

# Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2025-2029



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Foreword

**Group Chief  
Executive Officer,  
Bryan Pyne**



**I am proud to present the St John of God Health Care Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.**

This plan marks an important step in our ongoing commitment to foster a culture of hospitality, respect and opportunity for all people. Especially those with disability who access our hospitals and services, including our caregivers, patients and visitors.

Our Vision is to provide healing, hope and a greater sense of dignity, especially to those most in need. In continuing a legacy of this standard of care, we seek to remove the physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers that prevent people with disability from fully participating in our workplace and in the care we provide.

In 2025, we launched our organisational strategy *Every Moment Matters*, which identifies the Care Journey as a key priority. This includes making health care access easier for patients and visitors with disability, and creating healing spaces that truly reflect our Values. We also reaffirmed our commitment to putting our People First, ensuring St John of God Health Care remains a workplace where caregivers can thrive, lead and grow in a purpose-driven environment.

**St John of God Health Care operates 25 facilities comprising more than 3,200 hospital beds, as well as home nursing, midwifery and allied health, disability services and social outreach programs.**

The activities outlined in this plan have been designed to deliver on these commitments.

Our approach has been guided by meaningful consultation with people with disability, both within St John of God Health Care and across the wider community. This engagement will continue as we deliver a framework of key actions outlined in this plan that aim to strengthening our workforce capability, ensure our facilities and services are accessible to all, and expand employment and career opportunities for people with disability.

I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of this plan, and to those who will bring it to life in the years ahead.

Introduction

**What is a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan?**

A Disability Access and Inclusion Plan sets out how an organisation will remove barriers and create environments where people with disability can participate fully, safely and with dignity.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, disability includes a broad range of physical, mental, sensory, neurological and intellectual conditions, and protects people from discrimination based on these experiences. The Social Model of Disability further reminds us that it is not a person's impairment that limits participation, but the barriers created by society. This principle is reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which defines disability as the interaction between individuals and the attitudinal and environmental barriers around them.

Our Disability Access and Inclusion Plan outlines how St John of God Health Care will address these barriers - physical, communicative and attitudinal - by creating services, workplaces and spaces where people with disability are respected, understood and supported to thrive.

**Consultation**

The plan was developed in collaboration with people with disability, both within St John of God Health Care and the broader community, as well as with disability peak bodies and advocacy organisations. We are deeply grateful for their insights and contributions.



# Feature story

## Hospitality in action

For eight years, Lauren has been a cherished part of the St John of God Geraldton Hospital. What began with an invitation from a former CEO, who happened to be her next-door neighbour, has grown into a meaningful and enduring connection to the hospital and the people within it.

Now 41, Lauren volunteers once a week, supported by her long-time carer Anne, who has been by her side for 16 years. Together, they have become familiar and much-loved faces across the hospital.

Across her years of service, Lauren has contributed to a wide range of roles. She has warmly welcomed patients, guiding them from Reception to the Day Surgery Unit, and has played an important part behind the scenes by folding menus, preparing and distributing serviettes, and assisting with administrative tasks. Whatever the job, Lauren approaches it with enthusiasm, positivity and her unmistakable smile.

Her presence is felt everywhere she goes. Caregivers greet her by name, patients respond to her warmth, and her bright energy brings a spark of joy into every room.

**“I love volunteering here,” she says, “I like supporting the team, being friendly and using my skills to help however I can. I like to make the patients feel comfortable. I’ve made so many friends here.”**



# Our plan

## Priority areas and commitments

### 1. Our service users

We are committed to delivering care that exceeds expectations and is inclusive of all. The voices and experiences of people with disability are essential to shaping services that are hospitable, respectful, and responsive.

#### Our commitments:

- Amplify the voice of people with disability in consumer advisory bodies.
- Improve physical accessibility across all sites.
- Ensure timely and effective identification of support needs.

### 2. Our caregivers

We aim to foster a workplace culture where all caregivers, including those with disability, feel valued and supported. We are committed to building awareness, capability, and inclusive practices across our workforce.

#### Our commitments:

- Increase visibility, voice, and representation of people with disability.
- Provide education and training to enhance disability awareness and competence.
- Build partnerships to grow the employment of people with disability across St John of God Health Care.

### 2. Our community

As a leading health care provider, St John of God Health Care embraces its role in advocating for social inclusion and employment equity. We will continue to collaborate with individuals and organisations to create meaningful opportunities for people with disability.

#### Our commitments:

- Increase employment opportunities for people with disability through partnerships with Disability Employment Services.
- Celebrate and promote diversity as a core expression of our Mission.



Our plan

Framework and key activities

1. Advocacy and support

We will actively advocate for inclusion and celebrate the contributions of people with disability within our organisation and communities.

Activities:

- Mark key events such as the International Day of People with Disability.
- Build ongoing relationships with disability advocacy and peak bodies to stay informed and implement best practice.

2. Facility and hospital/ service use

We will ensure people with disability can access, understand, and help shape the services we provide.

Activities:

- Include people with disability in consumer and advisory groups.
- Strengthen admission and intake processes to identify and support individual needs.
- Review all patient and client information to ensure it is accessible and easy to understand.

3. Physical & digital environments

We will maintain physical and digital spaces that are accessible, welcoming, and safe for all.

Activities:

- Use disability access assessment tools to regularly review and improve our facilities and digital platforms.
- Ensure that physical and psychological safety are prioritised in all environments.

4. Feedback and complaints

We will make it easy for people with disability to share their experiences and influence positive change.

Activities:

- Review feedback and complaints systems to ensure accessibility for all users.
- Provide caregivers with guidance and training to respond effectively to feedback related to disability access and inclusion.

5. Caregiver knowledge and understanding

We will equip our caregivers with the knowledge and understanding needed to create inclusive and supportive environments.

Activities:

- Establish a caregiver network to promote learning, collaboration, and advocacy.
- Develop accessible online resources and tools to support best practice in disability inclusion.
- Offer Formation and learning opportunities that build awareness and understanding of disability and inclusion.

6. Recruitment and selection policies and procedures

We will create equitable employment opportunities and remove barriers for people with disability to join and thrive in our workforce.

Activities:

- Review recruitment and selection policies to ensure inclusive and fair processes.
- Partner with Disability Employment Services and similar organisations to promote employment pathways.
- Explore opportunities to create designated roles for people with disability.

Feature story

Inclusive emergency care

At St John of God Midland Public and Private Hospital, a growing number of neurodivergent patients coming to the Emergency Department led to the development of a more inclusive and supportive approach to care. Thanks to the generosity of St John of God Foundation donors Swan Rotary and the City of Swan, and in partnership with Autism WA, the hospital is launching an innovative program designed to make emergency care more welcoming and supportive for neurodivergent individuals and their families.

The Neurodivergent Transition Program will include:

- Specialist training for clinical staff to improve communication and understanding;
- The creation of a calming, sensory-friendly space within the ED;
- Family support resources to help loved ones feel informed and empowered;
- A part-time registered nurse dedicated to championing the program and coordinating care in partnership with Autism WA.

“Our goal is to reduce the stress that can accompany a hospital visit and ensure neurodiverse patients receive the compassionate, individualised care they need,” says Maddison Calzada, a registered nurse at St John of God Midland Hospital and one of the program’s key drivers.



Feature story

# Recognising International Day of People with Disability

Each year, International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) provides an opportunity for St John of God Health Care to celebrate the strengths, contributions and diverse experiences of people with disability across our communities.

In 2024, St John of God Accord marked IDPwD with activities focused on improving mental health for people with disabilities.

**This recognises that close to one in two people with disability report experiencing mental health issues, compared with one in five in the wider population.**

The events were focused on building understanding, reducing stigma and creating more inclusive pathways to support.

Past gatherings have included keynote talks from lived-experience advocates and mental health experts, presentations from members of our Client Voice Committee, and creative contributions from our music therapy participants.

Whether through shared learning, personal storytelling or community connection, our IDPwD activities reflect our commitment to listening, valuing lived experience and fostering environments where everyone feels respected and supported.



Disability Access and Inclusion Plan



St John of God Health Care

# About St John of God Health Care

St John of God Health Care is a leading Catholic not-for-profit provider of high-quality health care and community services in Australia and New Zealand.

As a not-for-profit health care provider, we return all surpluses to the communities we serve by updating and expanding our facilities and technology, developing new services, investing in people, and providing our social outreach services to those experiencing disadvantage.

## Our Mission

To continue the healing mission of Jesus.

## Our Vision

We are recognised for care that provides healing, hope and a greater sense of dignity, especially to those most in need.

## Our Values

Hospitality

Compassion

Respect

Justice

Excellence



Consumer reviewed  
and approved



ST JOHN OF GOD  
Health Care