



AUSTRALIAN NETWORK  
ON DISABILITY

# Access and Inclusion Index **Benchmark Report**

2019 - 20

May 2020

## Top Performers



Australian Government

Australian Taxation Office



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# From the CEO

I am pleased to present the 2019-20 Benchmark Report that provides the aggregated results of the 24 members who submitted their Access and Inclusion Index for review and evaluation.

Sincere congratulations to this year's top performers Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, the Australian Taxation Office and Medibank. We applaud these organisations for their enduring commitment and focus. Their results have been achieved through strong collaboration across their organisations and between Diversity and Inclusion teams, Employee Resource Groups and Disability Champions.

Top performers and participants in the Benchmark Report elevated their performance by engaging with each of their key business areas to develop and implement practices that are accessible and inclusive of people with disability.

While around 10% of members participate in annual Benchmarking, around 40% of members use the Access and Inclusion Index tools to successfully navigate their journey to disability confidence.

The Access and Inclusion Index provides a strong roadmap to guide organisations to disability confidence. The importance of roadmaps was called out by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Global Business and Disability Network and Fundación ONCE's report 'Making the future of work inclusive of persons with Disability'. Roadmaps unlock potential and build more inclusive economies and communities. We want to shape a future of work where no one is left behind.

My sincere appreciation to this year's Benchmark Report participants. Your commitment to understand, assess and progress practices to meet the needs of customers and employees with disability, plays a vital role in building a disability confident Australia.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Colbert".

**Suzanne Colbert AM**  
CEO

# About the Access and Inclusion Index

The Access and Inclusion Index is an online tool that helps organisations to understand, assess, benchmark and improve their disability confidence in order to meet the needs of their customers and employees with disability.

The Index helps organisations review their policies, procedures and practices, and establishes their progress on accessibility and inclusion of people with disability. It increases understanding of access and inclusion and provides opportunities to receive guidance on welcoming employees, customers and clients with disability across their business.

The ten Key Areas assessed by the tool are:

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 disability and whenever necessary we adjust for individuals.
3. **Workplace Adjustments:**  
We anticipate the needs of people with disability and have an effective process in place for making any adjustments 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. **Information Communication Technology (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 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 our commitment to best practice.
10. **Innovation:**  
We pride ourselves on our innovative practices and continually strive to do better.

# Methodology

Questions within each of the Key Areas of the Index are in 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:**  
Relates to monitoring and reviewing progress and using data to improve processes and outcomes.

Responses to all questions are assessed at four levels of maturity:

- **Level 1: Not participating**  
This is the level where an organisation may have not yet considered its position and is still planning its path.
- **Level 2: Basic**  
The organisation is operating in a way that 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 processes and practices are designed to deliver a consistently accessible and inclusive experience for employees, customers and stakeholders. Access and inclusion activities are across the organisation and are sustainable

The Index weights the Key Areas and questions according to their relative importance and impact on the access and inclusion of people with disability to produce a total Index score out of 100.

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



## RMIT's commitment to accessibility and inclusion earns top place in 2019 Index Benchmark Report

RMIT has participated in the Index every year since 2016 and it has provided a framework for continuous improvement while guiding the progress of the Accessibility Action Plan.

RMIT University's Chief Operating Officer and Senior Disability Champion, Dionne Higgins, said participation in the Index reflected the University's commitment to maintain and build accessible physical, cultural and digital environments for all our community.

"Being an inclusive place to work and study is what makes RMIT special. This Index will help ensure our approach and services remain strong, relevant and measured so we can constantly improve to make a difference for everyone," she said.

This commitment to access and inclusion earned RMIT the spot of top performer in the 2019-20 Index, a huge achievement that recognises the commitment and action taken by so many across RMIT to improve access and inclusion.

It has helped RMIT to improve access to employment, training and development, products and services, premises, communications and information communication technology.

Lara Rafferty, RMIT Associate Director of Student Diversity and Inclusion, and Chair of the Accessibility Working Group, said RMIT's achievement as top

# **"It elevates the standard for us to work toward and provides an opportunity to implement leading practices,"**

Amy Love,  
Senior Inclusion Manager,  
Staff Talent and Human  
Resources, RMIT

performer in the Index reflected a 'whole-of-community' approach to improving access and inclusion.

"Participating in the Access and Inclusion Index has been a great way for us to document our achievements over the past year, benchmark our progress, and engage the RMIT community on the next actions we need to take," she said.

As a multi-sector university with more than 94,000 students and 12,000 staff globally, embedding cultural change and practical improvements at RMIT is not a simple task.

RMIT's Digital Accessibility Framework was developed and launched in 2019, as a result of an external and consultative review, and drew on the insights from the Access and Inclusion Index report to enhance RMIT's strategic commitment to digital accessibility.

RMIT considered what the standards for accessibility should be for their software and digital content, and what they need to do to meet them, in order to develop the plan for 2020 and beyond.

The new Digital Accessibility Framework creates pathways for greater inclusion, setting consistent standards for delivering online information, content and services to meet the needs of the diverse community at RMIT and making them accessible and engaging for a wider audience.

By creating consistent standards for digital accessibility, RMIT will set an important goal to both meet and celebrate the diverse needs of the community of students and staff and improve everyone's experience at RMIT.

Amy Love, RMIT Senior Inclusion Manager, People, said that participation in the Index Benchmark Report is an investment for the future of the RMIT.

"It elevates the standard for us to work toward and provides an opportunity to implement leading practices," she said.

"This is advocated not only by our leaders at RMIT, but also raises the expectations of our staff and students to live and experience our value of inclusion. RMIT is proud that we have been ranked as the top performer in the Index."

# Key Findings and Results

The average score across the 24 participating members was 44/100. This remains consistent with the 2018-19 Index average and reflects the maturity and disability confidence of Australian Network on Disability members.

The scores show that many organisations see value in using the Index as a snapshot of current performance and a great way to measure their progress over time. The Index is an equally powerful tool for organisations starting out as it is for organisations that have been investing in inclusion of people with disability for a decade or more. The distribution of the 2019-20 scores is shown in Table 1.

Access & Inclusion Score Range	Number of organisations
0-10	2
11-20	3
21-30	4
31-40	4
41-50	1
51-60	1
61-70	4
71-80	2
81-90	3
91-100	0

Table 1 - Distribution of Index scores



# Leading Organisations

Australian Network on Disability is very pleased to announce that the 2019-20 leading organisations are:



**Australian Government**

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**Australian Taxation Office**



Congratulations to the top three organisations, who each scored over 80% and demonstrated their long-term commitment, and investment, in access and inclusion of people with disability as customers, employees and stakeholders.

# Maturity Levels

On average, participating organisations demonstrated a Basic maturity level across nine of the ten key areas, all bar the Commitment key area. The average maturity level across all Index participants for each Key Area are shown in Table 2 and Figure 1. This is broken down further in Table 3 and Figure 2.

Commitment remains the strongest measure, with 16 out of 24 organisations performing at a Programmatic level. Two organisations demonstrated a Strategic maturity in this key area.

Workplace Adjustments also had strong results with four organisations achieving a Strategic level of maturity, the most out of all Key Areas. This is promising to see as evidence shows that when employers make workplace adjustments in a timely and effective way, employees

with disability are more engaged and optimistic about their future career.

10 organisations demonstrated a Programmatic maturity for Communication and Marketing, while 11 were Not Participating. The ATO provided a great example of progressing access and inclusion in this Key Area (page 14).

Most organisations achieved a Basic to Programmatic level of maturity in six Keys Areas. The next steps for organisations performing at a Basic level is to leverage the momentum gained from completing the Index and build on the current frameworks, moving from a 'reactive' to 'proactive' approach.

For Recruitment and Selection, ICT, and Suppliers and Partners, at least half of the organisations are Not Participating and require focus in these areas to develop inclusive policies and practices. Medibank showed how they consider the core values of their suppliers, including access and inclusion, when deciding whether to partner with them (page 16).

## Overall Maturity by Key Area

## Average Maturity Level (all organisations)

Commitment	3
Premises	2.5
Workplace Adjustments	2.5
Communication and Marketing	2.5
Products and Services	2.5
ICT	2
Recruitment and Selection	2
Career Development	2
Suppliers and Partners	2
Innovation	2

Table 2 - Index average maturity level by Key Area

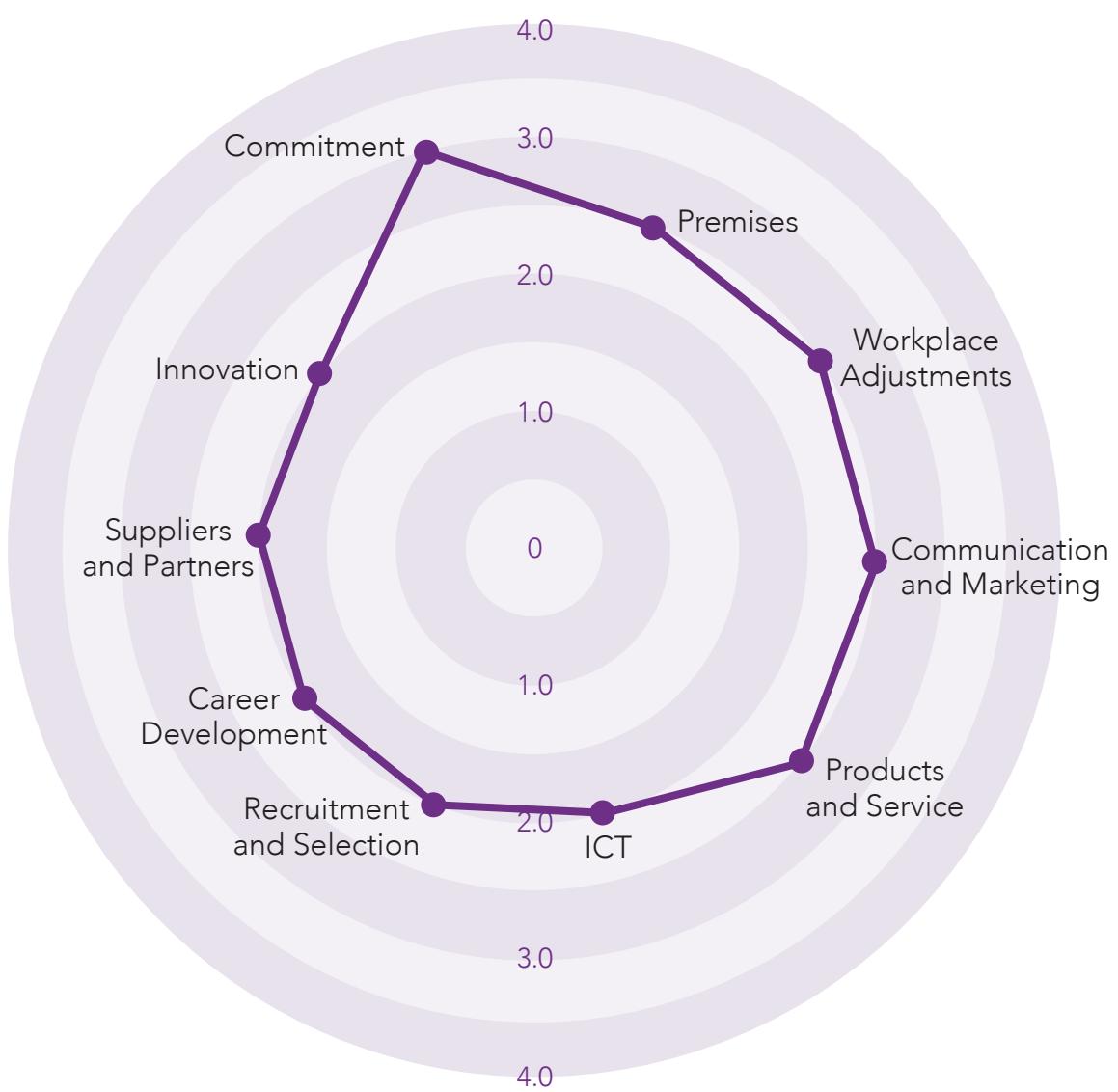
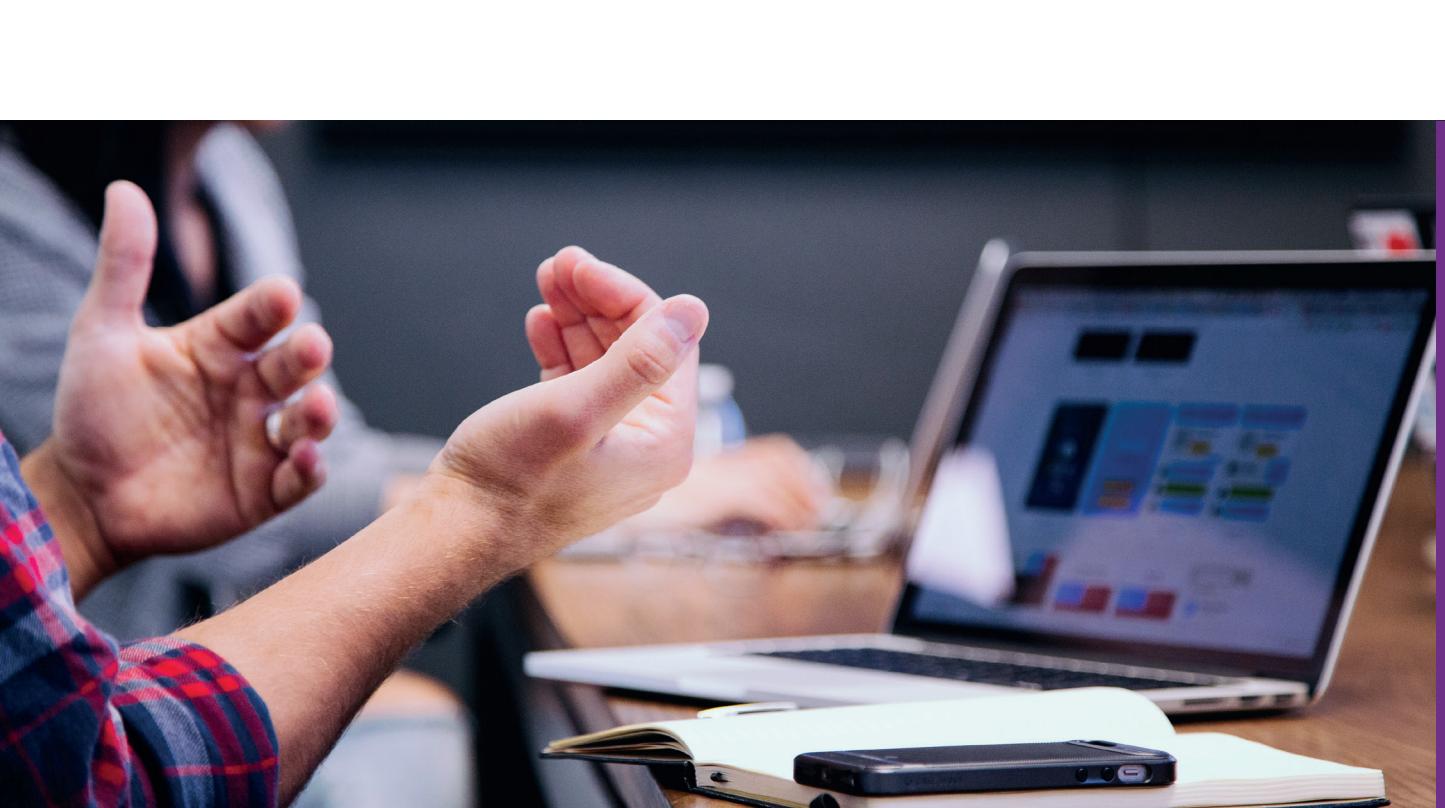


Figure 1 - Index average maturity level by Key Area - all organisations

Key Area	Number of organisations at:			
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Commitment	3	3	16	2
Premises	9	6	9	0
Workplace Adjustments	10	3	7	4
Communication and Marketing	11	3	10	0
Products and Services	7	6	9	2
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	13	4	7	0
Recruitment and Selection	12	5	7	0
Career Development	10	5	9	0
Suppliers and Partners	15	5	3	1
Innovation	9	6	8	1

Table 3 - Number of organisations in each maturity level by Key Area

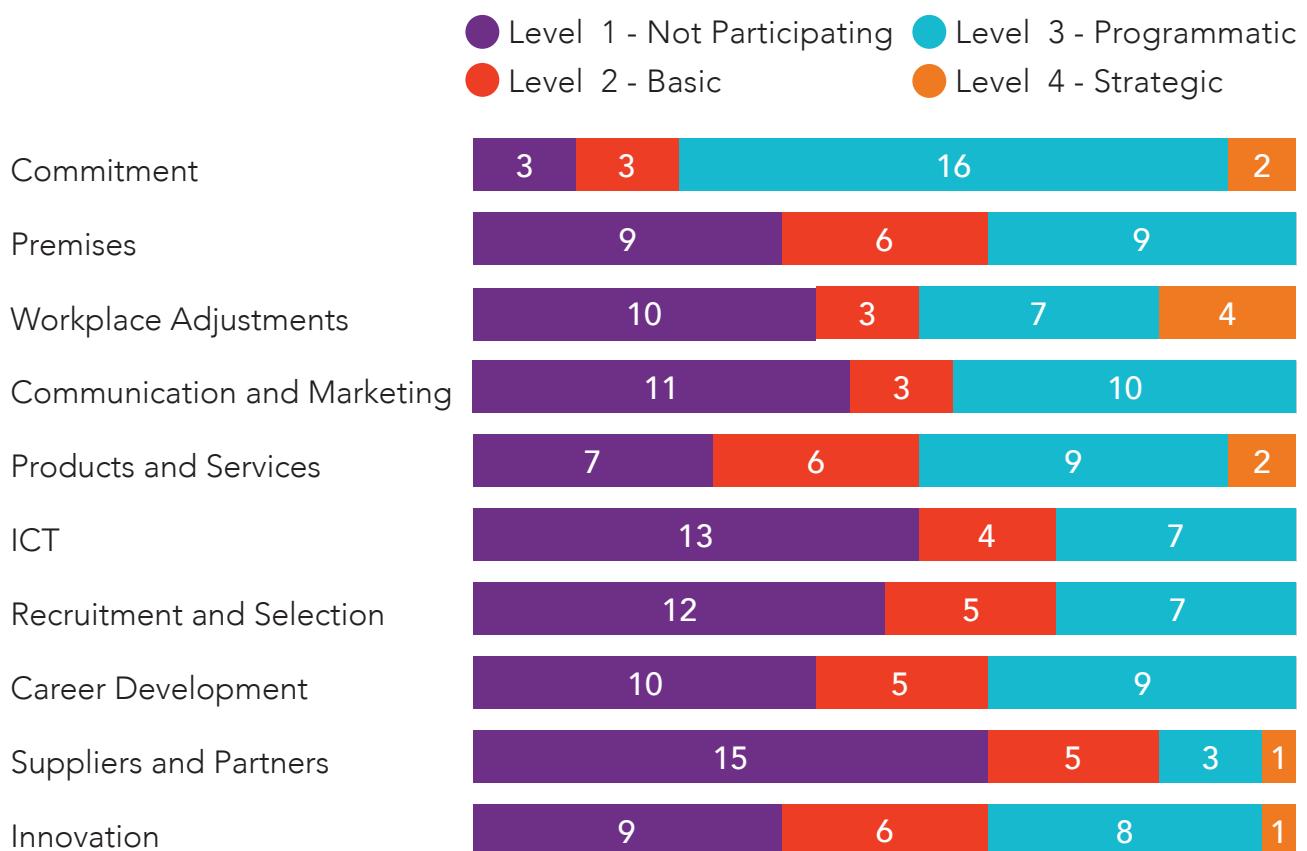


Figure 2 - Number of organisations in each maturity level by Key Area



## Framework, Implementation and Review

Table 4 and Figure 3 show the average maturity level relating to the Framework, Implementation and Review sections of each Key Area. These results show the maturity level of organisations from policy development through to monitoring and continuous improvement.

Scores were relatively consistent across all three sections, with a trend towards greater maturity in Framework and Implementation, and lesser maturity in Review.

Across these three sections, the Index tool helps organisations identify their current good practices and to build on these to develop a more systematic approach. Developing robust policies and procedures that are well communicated and embedded into 'business as usual', provides a strong foundation to continuously review and improve. Understanding and promoting good practice encourages and motivates other business areas to review processes and to innovate.

Behaviours	Framework	Implementation	Review
Commitment	3.5	3	3
Premises	2.5	2	2
Workplace Adjustments	2.5	3	2
Communication and Marketing	2.5	2.5	2
Products and Services	3	2.5	2.5
ICT	2	2	2
Recruitment and Selection	2	2.5	1.5
Career Development	2.5	2	2.5
Suppliers and Partners	2	2	1.5

Table 4 - Average maturity level in Framework, Implementation and Review by Key Area

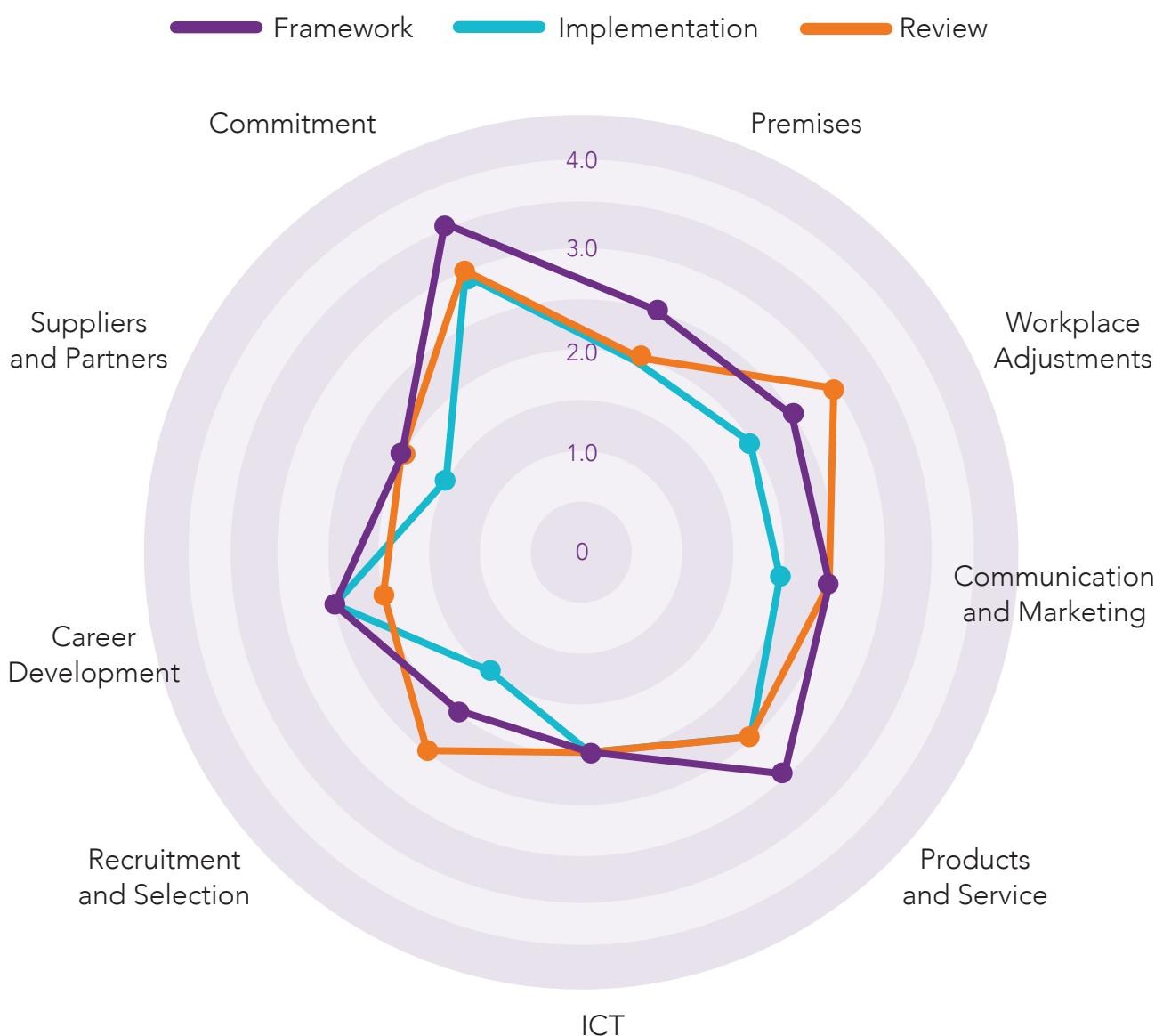


Figure 3 - Average maturity level in Framework, Implementation and Review by Key Area

# Innovation

Innovation is assessed differently from other Key Areas. There are only two questions: The first asks about innovative practices for employees with disability; the second asks about innovations for customers, clients or service users. The benchmark data shows participating organisations have a similar focus on innovative solutions for both customers and employees. Table 5 provides the maturity levels across the two questions.

Innovative thinking creates solutions and new ways of doing things to advance and improve access and inclusion. Examples of the innovative practices to support employees with disability include the development of high-tech solutions to improve the experience and usability of the workplace. Employment programs were also referenced in this section, with changes to the way recruitment is done to widen the talent pool and attract skilled and talented candidates with disability.

Six organisations achieved a Strategic level rating for their innovative policies and practices for customers, clients or service users. There were some excellent examples of creating products and services that have been built with accessibility at the forefront, such as technology, communication platforms and tailored services. These organisations reported on the impact the innovative practice made on other areas of the business, such as procurement and marketing, increasing the focus and long-term outcomes of access and inclusion in their organisation.

Life Without Barriers (page 18) provided an example of an innovative, accessibility first approach to designing systems and solutions for their clients, employees and community.

Innovation	Not Participating	At Basic	At Programmatic	At Strategic
For employees	6	10	6	2
For customers, clients or service users	11	3	4	6

Table 5 - Number of organisations within each maturity level for Innovation for Employees, and Innovation for Customers, Clients or Service Users



## Talking to everyone – ATO puts accessibility at forefront of communications and marketing

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has completed the Access and Inclusion Index in three of the last four years.

According to John Lennox, Assistant Director, Diversity & Inclusion, the reason the ATO participates in the Index is simple:



"It's important to assess ourselves to see how we are tracking year-on-year. We also want to know how we compare to the rest of the market."

"By participating in the Index," John added, "we can all learn from each other. There might be things the ATO is doing well which we can share with others. Equally, it shows us what we could do better."

In the 2017 Index Benchmark Report, the ATO was recognised as the second top performing organisation in a field of 28 participants. Yet surprisingly, whilst collating information for their Index submission, the ATO determined it could be doing a lot better than it was. They decided to take a year to pause, reflect and refresh some of their approaches to access and inclusion.

Participating again in 2019, the ATO is recognised for their continued high performance and for their progress in the area of Marketing, Communication, Digital and Employee Experiences.

One of the reasons for making such progress has been the development of the Digital Inclusion Guide.



It sits as a supplement to the ATO's Style Guide and Content Model to ensure all communications (including meetings, internal communications, external communications and videos) are accessible for all.

As technology is constantly evolving, the ATO is mindful of its commitment to being accessible to all employees, clients and customers. It has developed formal processes for publishing web content on the ATO website that meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA.

ATO's web content is published in HTML to ensure it meets best practice accessibility guidelines. Videos include captions or transcripts. These practices are supported by formal processes for publishing website content which includes checklists and post-publishing quality assurance processes.

In addition, all employees who develop website content are given accessibility training sessions. So far over 400 staff have been trained in creating accessible content.

For all marketing and communication staff, the ATO has a Diverse Audiences

team who assist them with understanding the communication needs of external audiences including people with disability.

The ATO has also connected with people with lived experience to provide enhanced understandings of the issues experienced by people with learning disability, cognitive impairment, and intellectual disability.

By the very nature of its work, the ATO is committed to providing products, services and communications that are accessible to both staff and the Australian community.

As John Lennox explained, "We are all part of the same team and diversity of thoughts, skills and abilities make us a better, more cohesive team. Inclusion is for everyone and the ATO needs to reflect the community it serves."



## Inclusiveness empowers Medibank to deliver better products and services

"It's not enough to have our own guidelines for inclusiveness. Our suppliers need to as well."

Access and inclusion have been an integral part of Medibank's culture since it was privatised in 2014.

"As an organisation, we are values lead and purpose driven," explained Nigel Davis, Head of Inclusion, Sustainability & Engagement at Medibank.

"We are often interacting with our customers at a time of high need. Having an inclusive and accessible culture ensures we can better understand our customers to provide the products and services they want."

Medibank has participated in the Access and Inclusion Index every year since 2016 and, according to Nigel Davis, the Index helps Medibank understand:

- What inclusion should look like;
- Where they are now; and
- Which areas within the organisation need improvement.

"We use it as a roadmap to follow. We know we rank highly but there is always more we could be doing. Our participation in the Benchmark

Report keeps us accountable. It's how we can keep moving forward."

For Medibank, inclusiveness means encouraging people to 'come as you are' so the organisation can challenge its thinking and improve the way it delivers its products and services. "In fact, I believe our culture of inclusiveness empowers the organisation to leverage from our differences for the benefit of our customers", said Nigel.

In the 2019 Access and Inclusion Index, Medibank ranked highly for its commitment to expanding its focus on access and inclusion to include its Suppliers and Partners.

The organisation has a Supplier Code of Conduct as well as a formal, written Procurement Policy. Both documents work together so Medibank can actively explore opportunities to engage organisations who share their values on accessibility and inclusion for people with disability, gender equality, cultural diversity and LGBTI inclusion.

In 2019, Medibank introduced a formal process for all Tier One suppliers so it could better understand their suppliers' approach to accessibility and inclusion

and ensure Medibank partners with organisations that share their core values.

Medibank has now included an access and inclusion criteria on their procurement checklist to aid the supplier selection process. In particular, the checklist applies to suppliers across Information and Communication Technology and Marketing. All suppliers in these categories must meet WCAG 2.1 AA guidelines.

Importantly, new products won't be launched until they meet these criteria. In addition, there are plans in place to either modify or replace current systems that have accessibility issues.

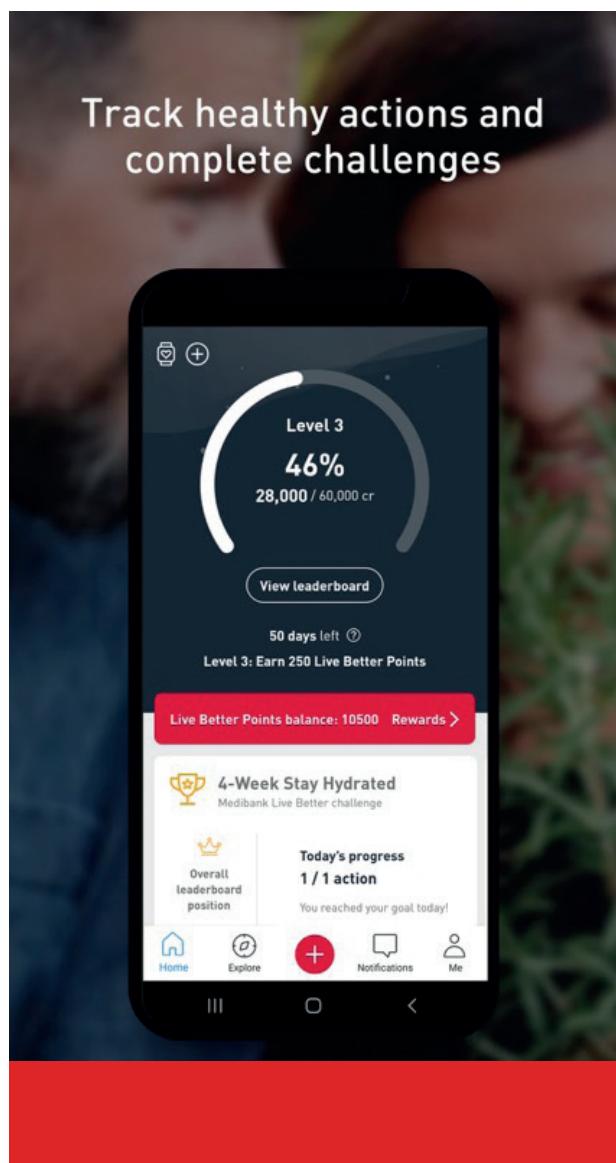
The Medibank Live Better app demonstrates how placing accessibility at the forefront of product development works to benefit everyone.

The Live Better app is a loyalty program where customers can track their physical fitness, mental health, diet and exercise habits. They can then redeem points or receive discounts for living a healthier life and developing better health habits.

"From the beginning, we wanted to make this app accessible to everyone. So the project specifications included accessibility provisions", Nigel said. To achieve this goal, at every stage of the app's development, the external developers worked with specialist accessibility

evaluation providers and Medibank personnel with lived experience.

"Being an organisation that values inclusiveness means we are constantly challenging our thinking to improve the way we deliver services. It's not enough to rank highly. We need to be constantly improving."





## A passion for digital accessibility and employment earns Life Without Barriers a high score for Innovation

"Participating in the Access and Inclusion Index Benchmark Report in 2016 was like a new door had opened on our accessibility journey as an organisation. The Index sets out what best practice looks like and now, we use it as the foundation for our business planning," explained Fiona Davies, Manager Diversity and Inclusion, People Safety and Culture at Life Without Barriers.

Fiona went on to say, "We're aspirational. We want to keep pushing ourselves to do even more".

As an organisation, Life Without Barriers is passionate about digital accessibility. To embed accessible practice into its operations, it established a new

business unit within its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) division called ICT Digital and Innovation.

This team is led by the Manager Digital and Innovation, Scott McShane, who took an innovative approach to digital accessibility by initiating the creation of an Accessibility Guild, which is a first in the community sector. The Guild is a community of practice which brings together ICT teams and accessibility specialists. The ICT team at Life Without Barriers also works closely with the Centre for Inclusive Design, Vision Australia and other partners. Their mission is to take an accessibility first approach to designing systems and solutions for their clients, employees and communities.

# WE LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS VE

"By building digital solutions with accessibility as the first consideration, we ensure our systems are inclusive for all users," Scott said.

With a philosophy of "getting our hands dirty in order to find a solution", the Life Without Barriers team is always on the lookout for opportunities to do things better. For several years, Life Without Barriers has held thought-leadership forums, called Ideas Without Barriers to focus on particular aspects of disability policy such as employment, housing or transport. Chaired by Board Director, Graeme Innes, the Ideas forums bring senior stakeholders together to discuss solutions to the barriers faced by people with disability.

Another innovation initiated by Life Without Barriers is a joint venture with Angus Knight to create Joblife Employment – a disability employment service focused on finding employment for people with disability, illness and

injury. Not only has Joblife created opportunities for thousands of job seekers facing employment barriers, Life Without Barriers has utilised this partnership to work towards its own employment targets. Life Without Barriers has also partnered with Joblife on important initiatives like AccessAbility Day which gives jobseekers with disability valuable work experience and contacts in workplaces.

Employing people with disability helps Life Without Barriers enhance its culture of accessibility and inclusion. Fiona said, "Using our results from the Access and Inclusion Index Benchmark Report as a reason to communicate our successes, helps to keep access and inclusion top of mind. It also helps to keep us accountable."

# Stronger Together

The 2019-20 Access and Inclusion Benchmark Report provides important insights into the practices and maturity of Australian organisations. We hope the good practice examples shared in this Report drive other organisations to start or progress in their access and inclusion journey, and mobilise their commitments and actions towards disability confidence.

Together, we can pave the way to greater inclusion of people with disability in Australian society.

## How to connect with us

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