IBM Australia, the Federal Department of Human Services and Westpac Group as the most mature on their journey towards access and inclusion.

Access and Inclusion Index 2016 - overall Index

1. IBM
2. Federal Department of Human Services
3. Westpac Group

A wide range of organisations have performed very well across key areas of the Access and Inclusion Index. This demonstrates that the Index translates across different types of organisations and can serve as a roadmap for progress in Australia:

- 11 organisations were in the top three places in different key areas of the Access and Inclusion Index and represented the technology, government, banking, education, insurance and recruiting sectors.
- 16 different organisations were represented in the top six places across key areas.
- No organisation was consistently in the bottom three places across all key areas.
- The scale of these organisations ranges from multinational to smaller Australian enterprises.

The average Access and Inclusion Index score across the 22 participating organisations was 47/100 with 11 organisations scoring between 31 and 50. Five organisations achieved an Index score more than 61. Australian Network on Disability considers this to be a solid outcome for the first year of the Access and Inclusion Index with respect to its purpose to contribute to future improvements in access and inclusion practice in Australia. The distribution of the varying levels of maturity recognises not only the organisations that are performing well, but provides encouragement for others that there is a clear path to follow.

Australian Network on Disability assessed all information provided by organisations in support of their self-assessment. Figure 1 and table 1 show the distribution of Access and Inclusion Index scores.



Figure 1 Distribution of Access and Inclusion Index scores

ACCESS AND INCLUSION SCORE RANGE	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
0-10	0
11-20	2
21-30	2
31-40	4
41-50	6
51-60	3
61-70	2
71-80	2
81-90	1
91-100	0
TOTAL	22

Table 1 Distribution of Access and Inclusion Index scores (data)

KEY AREAS

There are ten key areas in the Access and Inclusion Index representing the 'whole-of-organisation' approach required to ensure access and inclusion for all stakeholders with disability. Some of these areas - such as Commitment, Workplace Adjustments, Recruitment and Selection, and Premises - have been the focus of organisations for many years as primary enablers of access and inclusion. Other areas - such as Career Development, Marketing and

Communications and ICT - have had more recent focus as organisations have developed a better understanding of the needs of people with disability as employees, customers and stakeholders. In addition, the role of Suppliers and Partners, and Products and Services, are now receiving increased attention as leading organisations seek to ensure accessibility and inclusion in a more systematic and universal way.

KEY AREAS AND GOALS

The ten key areas and goals are listed below.

1. **Commitment:** We commit to best practice on access and inclusion for people with disability as employees, customers and stakeholders.
2. **Premises:** Our premises are accessible to people with disabilities and whenever necessary we make adjustments for individuals.
3. **Workplace Adjustments:** We anticipate the needs of people with disability and have a robust process for making any adjustments which might be needed by individuals.
4. **Communication and Marketing:** Our communication and marketing channels are accessible to people with disability and whenever necessary we make reasonable adjustments for individuals.
5. **Products and Services:** We value people with disability as customers, clients and service users and address their needs when developing and delivering our products and services.

6. **ICT:** Our ICT is accessible and usable by people with disability, and we also make reasonable adjustments for individuals.
7. **Recruitment and Selection:** We attract and recruit people with disability, which gives us access to the widest talent pool at every level.
8. **Career Development:** We value all our employees, including those who experience disability and are committed to their retention and development.
9. **Suppliers and Partners:** We expect our suppliers and corporate partners to reflect and enable us to meet our commitment to best practice.
10. **Innovation:** We pride ourselves on our innovative practices and continually strive to do better.

MATURITY LEVELS

Figure 2 and table 2 show the average maturity level across all Index participants for each key area. The maturity levels are:

- Level 1 - Not participating
- Level 2 - Basic
- Level 3 - Programmatic, and
- Level 4 - Strategic.

The increasing level of maturity is represented by the segments in the figures that follow.

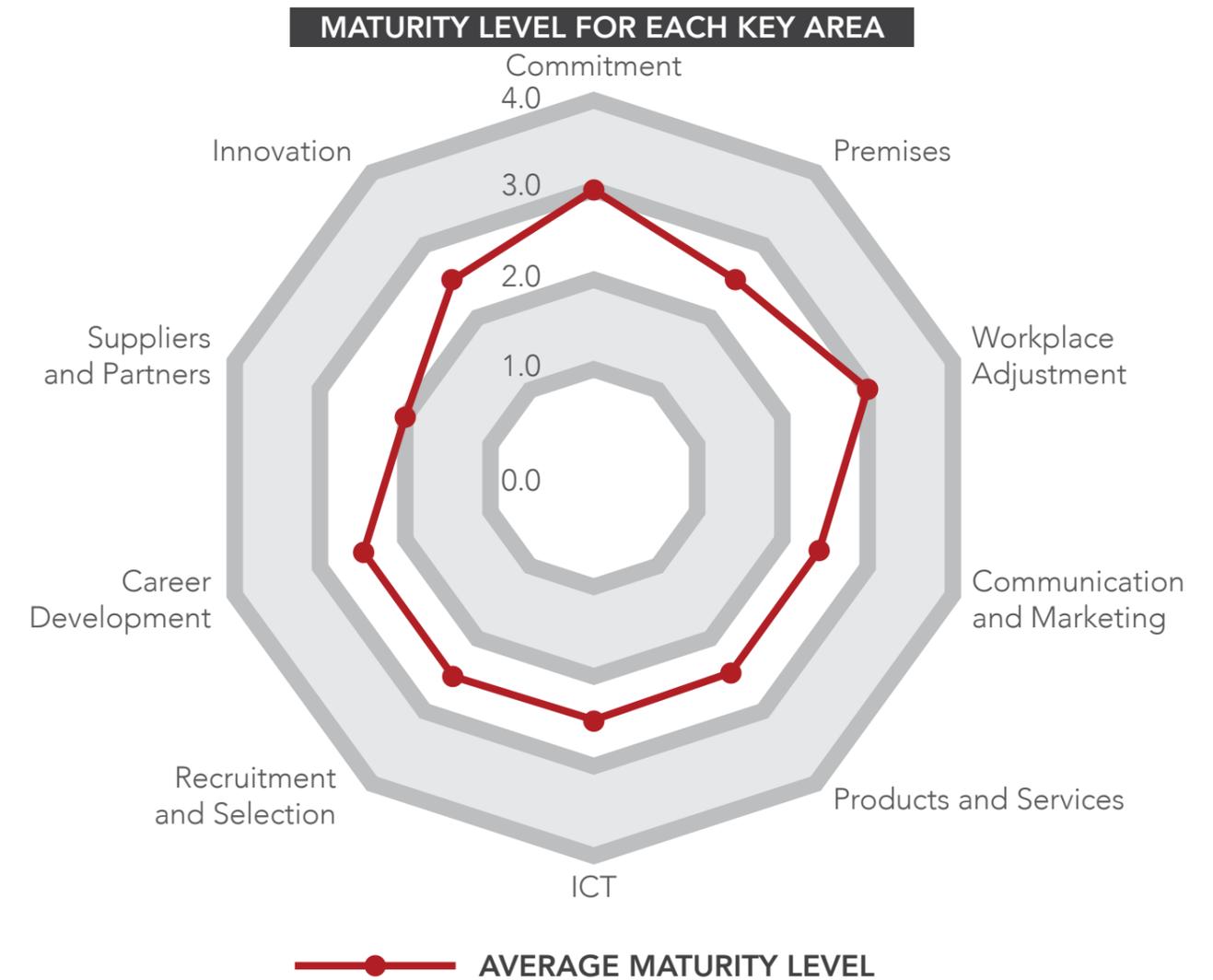


Figure 2 Index average maturity level by key area

KEY AREA	AVERAGE MATURITY LEVEL (/4)
Commitment	3.0
Premises	2.5
Workplace Adjustments	3.0
Communication and Marketing	2.5
Products and Services	2.5
ICT	2.5
Recruitment and Selection	2.5
Career Development	2.5
Suppliers and Partners	2.0
Innovation	2.5

Table 2 Index average maturity level by key area (data)

STRATEGIC

There was no key area in which the average maturity level of all participating organisations was at the Strategic level.

PROGRAMMATIC TO STRATEGIC

The areas of Commitment and Workplace Adjustments demonstrated the highest level of maturity overall amongst the participating organisations. The average across organisations was at the Programmatic level, meaning that there were tactics, programs, policies or procedures in place to address some issues or a focus on some parts of their business or operations. The Access and Inclusion Index provides clear guidance on how to make these practices systematic and truly embed them in organisations to progress to the strategic level.

BASIC TO PROGRAMMATIC

The areas of Premises, Communication and Marketing, Products and Services, and Career Development averaged between Basic and Programmatic, reflecting a more reactive approach with some programs and/or policies in place. We encourage members to take a strategic approach, ensuring practices extend across the organisation, are measured and sustainable.

NOT PARTICIPATING TO BASIC

ICT and Suppliers and Partners were key areas where on average only a basic, reactive level of maturity was present. For the Index findings for ICT to score at a basic level on average is an unexpected result, given the availability of external standards and guidance (WCAG 2.0) and the perceived trend of an increased emphasis on ICT. Organisations were committed to external standards and guidance, but scored lower for the sections relating to implementation and monitoring.

FIT FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Communication plays a fundamental role in all aspects of business and has a powerful role to play in influencing public perception. It positions brands, helps with managing relationships, supports effective team building, enables innovation and contributes to organisational growth. Ensuring communications and marketing activity is accessible to as many people as possible is essential in creating an inclusive workplace.

Life Without Barriers is a leading social purpose organisation that supports children, young people and families, people with disability, older people and people with mental illness, to live their best life and participate fully in the community. Inclusive communications and marketing messages are part of their core business practice.

Fiona Davies, National Manager Diversity and Inclusion, Margaret McKeown, National Manager External Relations and Damien Long, National Manager Marketing and Communications, share some of their initiatives and discuss their experience of participating in the 2016 Access and Inclusion Index.

“We have an AIEP — or Accessibility, Inclusion and Employment Plan. It was developed with advice and guidance from the Australian Network on Disability (AND) as well as consultation with our Disability Services Advisory Council and broad collaboration with our staff, board members, customers and engagement with other stakeholders outside the organisation. Our AIEP is led by our Chief Executive Officer. The plan informs our activity across the business,” said Fiona. “Having buy in from our staff and senior leadership is something that’s really important,” she added.

“The AIEP was one of the first documents I read when I started working here,” said Margaret. “It helped set the tone for what I thought about disability and what it actually meant. It made me think about wording and how we communicate our messages. It’s about gaining community acceptance by sharing and telling the stories of people with disability.”

For good practice in the area of communications and marketing, it is also vital to develop accessible digital materials that can be read by people using screen reading and magnification software. This includes ensuring adherence to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) AA standard, and reviewing electronic documents for best practice accessibility and easy English.

“It’s a constant challenge to ensure that all our communications and marketing materials are accessible and inclusive. My team is experienced in this and we’re starting to train others to do the same,” said Damien. “The checklists that we have as actions within the AIEP help to ensure we use the right fonts, language and add the correct structure to the material.”

Taking part in the Access and Inclusion Index has helped Life without Barriers to take stock of their progress in creating an inclusive organisation. “We see it as a guide to how we’re performing. It shows where we’re at and identifies gaps. In some areas we have performed well, but there’s plenty of room for improvement,” said Fiona.

“It’s measurable. There are real figures and real data to work from. I think it will be a powerful tool to help us move forward. We don’t see diversity and inclusion as a one-off event. It’s part of our business; it’s what we do and we’re including it across all of our areas,” she added.

CROSS SECTION OF RESULTS

The maturity level for each organisation in each key area was calculated and the distribution of results is shown in figure 3 below and table 3 on page 15. This information shows how many organisations are within each maturity level for each key area and provides clarity on overall progress with respect to all ten areas of access and inclusion.

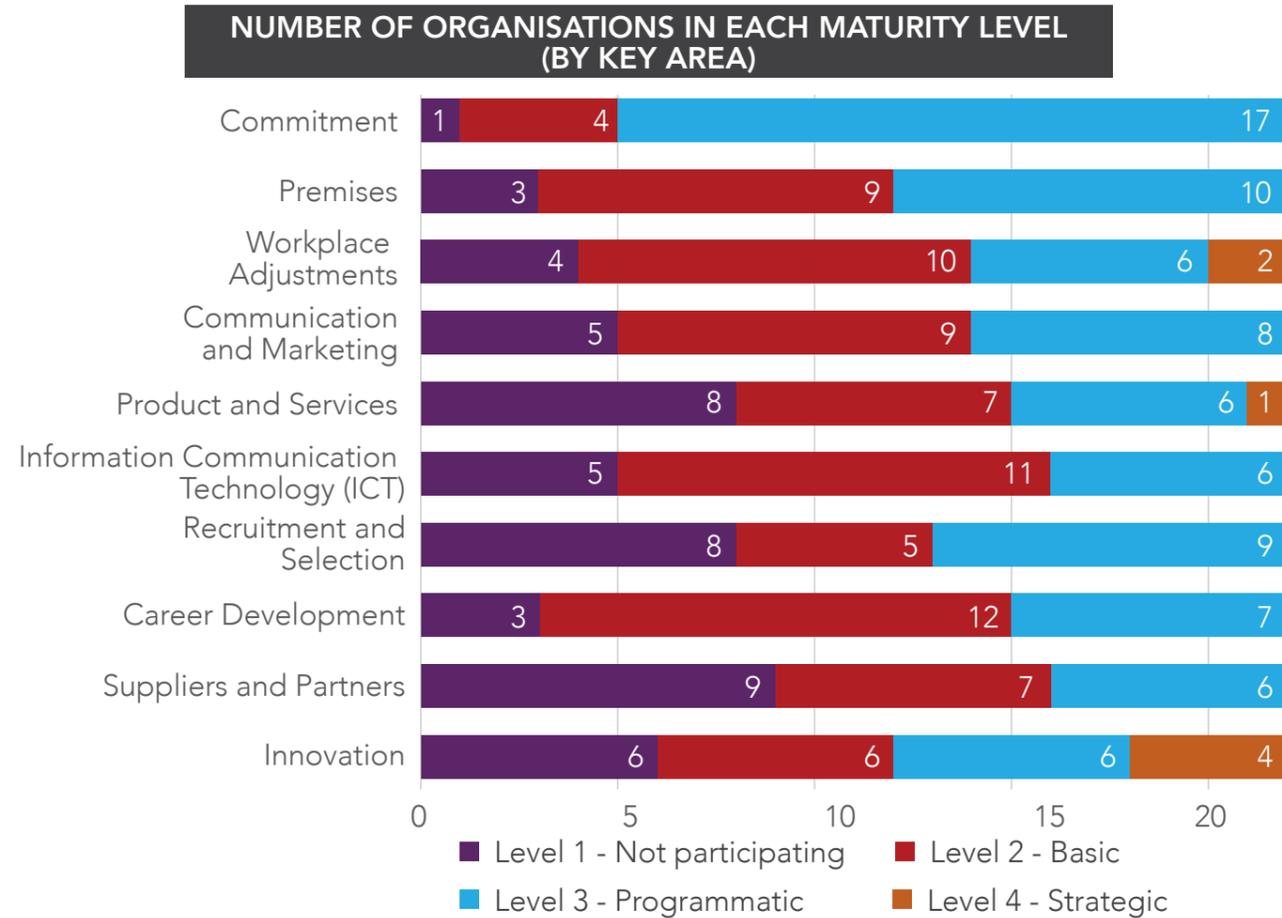


Figure 3 Number of organisations in each maturity level (by key area)

KEY AREAS	NO. OF ORGS AT LEVEL 1	NO. OF ORGS AT LEVEL 2	NO. OF ORGS AT LEVEL 3	NO. OF ORGS AT LEVEL 3
Commitment	1	4	16	1
Premises	3	9	10	0
Workplace Adjustments	4	10	6	2
Communication and Marketing	5	9	8	0
Products and Services	8	7	6	1
ICT	5	11	6	0
Recruitment and Selection	8	5	9	0
Career Development	3	12	7	0
Suppliers and Partners	9	7	5	1
Innovation	6	6	6	4

Table 3 Number of organisations by maturity band and key area (data)

Figure 3 and table 3 illustrate that most organisations operate within the mid-level maturity bands, i.e. Basic to Programmatic. A key observation is that for the area of Commitment, 16 of the 22 organisations are at a Programmatic level and one is at a Strategic level. This confirms AND's experience with members over the years that the area of Commitment is consistently regarded as a foundation piece for any other access and inclusion initiatives within organisations.

The findings with respect to the level of maturity for Recruitment and Selection are lower than expected and slightly surprising, given the increased public policy focus in recent years in advancing the employment of people with disability.

For the areas of Products and Services, and Suppliers and Partners, our findings indicate a relatively less mature approach to proactively improving access and inclusion in the organisation.

The key challenge for a number of organisations performing at Basic level is to gain momentum and move from 'reactive' to 'proactive'. The Access and Inclusion Index provides the resources for organisations to adapt and adopt proven best practice. The relatively high number of Basic responses across the board indicates that more engagement within organisations is required to progress maturity in regard to access and inclusion.

FRAMEWORK, IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND OUTCOMES, INNOVATION

Within the Access and Inclusion Index, questions are grouped into three areas. These are:

- **Framework:** relates to organisational commitment, policies, procedures and guidelines.
- **Implementation:** relates to actions, programs and initiatives that the organisation has taken to deliver on commitments.
- **Review and Outcomes:** relates to monitoring and reviewing progress and using data to improve processes and outcomes for people with disability.

An additional key area titled Innovation is included in the Access and Inclusion Index, but is separate from these three categories.

Figure 4 below and table 4 on page 17 show the average maturity level for questions relating to Framework, Implementation, and Review and Outcome. These results show the maturity level of organisations from policy development through to monitoring and continuous improvement in each key area. As a high-level generalisation, the trend is for organisations to be most mature in relation to Framework, less mature in Implementation and least mature in Review and Outcomes. Twelve organisations were more mature in Framework than Implementation and 19 organisations were more mature in Implementation than Review and Outcomes. There is more work to do in adopting a data-driven approach to inform current practice and ensure continuous improvement for access and inclusion.

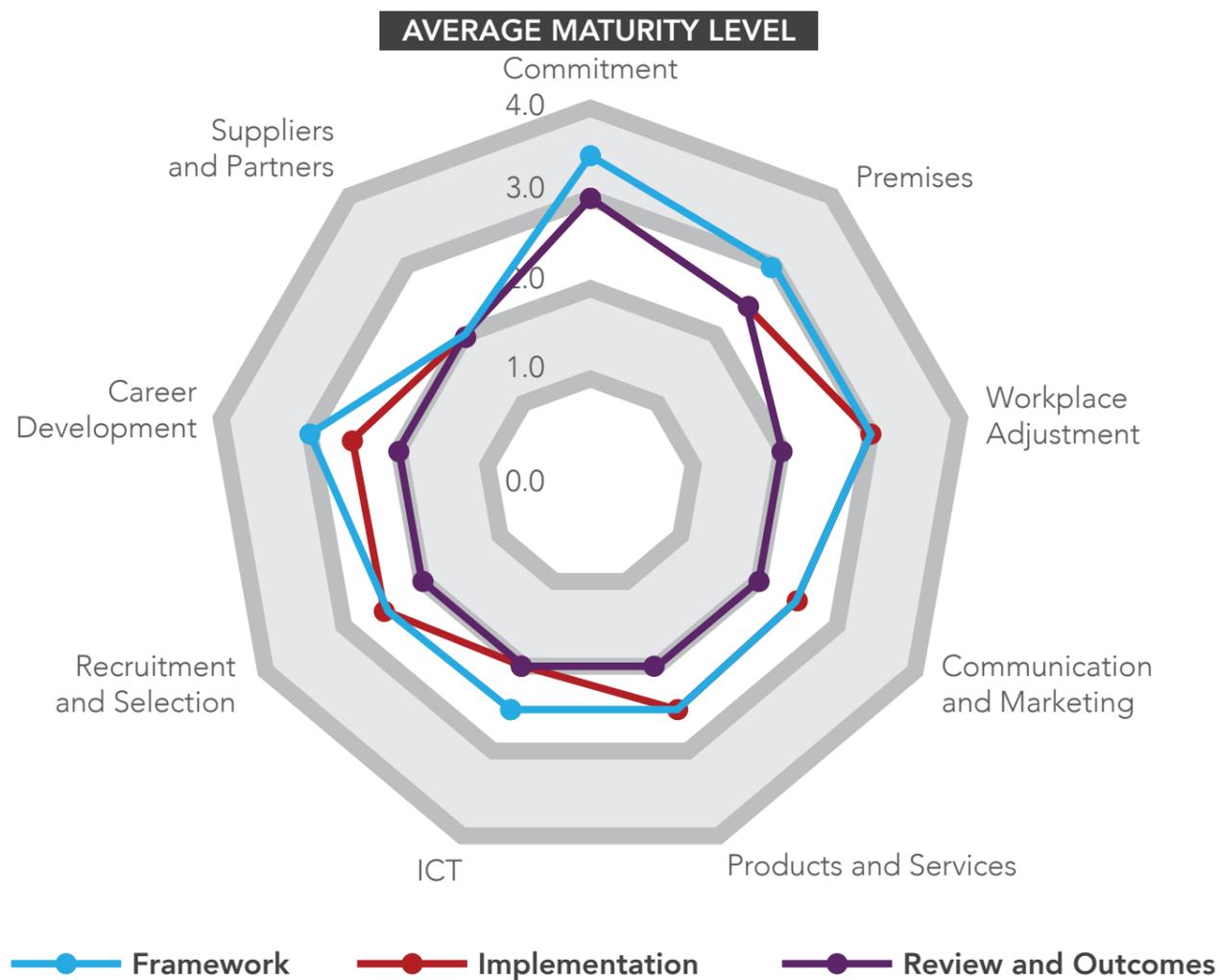


Figure 4 Average maturity level by key area and Framework, Implementation, and Review and Outcomes

KEY AREAS	FRAMEWORK AVERAGE MATURITY LEVEL	IMPLEMENTATION AVERAGE MATURITY LEVEL	REVIEW AND OUTCOMES AVERAGE MATURITY LEVEL
Commitment	3.5	3.0	3.0
Premises	3.0	2.5	2.5
Workplace Adjustments	3.0	3.0	2.0
Communication and Marketing	2.5	2.5	2.0
Products and Services	2.5	2.5	2.0
ICT	2.5	2.0	2.0
Recruitment and Selection	2.5	2.5	2.0
Career Development	3.0	2.5	2.0
Suppliers and Partners	2.0	2.0	2.0

Table 4 Average maturity level by key area and Framework, Implementation, and Review and Outcome

FRAMEWORK

Organisational commitment, policies, procedures and guidelines.

Organisations generally had stronger results for their Access and Inclusion Frameworks than for their Review and Outcomes (monitoring and reviewing progress and using data to improve processes and outcomes for people with disability). On average, the maturity level for Framework was higher than Review and Outcomes across all key areas except Suppliers and Partners, where maturity levels were equal.

Commitment rated the highest of all key areas, as might be expected from organisations that have allocated time and resources to undertake the Access and Inclusion Index. Commitment considers stated plans on access and inclusion for people with disability as employees, customers and stakeholders and, on average, rated at a level between Programmatic and Strategic.

Organisational frameworks for Premises, Workplace Adjustments and Career Development also rated strongly, with an average maturity level of Programmatic. This

means that there are policies and procedures in place, but they may not span the whole organisation or may not have covered all of the areas of best practice. Around half of organisations did not have documented requirements to ensure that new property leases, rentals or purchases are accessible.

On average, Recruitment and Selection was the one key area where the maturity level for Implementation was ahead of the maturity level for Framework. The most significant gap was in relation to having a current and up-to-date written policy in place stating a commitment to accessible Recruitment and Selection practices.

The area which presented the greatest challenge was Suppliers and Partners. Leadership within the procurement function, development of policies that demonstrate an organisation's commitment to access and inclusion, and ensuring that accessible products are purchased scored only Basic levels of maturity on average. Six organisations had a Strategic approach in relation to procurement leadership and in other aspects of the Supplier and Partner Framework.

REVIEW AND OUTCOMES

Monitoring and reviewing progress and using data to improve processes and outcomes for people with disability.

Tracking and monitoring initiatives and having formalised mechanisms in place to seek feedback from stakeholders with disability was, on average, the least mature area of access and inclusion for the organisations participating in the Index.

Monitoring Workplace Adjustment timeliness and quality, and using this information to inform policy and practice, is an area of opportunity for many organisations with around half of the organisations not yet doing this.

Premises and Career Development on average rated between Programmatic and Strategic in maturity, and all other areas were at a Basic level. In many areas, having a proactive process of seeking and using feedback from people with disability would provide greater insight to the monitoring processes of organisations.

In the area of Products and Services, six organisations were demonstrating a proactive approach to the review and monitoring of accessibility and a further 10 were operating at a reactive level to accessibility and making changes only when requested. A similar pattern was repeated in relation to ICT and Communications and Marketing.

For Recruitment and Selection processes, an opportunity exists for organisations to be more systematic in the collection of data for applicants for the purposes of identifying the barriers within the recruitment cycle with respect to the employment of people with disability. Slightly less than half of organisations were in some way active with four organisations operating at a Strategic level.

IMPLEMENTATION

Actions, programs and initiatives that the organisation has taken to deliver on commitments.

Commitment, Workplace Adjustments and Recruitment and Selection were the areas of highest performance when it came to the actions, programs and initiatives to deliver on the Frameworks developed by organisations. The average maturity level across organisations for these key areas is Programmatic and perhaps reflects the fact that they are the ones that are closest to the Diversity and Inclusion functions of many organisations. Seven organisations had introduced Workplace Adjustment Passports, which make it easier for employees to personalise their work environment.

The average maturity level across organisations for Premises, Career Development, Communications and Marketing, and Products and Services was between Basic and Programmatic. Some of the gaps in these areas are the provision of ongoing training for teams responsible for Premises and Career Development (including people leaders), and having systems in place to ensure that all Communications and Marketing material are accessible. Only one organisation achieved a Strategic level of maturity across any of these key areas and this was for Products and Services.

Suppliers and Partners and ICT are the lowest rating key areas when it comes to taking action on access and inclusion. The average maturity level of Basic suggests that an organisation is operating in a way which might reflect a compliance focus or is reactive to issues. Organisations were more likely to be advising their Suppliers and Partners of their accessibility needs than formally assessing the supplier or partner capability to deliver accessible products when engaging them in the first place. In ICT, formal accessibility training and progress on making websites accessible were more reactive in nature than proactive. Only one organisation demonstrated a Strategic level of maturity for Suppliers and Partners.

MAKING ADJUSTMENTS WORK

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Having a solid workplace adjustment policy is a foundation stone in creating a barrier free workplace. It helps managers to support staff to perform at their best, by ensuring they have everything they need to be able to thrive in their job.

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) is making good progress in this area. In the last twelve months, they have launched several innovative initiatives that are making a difference for their staff.

Following completion of the Access and Inclusion Index, Ed Holicky Assistant Director, Workplace Diversity and Belinda Gavin, Senior Project Officer, reflect on some of their activity.

Launched at the 2016 International Day of People with Disability celebration the ATO's electronic Reasonable Adjustment Passport, allows employees to describe how their disability, illness, medical condition or injury impacts on them in the workplace and detail any reasonable adjustment they require to do their job.

"We're proud of our Reasonable Adjustment Passport. We believe it's the first one to be done electronically," said Ed. "After talking to their manager, an employee documents their adjustments for approval. The information is then stored on our HR system. If a staff member changes positions or a new manager is appointed, the information is readily available. It saves time and provides a seamless process for the employee," he said.

At the ATO, workplace adjustments are discussed with potential employees from the outset.

"We ask about reasonable adjustments from the moment someone applies. We also advise on what is available if they choose to share information on their disability. Reasonable adjustments are funded centrally. We don't ask individual sections to pay. This is in line with best practice as recommended by the Australian Network on Disability," said Ed.

To help raise awareness about disability and workplace adjustments, the ATO has produced the 'Talking Disability' video series. It is stored on their staff SharePoint alongside other resources to support access and inclusion.

"The video series aims to challenge perceptions and break down some of the myths and misconceptions about disability," Belinda explains. "The series features employees with disability, managers and disability advisers talking about disability and reasonable adjustments. Overall it helps us to develop a disability confident culture and talk openly about disability in the ATO," she said.

The ATO undertook the Access and Inclusion Index to benchmark their performance across the 10 key areas.

"We wanted to look at our entire service offer for people with disability and determine where our gaps are so we could work on rectifying them. We also want to acknowledge the areas we are doing well in and find out how we can further improve those areas," said Ed.

INNOVATION

Two additional questions were asked in the Access and Inclusion Index and these related to Innovation. One question was in relation to innovation for employees with disability and the second was about innovation for customers, clients or service users. Information provided was assessed and there was a fairly even distribution of responses to each question, with a focus on both innovation and measurement.

Innovation for employees

Question 10.1: We have implemented an innovative policy and/or practice to support employees with disability in any of the nine key areas covered in the Access and Inclusion Index.

Nearly three quarters of the organisations in the Index have undertaken innovative policies or practices in support of employees with disability. Encouragingly, there appears to be a strong focus on measurement and sustainability as half of the organisations have translated their innovation into standard practice or have a focus on measurement.

MATURITY LEVEL	RESPONSE	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
Level 4 - Strategic	Yes, and we have measured the success of this innovation and it is part of, or in the process of being made part of, our standard business practices	7
Level 3 - Programmatic	Yes, and the impact has been measured or is in the process of being measured for the lessons learnt from this innovation, or the innovation is currently running successfully but is too early to be formally measured	4
Level 2 - Basic	Yes, but the impact of the innovation has not been measured.	5
Level 1 - Not participating	No	6

Table 5 Innovation for employees - number of responses for each maturity level

Innovation for customers, clients or service users

Question 10.1: We have implemented an innovative policy and/or practice to support customers, clients or service users with disability in any of the nine key areas covered in the Access and Inclusion Index.

Innovation for supporting customers, clients or service users with disability is also considerable, although slightly less than for employees. There is also a strong focus on embedding practice and measurement.

MATURITY LEVEL	RESPONSE	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
Level 4 - Strategic	Yes, and we have measured the success of this innovation and it is part of, or in the process of being made part of, our standard business practices	5
Level 3 - Programmatic	Yes, and the impact has been measured or is in the process of being measured for the lessons learnt from this innovation, or the innovation is currently running successfully but is too early to be formally measured	5
Level 2 - Basic	Yes, but the impact of the innovation has not been measured.	5
Level 1 - Not participating	No	7

Table 6 Innovation for customers, clients or service users - number of responses for each maturity level

WHAT'S NEXT?

The findings from the 2016 Index provide valuable insight into the level of disability confidence for organisations in Australia. The results confirm that AND members are highly committed to ensuring policy frameworks and programs are in place to foster access and inclusion. There is a trend toward well-developed policy frameworks being in place for accessibility of premises, the provision of workplace adjustments and ensuring equal opportunity in career development. These are very encouraging findings and indicate organisations are becoming more confident in ensuring people with disability are routinely included in all aspects of business.

Further investment should be made particularly around suppliers and partners, coming in last for the overall Index average. There is significant opportunity for leverage and influence with suppliers and partners that has not yet been harnessed. AND members can actively contribute to making a significant impact on inclusion of people with disability through their supplier and partner relationships.

While policy frameworks greatly support organisational practices, this has not necessarily flowed through to ensuring robust feedback mechanisms are in place for review and measurement of these practices in all areas of the Index. An organisation's ability to reflect and use insights gained to inform its policies and practices is a strategic approach to ensuring operations are aligned to overall business strategy.

At AND we continue to support our members in their ongoing commitment to ensure accessibility and inclusion for employees, customers, service users and other stakeholders. The launch of the national Access and Inclusion Index as a benchmark tool is an important step towards progressing the equitable participation of people with disability in society.

Stepping Into intern Georga at work.



DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



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