



# Down Syndrome New South Wales

## Strategic Plan

2020 – 2023

OCTOBER 2020

DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

## Our Vision

All people with Down syndrome in NSW live meaningful lives as valued and contributing members of their communities.

## Our Mission

Down Syndrome NSW:

- (i) advocates for change to achieve social transformation by building systems that promote self-determination;
- (ii) creates opportunities for people with Down syndrome that promote connection, capacity and autonomy; and
- (iii) provides information and support to families, carers and supporters, informed by best evidence and lived experience.

## Our Values

### Member centred:

*"Membership means everyone is interested in Down syndrome."*

- Ellen Hester, Strategic Planning Day 26.9.2020

We are champions and advocates for the rights of people with Down syndrome to be valued and engaged in the community.

### Inclusive:

People with Down syndrome have the right to be included in all aspects of everyday life and to choose how they want to live. Our services extend from people with Down syndrome to families, carers and associates. Our whole-of-life approach enables social transformation – i.e. a broader impact on the wider community.

### Integrity:

We are transparent in our actions. We work together to achieve our mission and share knowledge and strengths.

### Respect:

We respect and value personal and professional diversity. We treat community, colleagues and stakeholders with respect and courtesy, having regard for their dignity.



## Audience

The plan will:

- guide the board's focus and setting of priorities
- inform the expectations of members
- assist staff to contribute to the association's development
- advise other stakeholders of the association's direction

## Context

The Down Syndrome Association of NSW (DSANSW) has a proud 40 year history of promoting the inclusion of people with Down syndrome in all aspects of community life, consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. By advocating with government and service systems, and supporting individuals, DSANSW has helped drive change in legislation, policy and service access, as well as in community perceptions and opportunities. The National Disability Insurance Scheme has increased access to disability specific supports including early intervention, which has been vital to increasing the capacity of people with Down syndrome to live meaningful lives. Nevertheless, access to housing and employment remain restricted for many people with Down syndrome. The availability of appropriate and accessible care and support, research and knowledge informed by an understanding of the specific needs of people with Down syndrome, continues to be a challenge.

People with Down syndrome have unique strengths and challenges, so while there have been welcome changes in community inclusion for people with Down syndrome, they still experience exclusion in many aspects of life, including access to mainstream education and social engagement. Consequently there is much work for DSANSW still to do, both in the provision of opportunities, information and support; and in promoting self-advocacy by people with Down syndrome, advocacy for people with Down syndrome and their families and carers, and advocacy to build systems that impact positively on people with Down syndrome. DSANSW works in partnership with a range of other organisations, with the specific focus on Down syndrome across all life stages.





## Strategic Priorities

DSANSW intends to renew the organisation's role as a Centre of Excellence in the understanding of Down syndrome, bringing together lived experience and credible knowledge gained from research and professional expertise.

DSANSW will look for new ways to increase the value of membership by utilising the skills, talents and interests of members and to develop more opportunities for members to be actively involved in achieving the association's Vision and Mission. DSANSW will look to utilise the potential of the participative membership model during the course of the current Strategic Plan.

## Goals

### 1. Optimise digital engagement

Utilise online platforms to extend the reach of the association to all members and other stakeholders throughout NSW through: online access to education and activities, and digital dissemination of information and provision of services.

### 2. Enhance member self-advocacy skills

Promote the development of self-advocacy skills for members with Down syndrome in partnership with other organisations with relevant expertise or shared concerns.

### 3. Be the Centre of Excellence in the understanding of Down syndrome within NSW

Build a repository of information, data, and best practice guidelines, which can be shared across NSW, for the benefit of people with Down Syndrome. Key features will be:

- (a) the engagement of members and volunteers, drawing upon their skills, personal interests and experience, to promote increased connection between members; and
- (b) drawing on current research and expert knowledge to inform the development of DSANSW's knowledge base.

The use of the Centre's information for DSANSW and other relevant agencies, will be guided by continuous quality improvement principles and consistent best practice governance.

### 4. Value and support staff

Improve staff retention and transmission of staff knowledge within the organisation.

### 5. Strengthen and utilise partnerships

Promote partnerships with other organisations in Australia and internationally that share an interest in and knowledge of Down syndrome, and use their knowledge and connections to further DSANSW's mission.

### 6. Increase funding for DSANSW

Increase opportunities for people with Down syndrome, and support and information for families, carers and supporters by expanding the financial resources of DSANSW, recognising that new activities require additional resources.

